



Grossmont College
Career Center / Student Employment Services



Tips for Interview Success!

Job Hunting can be traumatic experience or an opportunity to learn and expand your horizons. The fact that you've been granted an interview is testament that you're on the right track. But the key to a good interview is to BE PREPARED! This packet will provide information and tools that can help.

The Art of Interviewing

No interview is a failure. The interview process is a learning experience that can enhance your performance. Good interviewing takes preparation and practice.

Adequate preparation can alleviate much of the stress associated with the typical job interview. Confidence shows, so prepare well in advance, and the best time to start is NOW.

Just Remember....

Interviewing is a two-way street. It's an information exchange between you and the employer.

You Want To Know

1. **What the Employer has to Offer.** The importance of actively weighing this organization and job during the interview cannot be overstated.
2. **Will I Be Happy Here?** A successful Job Hunter uses the Interview to screen the organization *before* going to work there.

The Employer Wants To Know

1. Why you have Selected their Organization to Seek a Job.
2. What **YOU** Can Do for the Company.
3. What Kind of Person are You? Do You Get Along with Other People? What are Your Values?
4. What Distinguishes **YOU** from Nineteen other People that Can Do the Same Thing?
5. Are You Affordable?

The Job Interview is a Chance to Sell Yourself!

The purpose of the job interview from **THE EMPLOYER'S POINT OF VIEW** is to determine the accuracy of statements recorded on the work application or resume and to determine whether your experience, education and personality qualify you for the job.

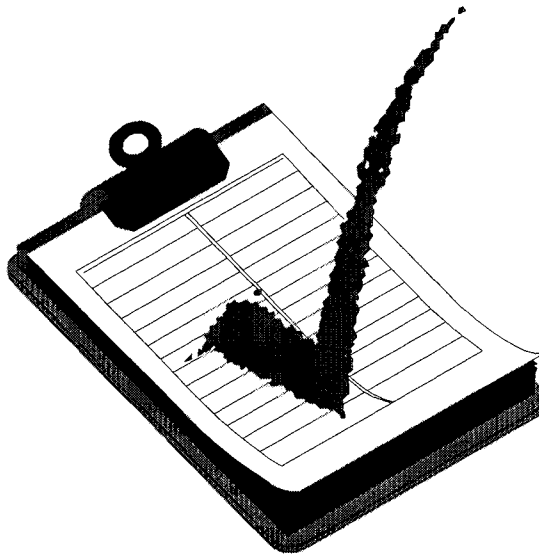
AS YOU SEE IT - the interview is your chance to sell yourself and your skills to the employer, and to convince her/him that you are the person that should be hired. Careful preparation will enhance your ability to accomplish this task.

Begin by taking stock of yourself and what you have to offer...

SECTION I

TAKING STOCK OF YOURSELF

A careful examination of your qualifications and characteristics will not only help you to identify the qualities you bring to the workplace, but will help build self-confidence for the interview itself. The following exercises can help you with this process.



IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS

A. Identify and write “specific” skills you have learned in your educational program at Grossmont College. (List 6)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

B. Identify and write skills you have gained from past experiences which are “transferable” to your new career goals. (List 6)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

EXAMPLES OF TRANSFERABLE/GENERAL SKILLS:

assemble products
assist people
build
calculate
check for accuracy
check equipment
communicate
compare data
deliver
demonstrate
develop
diagnose

drive
value
explain
file
follow directions
handle materials
maintain equipment
meet deadlines
motivate
operate
organize
repair

research
review
schedule
sell
set up
sew
sketch
solve problems
sort
supervise
train
troubleshoot

IDENTIFYING YOUR WORK VALUES

I prefer employment which enables me to:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> contribute to society | <input type="checkbox"/> be creative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> have contact with people | <input type="checkbox"/> supervise others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work alone | <input type="checkbox"/> work with details |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work with a team | <input type="checkbox"/> gain recognition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> compete with others | <input type="checkbox"/> acquire security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> make decisions | <input type="checkbox"/> make a lot of money |
| <input type="checkbox"/> work under pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> help others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> use power and authority | <input type="checkbox"/> solve problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> acquire new knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> take risks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be a recognized expert | <input type="checkbox"/> work at my own pace |

Select the four work values that are most important to you from the above list and write them in the spaces below. You may also list any other work values (desired satisfactions) which were not listed above but which are important to you:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

GOOD WORKER TRAITS

Employers look for workers who have fine personal qualities. Sometimes they will select an applicant who is less skilled over a more skilled candidate based on these characteristics. Employers know that skills can often be learned but *virtues* come with the individual.

