



DURING THE INTERVIEW

Greet your interviewer by name, with a firm handshake and a smile. Until your interviewer tells you otherwise, use the more formal "Mr. (Smith)" or "Ms. (Johnson)."

Remember **TENS**: **T**ouch (Shake Hands), **E**yes contact, **N**ame, **S**mile

Wait for the interviewer to sit down or invite you to sit down before seating yourself.

SELL YOURSELF

Though you may cringe at the thought, you need to *sell yourself* during the interview. You have a product (yourself) to offer this organization, and you must make sure that the interviewer understands what you have to offer. If you sit back and dutifully await the interviewer's questions, you may never have the opportunity to mention your best skills and qualities.

This doesn't mean that you take over the interview or ignore the interviewer's questions. It does mean that you should enter the interview with an agenda - with a clear idea of your key selling points and how to get those points across, whether your interviewer asks the right leading questions or not. While the interviewer controls the *flow* of the interview, you control the *content*.

Be prepared to speak in concise terms about relevant experiences that reflect positively on your skills and your character.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

To continue with the sales analogy - a good salesman never walks into a sales opportunity without knowing as much as possible about the company and its needs. Likewise, you need to carefully research the company.

BE ENTHUSIASTIC, BUT BE SINCERE

Enthusiasm is so important as it demonstrates your interest in the job and in the company. Enthusiasm works best when it is:

- **sincere** - don't gush over a job or a company that you couldn't give a hoot about. In fact, why are you interviewing with this company if you're not excited about the job?
- **based in your deep interests** - if you start your career and job search with an awareness of your deepest, most compelling interests, then you should eventually find yourself in interviews for jobs that you truly are excited about.

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO THE INTERVIEWER

If you don't listen well during the interview, you are telling the interviewer that you may not listen well to your co-workers and managers.

- Don't be afraid of silence during the interview - it's better to think about a question for a few moments, rather than jumping in with an answer that's off-target or long and rambling.
- If the question seems ambiguous or you need more clarification, ask the interviewer to elaborate or restate the question. (But don't use this as a ruse to gain more time.)
- Don't display defensiveness when a tough question has you stumped.

THINK ABOUT WHAT IT IS THAT SETS YOU APART FROM OTHER APPLICANTS

Your interviewer may be bored to tears from interviewing a series of cookie-cutter candidates who speak in the same generalities about their qualifications: "I'm a diligent worker, I'm a team player, I'm a quick learner."

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't use those terms in describing yourself. But you should be able to describe, in detail, previous situations in which you **demonstrated** those qualities.

KEEP THE INTERVIEWERS ATTENTION

You can apply the same principles that work in public speaking - vary the tone and tempo of your voice; take your nervous energy and translate that into enthusiasm; maintain eye contact with the interviewer. Where appropriate, ask questions that will provide information about the job and the interviewer.

Try to match the interviewer's energy level. People like to hire others like themselves.

DON'T PLACE BLAME ON PAST EMPLOYERS OR NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Badmouthing a previous employer or supervisor is the quickest way to lose a job offer. If you have experienced a bad employer or an inept manager, find the positives in your relationship and focus on those. If there were no positives, and you must talk about the job, focus as much as possible on your successes in that job and not on the conflicts.

GENERAL

Bring a pen and notebook with you. If you wish to take a few notes during your interview (to jot down your interviewer's responses to your questions, for example), ask the interviewer if that's okay.

Do not smoke or chew gum.

Sit comfortably, maintain good body posture.

Maintain good eye contact.

Listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying. Take a few seconds to think about a difficult question before responding. Responding quickly may convey that you're impulsive and don't take time to think about your decisions.

Close the interview on a positive note: indicate that the job looks like a good fit and you feel you can make a contribution to the organization; ask about any needed follow-up and when you can expect to next hear from the company and thank the interviewer for his or her time.

