



Interview Tips

NORTHWEST
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

Career Services

130 Administration Building

562-1250

- Firm Handshake
- Rule of Twelve's

First Impressions

First 12 Words:

"Thank you for scheduling this meeting"

"It is a pleasure meeting you"

First 12 Steps:

Show confidence, Walk with vigor

First 12 Inches:

From head to shoulders should be impeccably groomed.

Last 12 Inches:

Mid-calf to floor should be impeccable as well. It has been said that if you want to know if a person is well-dress you should look down

Professional Image Tips

Males

- Conservative, wrinkle-resistant quality suit
- Long-sleeved, light-colored shirt
- Coordinate tie - should barely touch top of belt
- Socks - matching, mid-calf (not white)
- Belt - should match shined shoes
- Clean, trimmed hair and nails, empty pockets and minimal or no cologne
- No food, gum or jewelry with the exception of a watch or wedding ring
- Turn your cell phone OFF

Females

- Conservative, wrinkle-free suit or dress
- Skin-toned hose with polished, moderate heel pumps (closed heel and toe)
- Make-up and perfume should be minimal
- Hair should be well groomed, nails clean with no chipped nail polish
- Rule of no more than 13 accessories
- No food or gum
- Turn your cell phone OFF
- Your purse is part of your outfit and should be small/conservative or leave it at home

10 WAYS TO STAND OUT

HANDSHAKE

- ◆ Firm
- ◆ Smile
- ◆ Eye contact
- ◆ Introduce self
- ◆ Remember names

1. Be early.
2. Carry only what is essential for the interview (portfolio, pen, extra resume).
3. Be as pleasant and professional to the receptionist, and everyone else you encounter, as you are to the interviewer.
4. Initiate the handshake.
5. Wait to be offered a seat.
6. Be prepared. Take extra resumes.
7. Let the interviewer set the tone by talking first.
8. An interview is a two-way form of communication. Ask questions when appropriate. Display a sincere interest in the position.
9. Be aware of when the interviewer is wrapping up the meeting.
10. A strong end is as important as a strong beginning. Exit on a positive note. Thank them for the interview.

QUESTIONS AN EMPLOYER MAY ASK

Questions About Yourself

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your major strengths?
3. What is a weakness that you have, and what are you doing to correct it?
4. What can you do that someone else can't?
5. What were the three most important events (decisions) in your life?
6. Are you a leader? Give examples.
7. What do you do in or with your leisure time?
8. Tell me about an accomplishment in which you take pride.

Questions About Career Goals or Plans

1. Where do you hope to be in five (ten) years?
2. How much money do you hope to earn at age 30? 35?
3. What does success mean to you?
4. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your chosen field?
5. What are your career goals?

Questions About School/Education

1. How does your education relate to our needs?
2. What were your favorite and least favorite subjects in school? Why?
3. What kinds of professors did you like? Why?
4. Why did you major in _____? Did you always plan to major in _____?
5. What is your GPA?
6. Why did you go to _____ (school)?
7. If you were starting all over, what courses would you take?
8. Are your grades an indication of your academic achievements?

Questions Specific to the Organization/Company/Job Applying For

1. What position in our company/organization interests you the most?
2. Why do you want to work for us? Why are you interviewing with us?
3. Why should I hire you?
4. In addition to the information we've given you, what other resources did you look at to find out about our organization?
5. How long have you been interested in this field?
6. What would be your greatest contribution to our operation?
7. Can you handle the responsibilities of this position?
8. What qualifications do you have that would make you successful with us?
9. What are the disadvantages of this field?

Previous Work Experience Questions

1. What have you learned from your past jobs?
2. Do you work well under pressure? Give an example.
3. Do you prefer a large or small company/organization? Why?
4. What jobs have you enjoyed the most? The least? Why?
5. How often, and in what way, did you communicate with your subordinates and supervisors?
6. What skills acquired or used in previous jobs relate to this position?
7. How do you handle criticism?
8. Do you like to travel?
9. What kinds of jobs have you held? How were they obtained, and why did you leave?