Worker traits that employers expect from all employees:

dependable	honest
loyal	punctual
conscientious	enthusiastic
flexible	willing to use initiative
persevering	persistent
ability to work under pressure	willing to follow safety rules
willing to follow directions	listening skills
adaptable	communication skills
productive	personal hygiene
able to get along with fellow workers	

Think carefully about which of these traits you have to offer a prospective employer. How might you demonstrate them in the context of the Interview? List and elaborate:

SECTION II

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

Now that you have taken stock of what you have to offer to an employer, it's time to prepare for the interview itself.

Careful research of both the company and the position itself is vital! Many, if not most, personnel offices can provide a complete, detailed description of the duties and responsibilities of specific jobs within the company. This information, in addition to annual reports and public relations data, can greatly simplify and enhance the process.

Prior practice of specific questions that may be asked during the interview can assure your ability to provide the best answers and examples possible. We have provided a list of commonly asked interview questions for you to review. Our sampling contains close to 73 examples, the interviewer will probably only ask you ten to fifteen questions - but WHICH ten to fifteen? It's best to expect the unexpected. Remember—careful preparation could make the difference between getting and not getting a job offer!

We have also included a list of commonly asked illegal questions and their legal counterparts.



COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
2. What jobs have you enjoyed the most? Least? Why?
3. In what school activities have you participated? Why? Which did you enjoy most?
4. What percentage of your school expenses did you earn? How?
5. What are your future vocational plans?
6. What courses did you like most? Least? Why?
7. Why did you choose your particular field of work?
8. What qualifications do you have that make you feel you will be successful in your field?
9. Do you feel you have received good general training?
10. Do you prefer any specific geographic location? Why?
11. Are you willing to relocate where the job sends you?
12. What are your ideas on salary?
13. Why did you decide to go to the college you attended?
14. Do you think your extracurricular activities were worth the time you devoted to them? Why?
15. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your chosen field?
16. Can you take instructions/criticism without feeling upset or hurt?
17. Can you work under pressure with deadlines?
18. Tell me something about yourself.
19. Define cooperation.
20. Describe a difficult problem you have had to deal with. How was it resolved?
21. Describe how your job relates to the overall goals of this department and company.
22. Do you prefer working with others or alone?
23. Explain your role as a group/team member.
24. What is your major strength? Weakness?
25. Have you worked successfully with a difficult type of person?
26. How do you feel about your progress to date?
27. How do you organize and plan for major projects?
28. How do you take direction?
29. How long would it take for you to make a contribution to our company?
30. How long do you expect to stay with the company?
31. How much experience do you have?
32. What jobs have you held? How were they obtained? Why did you leave?
33. How much money do you hope to earn at age 25? 30? 40?
34. How would you define a conducive work environment?
35. How would you define your profession?
36. In what ways has your job prepared you to take on greater responsibilities?
37. In your last job, what are some of the things you spent most of your time on?

COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Continued...)

38. We have tried to hire people from your school/major before, and they never seem to work out. What makes you different?
39. What problems do you encounter in doing your job? What do you do about them?
40. What are some of the things that bother you?
41. What are some of the things you find difficult to do? What do you do about them?
42. Describe the broad responsibilities of (position/title).
43. What are your greatest accomplishments?
44. What are your plans for further education?
45. What special abilities do you possess that would contribute to our firm?
46. What interests you about our product/service/company?
47. What are you looking for in your next job?
48. What aspects of your job do you consider most crucial?
49. What can you do for us that someone else cannot do?
50. What did you like/dislike about your last job?
51. Can you forget your education and start from scratch?
52. Are you looking for a permanent or temporary position?
53. What do you feel is a satisfactory attendance record?
54. What do you know about our company?
55. What do you think determines progress in a good company?
56. What do you think of your current/last boss?
57. What have you learned from the jobs you have held?
58. What is the most difficult situation you have faced?
59. What is your energy level like? Describe a particular day.
60. What kind of decisions are most difficult for you?
61. What would you like to be doing five years from now?
62. What would your references say about you?
63. Why do you think you might want to work here?
64. Why should I hire you?
65. Have you ever been fired? Why?
66. Why were you out of work for so long?
67. How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?
68. If you were starting school all over again, what courses would you take? Why?
69. You have a project that requires you to interact with different levels within the company. How do you do this? What levels are you comfortable with?
70. Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime?
71. Do you have any disability/obstacle that will get in the way of performing your job for us?
72. Can you get recommendations from past employers?
73. What one question are you most afraid of being asked? ANSWER IT!

Be prepared to deal with inappropriate questions! Stay calm, natural, and take time to think about your response.

Prepare and practice (rehearse) your answers!

Turn negatives into positives.

Assertively sell yourself using:

**SPECIFIC SKILLS
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS
GOOD WORKER TRAITS**

Remember to bring a copy of your application, resume and Letters of Recommendation.

