

INTERVIEWING FOR SUCCESS



Clearwater Bar Association Young Lawyers Division

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BY: CLEARWATER BAR ASSOCIATION, YOUNG LAWYERS DIVISION

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Our goal is to provide you with the tools to help guide you during the resume drafting, interviewing and post-interviewing process for you to obtain employment. We want to assist you in the job search process and through the Interviewing for Success Program, we will provide you with information to: prepare a well drafted resume; confidently and professionally interview with a potential employer; and have the resources to professionally dress for your interview.

At the beginning of your job search, you should create a list of all of your targeted employers. Knowing the industries your targeted employers fall into will help you narrow your focus on the types of information the employers will be looking for on your resume and during your interview.

By reading and using the materials provided to you in the Interview for Success Program you will gain valuable information to assist you in the job acquisition process!

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COVER LETTERS

Cover letters are important because they get the employer to notice you, Use them to highlight and make points from your resume and show why you should be interviewed. It is very important that your cover letter is brief, concise, well written, grammatically correct, and error free.

Cover Letter Format Guidelines:

The cover letter must appear professional. If the letter does not look professional, then the employer may not read its contents. To make the cover letter appear professional:

- Limit the cover letter to 1 page.
- Limit the number of paragraphs to 3 or 4.
- Keep paragraphs to 9 sentences or less.
- Use a decent font and font size. Times New Roman and Courier are common fonts. The size should be no smaller than 10 and no bigger than 12.
- Do not bold, underline, or use all CAPS to emphasize a point. This often reads like shouting. Err on the side of understated and subtle.
- Follow a business letter format. A common business letter format is block style. When writing a letter in block style:
 - The letter should be single spaced. Place a space between each section or paragraph.
 - All portions of the letter should be left justified. Do not indent.
 - The order of sections is 1) date; 2) address block (the person to whom the letter is being sent, the organization, and the address); 3) the salutation (“Dear Mr. Smith:”); 4) the body of the letter; and 5) your signature block.
- Print your letter on high quality paper and with a laser printer, if possible. The paper should be white or cream. Do not use a paper that is a bright or dark color.
- Always sign your name with dark blue or black ink.

Cover letters give an employer the opportunity to see how well you write and what makes you stand out. Take the time to tailor your cover letter to the employer and job position for which you are applying. It takes time to think through what you want to say and to figure out how to say it well, but it is worth the effort. Writing about yourself can be awkward, but the best cover letters reveal something about you that makes you a better fit for the job than all the other applicants.

Cover Letter Content Guidelines:

Take the time to review the following guidelines. Then use the samples for ideas. Notice that the samples offer specifics and give examples. The authors show why they want the job. They do not just tell the recipient why they would be good for the job.

- Always find a contact. Sending you letter “To whom it may concern:” is a good way for it to end up in the trash. It may take research or phone calls to find the contact. When you do send the letter, make sure all names are spelled correctly.
- Always use Mr. or Ms. in the salutation line. Do not use the first name of the person unless you personally know them. For females, use Ms. instead of Mrs. unless you have been specifically told to use Mrs. If the name is gender neutral, like “Leslie” or “Kelly” call to find out if the person is male or female.
- Introduce the most important information in your first paragraph. This is information such as your year in school and names of anyone who referred you or how you came across the employer. The purpose of this paragraph is to hook the reader and make them want to read more.
- Use the next two paragraphs to supplement, not repeat your resume.
 - In the second paragraph, tell the employer why you are interested in working specifically for them. In other words, explain how the position or organization makes you want to work for them.
 - In the third paragraph, focus on the skills and experiences you bring that are relevant to the position you are applying for. This might include direct skills such as specific class or work study, indirect skills such as skills you learned elsewhere but are transferrable to this job, or soft skills such as people skills.
- In the last paragraph include information about follow up and enclosures. Thank them for their time and consideration. This paragraph should also include a statement of what your next step is going to be. Unless you have been told “no phone calls, please,” you should take the initiative to follow up.
- Show, do not tell, the employer why you are a good match. Do not say “I believe I will be an asset” or “I am confident that I will contribute.” These statements often come off as arrogant and offensive. You can show your confidence, enthusiasm, energy, and initiative by writing along the lines of, “I am eager to build on my retail experience while working for your company.”
- Use plain writing and perfect grammar. Eliminate unnecessary words and passive verbs. Your sentences should be short and you should use active verbs.
- Always have someone proofread for typos and errors.
- Review and revise cover letters according to the employer.

It is becoming more common that you will need to submit a cover letter and resume via the Internet or email. When you are sending an email cover letter, it is important to follow the employer's instructions on how to submit your cover letter and resume, and to make sure that your email cover letters are written as well as any other cover letter you would send.

General Cover Letter Format

Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number
Email Address
Date

Employer Contact Information

Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Salutation

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

Body of Cover Letter

The body of your cover letter lets the employer know what position you are applying for, why the employer should select you for an interview, and how you will follow-up.

First Paragraph

The first paragraph of your letter should include information on why you are writing. Mention the position you are applying for and where you found the job listing. Include the name of a mutual contact, if you have one.

Middle Paragraph(s)

The next section of your cover letter should describe what you have to offer the employer. Mention specifically how your qualifications match the job you are applying for. Remember, you are interpreting your resume, not repeating it.

Final Paragraph

Conclude your cover letter by thanking the employer for considering you for the position. Include information on how you will follow-up.

