

The Interview That Gets You The Job

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Job interviews can be stressful, but you can take that stress and turn it into confidence and motivation. First of all, landing an interview should be a motivator for you, not a stressor. Allow your confidence to show.

Remember, you don't want to march in with too much confidence, but you should appear steady, honest (Admit if you do not have an answer to a certain question.), and pleasant. Just because it's an interview doesn't mean you have to be stiff and formal. Most interviewers like to see that they have used their skills to place candidates at ease.

Before the interview, study the job description and note questions, as well as clarifications you need.

If a skill is listed as a "Nice to Have" on the job description, research the topic beforehand if it's something with which you have no experience. If the skill is software, download a free trial if available. This way, if asked, you can answer honestly that you have awareness of the "Nice to Have" item, and are anxious to learn more about it. This demonstrates initiative and motivation to learn new things.

When the interviewer asks (and they will) if you have any questions, you can draw upon the job description itself from your prior research. This demonstrates you want to achieve the job's requirements.

Here are some more valuable tips to help you land the job:

- * Research the company. Interviewers are always impressed if a candidate comes in the door with some knowledge of the organization and in what areas they may add value. Read reviews on the company written by employees or former employees.
- * Research the interviewer. Most executives have a profile on LinkedIn. Learn about their specialties and passions. If you notice a commonality, mention it if the opportunity presents itself.
- * Shake the interviewer's hand. It's the sign of pro. Two quick shakes are all you need. Let go of the hand afterwards!
- * Don't talk too much. Just because it's an interview doesn't mean you have to offer a lot of information during those uncomfortable silent moments. Interviewers will pause on purpose to see how you handle silence. The best thing to do is maintain eye contact and smile. Talking excessively is a sign of nervousness. A trick to conquering this is to envision yourself already in the position and simply having a conversation with your manager. It's mind over matter.
- * Don't talk too little! Just because it's a job interview doesn't mean you have to sit in the hot seat and speak only when spoken to. When the opportunities arise, speak about the items you already have stored in memory regarding the job description or the company.
- * Inquire about the company's culture. You will always get a lengthy answer to this question, giving you a chance to "rest" and let the interviewer "sell" you the position.
- * Don't chew gum! Nothing is more distracting than a big neon pink ball bouncing around in a candidate's mouth, nonetheless blowing bubbles or popping the gum. If you do this, you can kiss this job opportunity goodbye.
- * Speak clearly. While you should be yourself, never respond with utterances like "Huh?" or "Word!"

Now for the tough questions:

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* "When did you last get angry at work?"

Anger shows a lack of control. I don't lose control.

* "What is your biggest weakness?"

I tend to triple-check my work and have to draw the line when the deadline arrives."

* "How do you handle stress?"

Stress comes with the territory. I try to set the pace by remaining calm and usually it helps calm the rest of the team. If the stress is unmanageable, I take a walk or a short break and don't join the fray.

* "Tell me about your most successful project."

You will have anticipated this before your interview and will be ready to keep your answer short, honest and factual. Mention any cost savings resulting from your efforts.

Leave a business card. It's another sign of a pro.

Always send a thank you-email. It's your final opportunity to make a good impression.