BEHAVIOR-BASED QUESTIONS

Behavior-based questions focus on specific accomplishments and/or activities that you may have experienced in past jobs or situations. These are difficult questions, but are being encountered more and more in the interview environment. If asked such questions, **take the time to come up with an example**. To succeed: 1) Stay calm 2) Recall several potential answers 3) Choose one that feels right 4) Consider the ramifications of sharing it 5) Recall a few key points and 6) Begin your story, and share it with enthusiasm and vividness. Consider these examples:

Describe a time when you:

achieved a great deal in a short amount of time
were disappointed in your performance
made a major sacrifice to achieve a work goal
were unwilling or unable to make the necessary sacrifice to achieve a goal
worked effectively under a great deal of pressure
didn't handle a stressful situation very well
really got angry over a situation at work
felt under a great deal of pressure from an internal or external customer
were really bothered by the actions of a coworker
were especially creative in solving a problem
were not as creative as usual
organized or planned an event that was very successful
planned and coordinated a project that was very successful
were unable to complete a project on schedule despite your best efforts
really had to remain flexible
had to deal with a personality conflict with a boss or coworker
were unable to sell your idea to a key person
felt really good about a decision you made and the process you went through
were very effective in your problem solving ability
used facts and reason to persuade someone to accept your recommendation
utilized your leadership ability to gain support for what initially had strong opposition
were able to build team spirit during a time of low morale
were able to gain commitment from others to really work as a team
used your political savvy to push through a program you believed in
were particularly perceptive regarding a person's or group's feelings and needs
were able to predict someone's behavior or response based on your assessment of him/her
were particularly supportive and reassuring to a person who needed a friend
built rapport quickly with someone under difficult situations
wrote a report which was well received by others
were particularly effective at prioritizing tasks and completing a project on schedule
identified potential problems and resolved the situation before the problems became serious
were highly motivated and your example inspired others
had to make an important decision quickly without all of the information you wanted
had to make a decision you knew would be unpopular
were in a situation when events and circumstances changed rapidly

Common Illegal Question and Their Legal Counterparts

Topic	Illegal Questions	Legal Questions
Affiliations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what clubs or social organizations do you belong? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How old are you? When did you graduate from State University? What is your birth date? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If hired, can you offer proof that you are at least 18 years of age?
Arrests / Convictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever been arrested? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever been convicted of _____? <i>(The crime should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)</i>
Citizenship/ Nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you born? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you show proof of eligibility to work in the United States? What languages do you read, speak, or write fluently? <i>(This question is okay, as long as this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)</i>
Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have any disabilities? Please complete the following medical history. Have you had any recent or past illness or operations? If yes, list and give dates. What was the date of your last physical exam? How's your family's health? When did you lose your eyesight? How? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? <i>(This question is okay if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.)</i> As part of hiring process, after a job offer has been made, you will be required to undergo a medical exam. <i>(Exam result must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations based on the exam results.)</i> Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related function?
Marital / Family Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your marital status? Whom do you live with? Do you plan to have a family? When? How many kids do you have? What are your childcare arrangements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? Travel is an important part of the job. Would you be willing and able to travel as needed by the job? <i>(This question is okay, as long as ALL applicants for the job are asked it.)</i> This job requires overtime occasionally. Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? <i>(Again, this question is okay as long as ALL applicants for the job are asked it.)</i>
Military	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What type of training or education did you receive in the military?
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How tall are you? How much do you weigh? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job? <i>(Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential to the safe performance of the job.)</i>
Residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you own or rent your home? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is your address?

THE SALARY ISSUE!

In general, it's best to avoid discussing salary during an interview unless a job offer has been made. Here are some possible responses for delaying the salary question, during an interview, until an offer is made:

- ✓ My salary history and expectations are in line with my professional achievements, experience level and the requirements of the position under consideration.
- ✓ Due to the sensitive nature of the salary issue, I prefer to discuss salary in a personal meeting.
- ✓ Rather than making salary an issue in the process, I would prefer to discuss compensation in the context of the opportunity presented and my potential contributions.
- ✓ I would prefer to defer discussion of compensation issues and focus first on the match between your needs and my capabilities.
- ✓ Although I considered my salary at XYZ appropriate for my years of service in the industry, I am aware that compensation in other industries may vary widely.
- ✓ Until we have had more time to discuss the position and its responsibilities, I would prefer to defer talking about salary. Once we agree that we have mutual interest...
- ✓ I am reluctant to discuss my previous salary, because I am concerned that you may decide whether or not to consider me for this position solely based on money, and as I have said...
- ✓ Since I am not aware of how this industry's positions are evaluated, would you be willing to share the salary range for this position with me?
- ✓ Although money is important to me, I recognize that the current economy may have affected salary ranges. I am sure that if you believe I am the right person for this position, you will offer me a fair salary, given all the parameters.
- ✓ I am hoping to find a challenging position where I can use my experience. Money will only be one of the criteria I will use in evaluating opportunities, so I prefer to wait until we're further into our discussions to talk about salary.
- ✓ I am primarily interested in the responsibilities of the job, and feel that after those are explained we can discuss salary.
- ✓ Although I was paid well at XYZ, it is now part of my past; and I prefer to pursue any salary questions by understanding this company and how your positions are evaluated.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

