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JOB INTERVIEWING TIPS

Ace Your Job Interview

Job interview tips

ALEX KISH

8:12 a.m.

Separate yourself from the pack. To decide what to wear to the interview, you've got to scope out the company culture. You can do that by checking out the company's website or, if possible, doing some recon in the parking lot to see how everyone is dressed as they head into the office. A suit and closed-toe shoes are musts for formal environments. For casual workplaces, you can't go wrong with a pencil skirt, a pretty blouse, and pumps. Then do one thing that will make you stand out from the crowd. "Try adding a memorable accessory to your outfit," says Susan V. Fried, chief officer of recruitment and development at K&L Gates LLP, an international law firm. "I'll remember a person who was carrying a great bag or wearing a striking but tasteful necklace."

8:55 a.m.

Zip it. Even if you were doing 90 miles an hour to arrive on time, don't let it show. Huffing and puffing, fumbling with your keys, or jamming things into your purse makes you look unprepared, so have your bag zipped and remove the sunglasses from your head, advises Brandi Blades, vice president of marketing at Brill Street, a Chicago company that connects employers with employees. And the iPhone is off, right?

9:07 a.m.

Get a grip. "The number-one thing is poise—it transcends both age and experience," says Andrew Essex, CEO of Droga5, a New York City ad agency whose clients include Puma. "Before your mouth even opens, look me in the eye and shake my hand." BTW: A nice, firm handshake isn't just a requirement for the Y-chromosome set. In a 2008 University of Iowa study, women with firm grips received higher ratings than men with equally strong handshakes. So don't limpfish it: Grab the interviewer's hand firmly, making sure the web between your thumb and first finger meets theirs, pump once or twice, then let go, says Donna Goldfeder, director of career services for Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

9:10 a.m.

Dazzle with small talk. Go in prepared with a couple of lines you could say while the interviewer is walking you to her office or as you're settling in. A simple "Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today" is always a safe bet, according to principal image consultant Michelle T. Sterling, founder of Global Image Group. Or comment on something interesting you noticed in the office or around the building.

9:16 a.m.

Appear riveted. Lean forward slightly (it instantly makes you appear more interested) and maintain eye contact. "Some people tend to glance all over the place and aren't even aware they're doing it," says Carole Martin, an interview coach in San Diego and the author of *Boost Your Interview IQ*.

9:24 a.m.

Brag a bit. The big thing in HR circles these days is "behavioral questioning" (basically, the interviewer asks how you've handled certain situations, assuming that past behavior will offer hints of future success). Give specifics, says Goldfeder. Don't just say you saved the company cash—explain how your new processing system saved a cool \$100,000.

[< BACK](#) [1 2](#) [NEXT >>](#)

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