

Interview Preparation and basic tips updated on Jan 2025

Make a Great First Impression

People often say "**you never get a second chance to make a first impression**", and that's actually quite true—which is why it's so important to start on the right foot.

So, knowing that, how do you make the best first impression possible?

Everyone's different, and while you don't want to be too formulaic, there are definitely a few things you'll want to keep in mind that should universally help show you in a positive light while preparing for a job or employment interview. Small things make a huge difference and we have listed tips to make the first impression the best and make the interview a successful one.

1. Your interview starts the moment you walk into the building; anyone you meet may be connected with the hiring manager or the hiring team.
2. Be nice to everyone you meet from the receptionist up to the senior-level executives; everyone's opinion counts.
3. If interviewing with several people at the same time, give everyone equal attention; you never know who the real decision maker is.
4. Answer interview questions by communicating strong stories of success; prove what makes you unique rather than just explaining what you did.
5. Try to ask questions throughout the interview; it should be a conversation not an interrogation.
6. Asking questions during the interview helps you uncover key issues and better prepares you to answer questions throughout the interview.
7. Be sure to ask what the next steps in the interview process are so you can prepare an appropriate follow-up strategy.
8. Create a brief and visually interesting presentation about your skills and achievements to give to the hiring manager during the interview.
9. When asked questions about mistakes you have made, be authentic, explain what you learned from the experience, and don't get defensive.
10. If asked about your weaknesses, don't spin weaknesses into strengths; it's not credible and who wants to hire someone they don't trust?
11. Ask big-picture questions about the company and how the department you are interviewing with fits into the company's long-term goals.
12. People think they should talk in general terms about career successes, but you build trust with interviewers by talking about specifics.
13. If recruiters ask you to "walk them through your background," focus on your core message of value, not the five positions you held pre-2001.

14. Interviewees are a risk to hiring managers because they don't know you. Prove success that can be duplicated in their company to earn trust.
15. A good interviewee is also a good listener. The questions asked provide clues to what the hiring manager needs and expects.
16. For women, avoid heavy perfume, makeup, and jewellery on interviews. For men, go for a clean-shaven look, short hair, and polished shoes.
17. For men and women, cover up any tattoos and remove body piercing before interviews (other than earrings for women).
18. Before the interview, turn off your cell phone, take loose change out of your pocket, and don't show up with your own coffee from Starbucks.
20. Be memorable for what you say during an interview, not for what you wear.
21. On phone interviews, sit in front of a mirror to make you feel like you are in front of someone-- even if that someone is yourself.
22. During a phone interview, the only tool you have to communicate enthusiasm is your voice; vary your tone to communicate fit and interest.
23. Phone interviews are like open-book tests; keep any necessary notes handy so you can refer to them during the call.
24. While waiting for your interview, check out the surroundings. Do people look frazzled or happy? These are clues into the department culture.
25. Try to relax - don't sit on the edge of your chair and don't lean too far back: sit up reasonably straight and still.