The interviewer will emerge from the interview with a subjective feeling about you, the interviewee. You must try to enhance that feeling. You can accomplish this by considering the following checklist of interview hints:

- ___ Listen to the questions carefully.
 - ___ If a question is ambiguous, you should either interpret it in your way and say what puts you in the best light or ask for clarification.
 - ___ Use ploys to get thinking time: ask for clarification or use a bridge.
 - ___ Don't worry about thinking for a few seconds before you answer.
 - ___ Assume that every question is asked for a purpose.
 - ___ Be ready for the blockbuster question.
-
- ___ Handle the offensive question firmly but tactfully.
 - ___ Tactfully decline to answer questions about your private life.
 - ___ Prepare good answers for questions that may probe skeletons in your closet.
 - ___ Find out how your references will respond to a check.
 - ___ Accept responsibility for personality conflicts.
 - ___ Don't put the interviewer in the middle of a battle.
-
- ___ Don't talk against a former employer.
 - ___ If you must discuss a bad situation with a former employer, do so dispassionately.
 - ___ Answer specific questions specifically.
 - ___ Don't respond to a serious question with a flip joke.
 - ___ If you joke, don't make the interviewer the butt of it.
 - ___ Recognize dual purpose questions and answer them decisively.

QUESTIONS TO USE DURING AN INTERVIEW

Most interviewers will ask at some point in the interview if YOU have any questions you would like to ask. The following list suggests several questions that might be appropriate at this point. Select one or two that you might like answered.

1. Can you tell me some of the particular skills or attributes that you want in the candidate for this position?
2. Why is this position available?
3. What happened to the person who formerly had this job?
4. Please tell me a little about the people with whom I'll be working most closely.
5. How do you rate your competition?
6. What do you consider to be your firm's most important asset?
7. How do you feel your company might better serve the community?
8. How do you feel about promotions from within?
-or-
What are the opportunities for advancement?
9. Could you tell me a little about your role with the company?
10. What are your plans for expansion?
11. I've read that your company has risen from (fifth) to (second) in market share in just the past (three) years. What are the key reasons for this dramatic success?
12. What do you see ahead for your company in the next (five) years?
13. You say you are anticipating a growth rate of “__” percent over the next few years. Will this be accomplished internally or through acquisitions?
14. What new products are being considered for introduction over the next year or two?
15. What is the company's position on training programs for their personnel?
16. How is performance evaluated?
17. What types of professional development programs are offered or supported by this company?

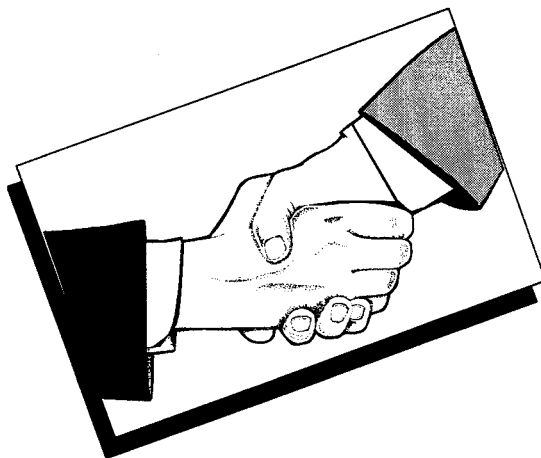
SECTION III

POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS

Now that you've completed the preparation, it's time to ready yourself for the actual interview.

You've heard it before: "**First Impressions are LASTING Impressions**"! An interviewer has a preliminary impression of you before you even meet, based on your resume, phone conversations, or input from a mutual acquaintance. But those first few minutes after you actually meet can be critical. If you make a poor first impression, it will be difficult to change.

The information on the following pages should assist you in making a fine first impression...



The 30-SECOND COMMERCIAL

An article in the Wall Street Journal indicated that the fee for thirty seconds of television time for major events, such as the Super Bowl, is over \$500,000. For only thirty seconds of your time, an advertiser is willing to pay a half a million dollars to two million dollars.

Are such messages ad-libbed? Do the announcers “fake it” with little thought to their purpose or how their objectives are to be attained? Not likely. A great deal of thought, practice and rehearsal goes into putting together an effective commercial. As Winston Churchill once said, “It takes at least six weeks to prepare a good extemporaneous speech.”

