



Ethan Allen

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Tips for Effective Interviewing

Confirm the appointment.

Do this one day before your interview. Know the location of the interview. Try to find out how long you'll be there. And make sure you have your contact's phone number(s) in case you need to call.

Clear your calendar.

If possible, keep your schedule free of any other commitments that day. The interview might run over or you could be asked to stay longer during the appointment. Explaining that you have to be somewhere else could create an awkward situation that should be avoided.

Say the interviewer name(s) correctly.

If you know the names of interviewers in advance, confirm the pronunciation and spelling prior to the appointment. If necessary, ask the receptionist to help you with pronunciations. It's a part of his or her job.

Be on time.

Arrive no more than 10 minutes early but whatever you do, don't be late! Arriving late will create an impression that you are unreliable. If unforeseen circumstances arise and you must be late, do everything you can to call ahead of time.

Dress to impress.

If possible, learn in advance what attire is appropriate for the interview. If you're still not sure, dress conservatively in a dark suit.

Let them know you've arrived.

Walk to the receptionist, smile, shake hands, introduce yourself, and state that you have an appointment with your contact's name. Offer your résumé or business card and wait.

Prepare a short statement about you.

Be ready to answer the question, "Tell me about yourself and your background." This is your "stump speech" and should include some information on the types of companies and industries you have worked for, your strengths, transferable skills, and some personal traits. Practice saying this statement until it feels natural.

Be prepared to talk about your successes and experiences.

The prospective employer will want to learn about your past experience—successes and failures (as a learning experience), work ethic, and professional track record. Be able to amplify every item on your résumé.

Be nice.

Everyone you meet during your interview—from the receptionist to the interviewer(s)—should be treated with respect and courtesy. The receptionist might not be conducting the interview, but his or her opinion of you might be solicited.

Promptly follow up.

Decide if an email follow-up is appropriate. If any documents were requested, such as references, employment application, or samples of your work, that's a good reason for email, assuming you have them in electronic form. In any event, it's always good practice to send a thank-you letter or note—on paper, mailed in an envelope—within a day of the interview. In some cases, an email thank-you note may be appropriate. Then a few days later, call to express your continued interest, and to see if you can offer more information.

After your interview, say thank you! Smile and tell the interviewer where you can be reached. Thank the interviewer for his/her time; give a firm handshake and leave. Make sure to follow up with a thank you either by email or mail!