Behavioral/Situational Questions

1. Tell me about a time when you had to meet deadlines, and your work was constantly being disrupted. How did you handle the situation? What caused you the most difficulty, and why? What did you do to address these disruptions? What ultimately happened?
2. Tell me about a time you worked with a team member who was not actively participating or living up to the rest of the team's expectations. How did you personally deal with this team member in this situation, and what ultimately happened within this group?
3. We all have bad days, including our customers. Tell me about a difficult customer you have encountered. What was the situation? What did you do to empathize with the customer? What was the customer's reaction to your approach?
4. Tell me about a time you went above and beyond the call of duty for a customer.
5. Describe the duties and/or responsibilities from your work and/or academic experience that demonstrate your ability to do the job for which you are applying.
6. Tell me about a situation where you felt you needed to do something without being told. What did you do? Why did you decide to do this without being told? What was the outcome?
7. Describe a situation where you needed to get an understanding of another's viewpoint before you could get your job done. What problems did you encounter, and how did you handle them?
8. Learning a new skill can sometimes be challenging, even difficult. Tell me about a challenging learning experience you have faced. What was the situation? What learning demands were placed on you? What did you do? What was the outcome of the situation?
9. Describe a time when you felt motivated to pursue a goal. What was the situation? What did you do to get yourself motivated? What did you do to keep yourself motivated? What was the outcome?
10. Give me an example of a time you found an error on a bank statement, a bill (credit card, phone, etc.), or grade (test, grade card, etc.). How did you find the error, and what did you do to have it corrected?



QUESTIONS THAT YOU MAY ASK AN EMPLOYER

Caution: When an employer has supplied you with information about the company/organization before the interview, they expect you to read it, study it, and formulate questions from it. Asking questions that could have been answered by reading the brochures or job descriptions wastes the interviewer's time and does not speak well of you. If the information does not give answers, the following questions are fair game:

1. Can you tell me about your own experience with the company/organization?
2. What have you liked most and least about working for this company?
3. What happens during the training program?
4. What does it take to advance in your field?
5. Can you please tell me a little bit about the people with whom I will be working most closely?
6. What aspects of your job provide you with the most satisfaction? The least?
7. What do you consider to be your organization's three most important assets?
8. What do you see ahead for your company/organization in the next ten years?
9. Is there a formal plan for measuring and rewarding performance over time?
10. Is it possible to transfer between different departments or different geographical regions?
11. How will I be evaluated?
12. How would I spend a typical day?

Interview "DO'S and DON'TS"

DON'TS

1. DON'T wear jeans, leisure clothes, loud jewelry, loud ties, faddish styles, outlandish hair styles or over-powering cologne.
2. DON'T have your cell phone on or text during an interview.
3. DON'T slouch in your chair.
4. DON'T mumble or exaggerate.
5. DON'T smoke because many employers have implemented no-smoking policies.
6. DON'T sound confused or contradictory.
7. DON'T dominate the conversation.
8. DON'T argue with the employer.
9. DON'T criticize past employer/fellow employees.
10. DON'T discuss your personal problems or financial troubles.
11. DON'T boast or talk about unrelated subjects.
12. DON'T initiate the matter of salary, fringe benefits or vacations - discuss it only if the employer brings it up first.

DO'S

1. DO write down the time of the interview and the name and address of the company.
2. DO get a good night's sleep the night before an interview so you are fresh and alert.
3. DO go to the interview alone.
4. DO arrive fifteen (15) minutes before the interview.
5. DO look neat, clean and well-groomed.
6. DO wear clean, pressed, conservative clothing.
7. DO greet the employer by name in a poised and friendly manner.
8. DO shake hands like you mean it.
9. DO relax and smile.
10. DO speak clearly and distinctly.
11. DO maintain a comfortable level of eye contact with the employer.
12. DO answer questions promptly, accurately and honestly.
13. DO be prepared to discuss the information on your application.
14. DO be specific about the kind of work you are interested in doing.
15. DO express your willingness to learn.
16. DO thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.
17. DO ask the employer when you should contact him/her for the final decision.
18. DO send a thank you note right away after the interview.
20. DO be persistent (but not obnoxious) to find out whether or not you got the job.