The point is, thirty seconds is sufficient time to sell a product or a service, or you (or at least to get someone’s interest). Yet people find it difficult to concisely communicate their background, strengths and objective. They feel that because they are good at their chosen profession, they can just ad-lib through a meeting or an interview. A common result is information/referral meetings that produce little useful information or referrals and job interviews, which produce few, if any, offers.

A more disciplined, practiced approach, using the example of the thirty-second commercial, can be very effective for handling any number of interview and meeting situations. The first and most important is to be able to clearly and concisely communicate one’s strengths, background, and objective in a way that will gain the interest of others.

The 30-Second Commercial should contain 3 Major Elements



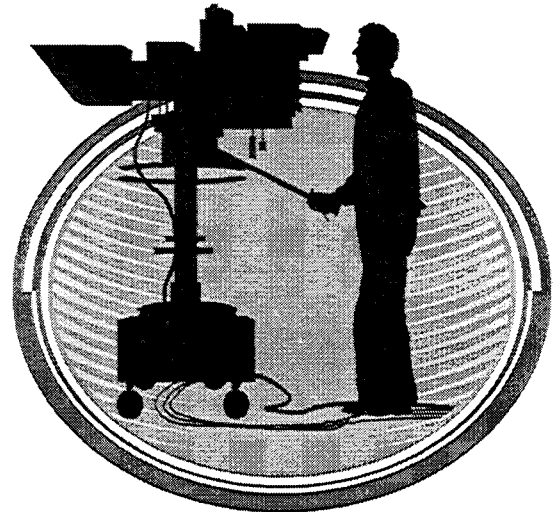
Your background; including work history, education, training etc.



Some discussion of your accomplishments in that background. This could be several accomplishments or, possibly, an inclusive statement with a specific accomplishment for illustration.



Your objective, as it relates to the particular person or their industry, profession, or function with which you are speaking.



30-Second Commercial:

EXAMPLE

"I have 25 years in management. I'm best at helping organizations make better use of their resources, like hard assets, money, or people."

"For example, I've led several business turnarounds. At a Fortune 500 company, the team I developed figured out how to meet customer needs in half the time while cutting costs 30%. I consulted with an entrepreneurial company and helped them solve much of their financing problems with an improved sales program."

"I'm seeking a key operations management position where I can use my organizational, financial, and team-building skills."

Your 30 Second Commercial

Who Am I?

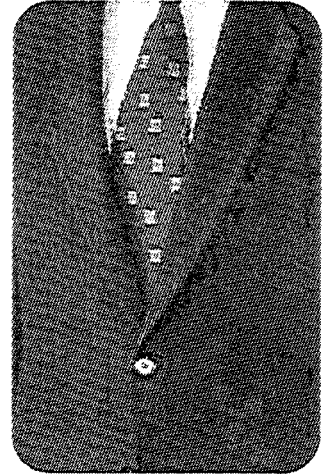
Most Recent Position (with a little detail or an accomplishment)

Reason for Leaving Statement

Future Focus or Positive Next Steps

RECOMMENDED RULES OF DRESS FOR MEN

1. Hair should be trimmed above ears and faces clean-shaven. If you insist on a beard or mustache, make certain that it's neatly groomed.
2. Wear glasses with up-to-date frames and clear lenses—no dark tints or photo-grays.
3. Wear no more than one ring on each hand and a watch; no other jewelry (no bracelets).
4. Clothing should be neat and well pressed.
5. Wear navy blue or gray suit, single-breasted; white or pin-stripe dress shirt and conservative patterned tie;
-or-
Navy blue or gray jacket; coordinated gray, tan or charcoal slacks; white or pin-stripe dress shirt and conservative tie;
-or-
Plain sports shirt; coordinated navy blue, gray, charcoal or brown slacks;
-or-
Clean sports shirt and clean casual pants.
6. Tip of the tie should come to the top or center of belt buckle.
7. Belt should show no signs of wear or a weight gain or loss; should match shoes.
8. Nails should be cut short, filed and clean.
9. Shoes should be well shined, recently heeled, black or brown, with ties—no loafers; light weight, appropriately colored over-the-calf socks.
10. No aftershave, no cologne, no strong-smelling deodorants, no smoking.
11. Carry a good leather or leather-like portfolio or slim briefcase.



RECOMMENDED RULES OF DRESS FOR WOMEN

1. Clean hair, short or tied back and professional.
2. Make-up is essential for a polished look, but keep it simple—avoid harsh colors or too heavy an application.
3. Wear glasses with up-to-date frames and clear lenses—no dark tints or photo-grays.
4. Clothing should be neat and well pressed.
5. Simple earrings, not dangling; a pin or necklace and a watch; no more than one ring per hand; no more than one bracelet.
6. Wear seasonal business suit in solid color or conservative pattern with tailored or pleated skirt; blouse in a complimentary solid color—white, cream or pastel; skirt should cover the knee when seated;
-or-
Jacket in solid color or conservative pattern; coordinating blouse and tailored or pleated skirt in appropriate length;
-or-
Tailored dress in solid color or conservative print or pattern and appropriate length;
-or-
Tailored blouse, preferably with long sleeves, in white, cream or pastel; coordinating tailored or pleated skirt in solid color or conservative print or pattern and appropriate length.
7. Nails should be short to medium length; manicured with light or clear polish.
8. Medium heel leather pumps, no open toes or backs; no nicks in heels; do not wear flats.
9. Stockings or panty hose in nude or beige *always*—even in summer.
10. No perfume, no cologne, no strong-smelling deodorants, no smoking.
11. Carry a good leather or leather-like portfolio or tailored leather purse—but not both.



Many elements go into presenting that first impression of who you are. Your personal appearance, including grooming, greatly affects your employability. But as important as your physical appearance is, the attitude you convey toward your employment and your employers can be just as powerful. It is important to bring a positive attitude into the interview, without being too familiar.

- Confident
- Enthusiastic
- Energetic
- Cooperative
- Alert
- Punctual
- Healthy
- Cheerful
- Loyal

You may be well-groomed, but if you appear disinterested or argumentative, your chances for being hired decrease dramatically. Most employers want to hire an individual who is:

Remember to:

Sell Yourself: The difference between bragging and self-confidence is enthusiasm.

Be Yourself: Act naturally but professionally, for two good reasons:

- 1. You will be most satisfied working for people who like you just the way you are.**
- 2. It's unlikely that you can play a role well enough to fool an experienced interviewer.**

EVALUATION FACTORS USED BY INTERVIEWERS

What do interviewers look for? Many factors contribute to an interviewer's final impression of you. A sampling of some of those characteristics is listed below:

- ✓ Inability to express one's self clearly—poor voice, diction, grammar.
- ✓ Overbearing—overaggressive—conceited “superiority complex”—“know-it-all.”
- ✓ Poor personal appearance.
- ✓ High pressure type.
- ✓ Lack of interest and enthusiasm—passive, indifferent.
- ✓ Lack of confidence and poise—nervousness, ill-at-ease.
- ✓ Failure to participate in activities. Lack of tact.
- ✓ Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time.
- ✓ Unwilling to start at the bottom—expects too much too soon.
- ✓ Makes excuses, is evasive, hedges on unfavorable factors in record.
- ✓ Never heard of company (lack of knowledge about company).
- ✓ Lack of maturity.
- ✓ Lack of courtesy, ill mannered.
- ✓ Condemnation of past employers.
- ✓ Lack of social understanding.
- ✓ Marked dislike for school work.
- ✓ Fails to look interviewer in the eye.
- ✓ Limp, fishy handshake.
- ✓ Late to interview without good reason.
- ✓ Indefinite response to questions.
- ✓ Poor scholarship record—just “got by.”
- ✓ Over-emphasis on money—interested only in best dollar offer
- ✓ Lack of planning for career—no purpose or goals.
- ✓ Asks no questions about the job or company.

Some additional hints:

Arrive Early

Remember to get to the interview a few minutes early. If you're not sure of the location of the company or the personnel office, do a dry run a few days ahead of time. If necessary, call the receptionist for directions.

Appearance

Before you go into the interview, stop in a rest room. Make a final check of your appearance and make any necessary last-minute adjustments.

Waiting

Assume that your interviewer can hear everything you say or do while you wait to be interviewed. The receptionist may be asked for his/her impression as well, so be on your best behavior..

All of these factors will contribute to the impression you leave behind. Make sure that yours is
P-O-S-I-T-I-V-E!

SECTION IV

PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL/ACHIEVEMENT/BUSINESS PROFILES

The employer is looking for certain intangible assets, as well as your ability to cleverly project a series of personality traits that are universally sought by all successful companies. (Refer to the list of “Good Worker Traits” in Section I.) Building these key traits into your answers to the interviewer’s questions will win you any job and set the stage for your career growth at the new company.

Take the time to carefully assess your qualifications. The following profiles will help you explore your potential value to an employer from a personal, professional, achievement-oriented, and business viewpoint. Keep these assets in mind as you formulate your interview responses.

PROFILES

I. PERSONAL PROFILE

The personal profile is used by interviewers to determine your personality. Your answers tell them how you feel about yourself, your chosen career and what it would be like to work with you.

A. DRIVE

1. A desire to get things done
2. Goal oriented

B. MOTIVATION

1. Enthusiasm and willingness to ask questions
2. Accept added challenges
3. Do that “little bit extra” on every job

C. COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Ability to write and speak effectively to people at all levels

D. CHEMISTRY

1. Does not get rattled
2. Wears a smile
3. Is confident without self-importance
4. Gets along with others
5. A team player

E. ENERGY

Gives that extra effort in the little things as well as important matters

F. DETERMINATION

Does not back off when a problem or situation gets tough

G. CONFIDENCE

1. Not Boastful
2. Poised
3. Friendly
4. Honest
5. Open with employees at all status levels
6. Neither intimidated by the “big enchiladas” nor overly familiar

PROFILES (Continued...)

II. PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Companies search for employees who respect their profession and employer. Demonstrating these traits in your interview will identify you as loyal, reliable and trustworthy.

A. RELIABILITY

1. Following up on yourself
2. Not relying on anyone else to ensure the job is well done
3. Keeping management informed every step of the way

B. HONESTY/INTEGRITY

1. Taking responsibility for your actions, both good and bad
2. Always making decisions in the best interest of the company, never on whim or personal preference

C. PRIDE

1. Pride in a job well done
2. Always taking the extra step to make sure the job is done to the best of your ability
3. Paying attention to details

D. DEDICATION

Whatever it takes in time and effort to see a project through to completion - meeting deadlines

E. ANALYTICAL SKILLS

1. Weighing the pros and cons
2. Not jumping at the first solution to a problem that presents itself
3. Weighing the short- and long-term benefits of a solution against all of its possible negatives

F. LISTENING SKILLS

Actually listening and understanding, as opposed to just waiting your turn to speak.

PROFILES (Continued...)

III. ACHIEVEMENT PROFILE

A. MONEY SAVED

Every penny saved by your thought and efficiency is a penny earned for the company

B. TIME SAVED

Every moment you save enables your company to save money as well as to make to make more in the additional time available - a double bonus.

C. MONEY EARNED

Generating revenue is the goal of every company

IV. BUSINESS PROFILE

A. EFFICIENCY

Always keeping an eye open for waste of time, effort, resources and money

B. ECONOMY

1. Most problems have two possible solutions:
 - a. An expensive solution.
 - b. A solution the company would prefer to implement.

C. PROCEDURES

1. Follow them - do NOT work around them.
2. Keep your boss informed.

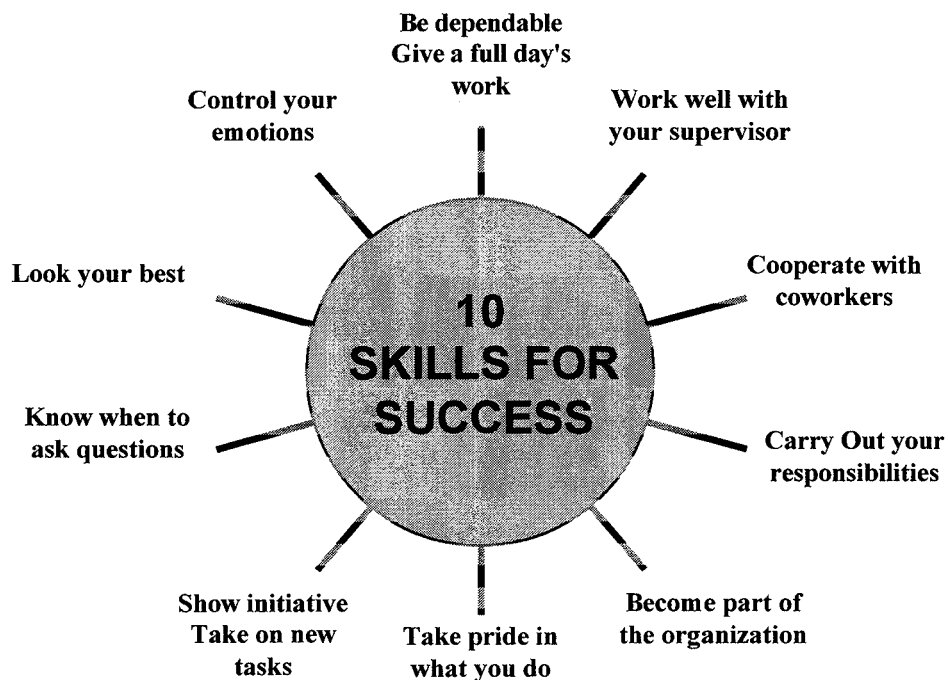
D. PROFIT

1. Universally admired
 - a. Efficiency
 - b. Economy
 - c. Procedures

As the requirements of the job are unfolded to you at the interview, meet them point by point with your qualifications. If your experience is limited, stress the key profile traits, your relevant interests, and desire to learn. If you are weak in just one particular area, keep quiet; perhaps that dimension will not arise. If the area is probed, be prepared to handle and overcome the negative by stressing additional complementary skills that compensate.

Do not show discouragement if the interview appears to be going poorly. You have nothing to gain by showing defeat, and it could merely be an interview tactic to test your self-confidence.

If for any reason you get flustered or lost, keep a straight face and posture. Gain time to gather your thoughts by asking, "Could you help me with that?" Or, "Would you run that by me again?" Or, "That's a good question; I want to be sure I understand". Could you please explain that again?"



Remember that in effect you have entered into a contract with the employer. You are expected to perform a number of duties, and the employer has agreed to *pay you a certain wage, provide benefits, pay social security and worker's compensation, and perhaps sponsor in-house training programs.*

It's important that you keep your end of the agreement by performing your duties *promptly and accurately.* If you don't, the employer has the right to let you go (**fire you**).

SECTION V

THANK YOU NOTES

The item that makes you different from “the others” who are applying for the same job!



THANK-YOU NOTES

After every job interview, you must take time to sit down and write a brief thank-you note to each person you interviewed with. If other personnel, such as secretaries, receptionists, or anyone else were friendly and gave you a helping hand, send them a note also. Ask for their names or cards while you are still visiting the organization. This will assist you in remembering the correct spelling of names and job titles.

Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration. You might also add something individual about the way they treated you. Thank-you notes can also be used as an opportunity to mention any main points you forgot to address in the interview. **BE BRIEF!**

Notes can be hand written on very plain stationary or typewritten in a business letter format. Mail the note promptly after the interview.

WHY SEND A THANK-YOU NOTE?

- It helps the interviewer remember you!
- You present yourself as a “people” person who remembers to express appreciation.
- If the interview went well and you are hopeful of being invited back, the thank-you note can reiterate your interest in further talks.
- The thank-you note gives you the opportunity to correct any wrong impression you may have left behind.
- If the interview did not go well, you can ask the interviewer to keep you in mind for future leads.

FOLLOW-UP

It is important to take follow-up action with an employer within two weeks of making the initial contact. Do not expect them to contact you. Show your initiative by calling or visiting to check on the status of your application. Often employers will wait to see if you are interested enough to call back. A pleasantly persistent individual often gets the interview opportunity *or the job*. A sample follow-up letter and format have been included on the following pages to assist you.

PERSONAL CONTACTS

Calling or walking into an employer’s office immediately puts you on the spot for evaluation. Prepare yourself for this initial contact because it can be a crucial part of the application process.

The receptionist in an employment office is usually trained to screen applicants. A good relationship with this contact person can often speed your application as well as provide you with significant information about the company. View this person as an aid, not an obstacle to get past as rapidly as possible.

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER FORMAT:

(Date)

Interviewer's Name

Title

Company Name

Street Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

Express appreciation for being granted the interview and for the courtesies extended to you by the interviewer(s). Indicate the position for which you were interviewed, where and when the interview took place. You may wish to reference some particular part of your visit to refresh the interviewer's memory.

Reaffirm your interest in the position and briefly restate your reasons for wanting the job, or for wanting to join this particular organization. If there is something you forgot to mention in the interview that might improve your chances for success, you may want to include that information here.

Offer to provide additional information, if necessary. Indicate once again that you are indeed interested in the position and are available for further interviewing at their convenience.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature - black ink)

Your Name Typed

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER:

January 15, 2003

Ms. Linda M. Whitestone
Director of Employment
Westover Corporation
100 East Winship Lane
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Ms. Whitestone:

I wanted you to know how much I appreciated the opportunity to interview for the position of Assistant to the Advertising Manager. This is an exciting position, and I look forward to the prospect of joining Westover and working with such a dynamic and talented manager as Peter Mitchell.

As I mentioned during my visit, I am familiar with many of the duties and responsibilities of the position. I spent two summers working for Annenburg and Whitcomb, as well as interning with several local advertising agencies. My experience working as Director of Advertising on "The Summit" at Grossmont College has also prepared me well for the responsibilities of this position.

In addition to my experience in this area, the knowledge I gained through the courses in my associate degree program, as well as the ongoing education I am receiving at San Diego State University, will serve me well in meeting the requirements of the position. I know I can contribute significantly to your company.

Thank you again for the opportunity. I enjoyed our discussion and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Melinda Franklin

References

"Tips for Interview Success" was created and developed by the Grossmont College Career Center and Student Job Placement Office staff. The following sources were referenced and/or provided authorization for reprinting of educational material for this handout.

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----- RIGHT Management Consultants, 3655 Nobel Drive Suite 100, San Diego, CA 92122 (858)587-8084

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G R O S S M O N T
C O L L E G E



8800 Grossmont College Drive
El Cajon, CA 92020

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