Complimentary Close

Respectfully yours,

Signature

Handwritten Signature (for a mailed letter)
Typed Signature

Sample Cover Letter - Entry Level Job Openings at a Company

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, State, Zip Code
Your Phone Number
Your Email Address

Date

Contact Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. /Ms. Contact,

Thank you for taking the time to review my resume. I have recently graduated from University High School and I am currently looking for a job in the Clearwater area.

I am interested in an entry level position with ABCD Company. I have heard that ABCD is a wonderful company to work for and I hope that I can join the team.

If you have questions regarding my resume or anything else about myself please feel free to call me or email me at namelastname@gmail.com.

Again, thank you for reviewing my resume. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

Sample Cover Letter - Summer Job

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, State, Zip Code
Your Phone Number
Your Email Address

Date

Contact Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr. /Ms. Contact,

I am interested in the summer position at Clearwater Store advertised in The St. Petersburg Times.

I have excellent communication skills and an aptitude for customer service. My past experience as a volunteer at Clearwater Hospital made it necessary for me to focus on providing quality customer service, and also enabled me to work with all types of people.

I am excited about the opportunity to continue to expand my communication skills while working for your company.

Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at [firstlastname@gmail.com](mailto:firstname.lastname@gmail.com) or 222-222-2222. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

Sample Cover Letter - Email Cover Letter

Subject Line of Email Message: Editorial Assistant Position - Jane Jobs

Email Message:

Dear Hiring Manager,

Thank you for taking the time to review my resume. I have recently graduated from University High School and I am currently looking for a job in the Clearwater area.

I am interested in an entry level position with ABCD Company. I have heard that ABCD is a wonderful company to work for and I hope that I can join the team.

If you have questions regarding my resume or anything else about myself please feel free to contact me.

Again, thank you for reviewing my resume. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Sincerely,
Jane Jones

Jane Jones
111 Main Street
Town, NY 11111
Email: janejones@gmail.com
Cell: (555) 555-5555
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/janejones

Sample Cover Letter - Internship

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, State, Zip Code
Your Phone Number
Your Email Address

Date

Contact Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Contact,

I am interested in applying for the summer internship position that was listed on your website. I have heard that your company has a very good computer internship program.

I am very interested in the computer field and have taken several computer classes that are offered at my high school.

This internship would provide me with the ideal opportunity to expand my computer skills while working for a well known company.

I will call next week to make sure that you have received my cover letter and resume. I look forward to speaking with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

DRAFTING RESUMES

A resume is a brief summary of your educational and professional experience; it should reflect you as an individual, serve as a tool to attract favorable attention, stimulate interest and generate positive action by employers. It is not intended to be a comprehensive description of you. Resumes are designed to lead you further in the job process. They generally do not get you a job; but they can get you an interview which may lead to you landing the position. The best resumes are ones that are tailored for a particular job or type of job. Tailored resumes are more likely to get you an interview than generic ones because you are focusing on the accomplishments, skills and other characteristics that will interest an employer. The best way to start is to look over the guidelines and samples provided here, and then create a comprehensive resume. This is the resume that can be many pages long and which lists everything you have ever done in your life. In putting together the comprehensive resume, be sure to include educational information, extracurricular activities, skills and specialized knowledge, community activities, interests and hobbies, and in-depth descriptions of any positions, internships, volunteer positions, clinical courses or paying jobs.

Once you have created a comprehensive resume, edit it into a resume of pertinent information for employers. These are general guidelines for writing resumes. Be aware that there are always exceptions. These are here to be used as samples, but not blueprints. Different people will have a different set of skills and experiences that will make their resume unique.

Resume Format Guidelines.

Format is important. **The average employer takes less than 30 seconds to screen a resume.** If the resume looks hard to read, is too long or does not have enough white space, it may not be read.

- *Whenever possible, keep it to one page.* Remember, this is a summary of relevant educational and employment history, not your autobiography or True Confessions. It is acceptable to go to more than one page if everything on the resume is clearly relevant and important to the potential employer.
- *Make it inviting to read.* You want a layout that is user-friendly, not cluttered or disorganized. Use boldface and indentations to separate sections and guide the employer. This is your marketing piece, and you have one chance to make a good impression with your credentials on paper, so make it look good. If in doubt, try a number of different layouts and try them out on your friends. See which one they want to look at the longest.
- *Use reverse chronological order.* That is what employers are used to seeing. If you are in school, the “Education” category goes first, with your current school listed first within that category.

- *Type size.* Keep it easily readable. For most fonts, somewhere between 10 and 12 font size is good. If you go too small it gets hard to look at and loses the reader's attention. Try an in-between size like 11 if you're pushing over one page by just a bit.
- *Margins.* There are no set rules for your resume margins. In general, you may list your section headers at less than 1" from the left side but solid block descriptions within sections should be at least 1" from the left side of the page. Your top and bottom margins should be no less than .5". Remember, the benefits of having ample white space are that employers like to have room to write notes and having plenty of white space invites the employer to actually read the content. Increase line spacing to increase "white space".
- *Type styles.* Keep them simple. You want your credentials to stand out, not your word processing skills. As a general rule, only have two or three different things going on, such as **bold**, *italics* and plain. Adding UNDERLINE and ALL CAPITALS can sometimes make it too hard to read, (Surveys show that all readers are psychologically predisposed to *not* reading material in all CAPITALS. Avoid them). Do use *italics* for Dates of Employment.
- *Use a professional-looking font.* Fonts such as Times New Roman, Century Schoolbook, Courier and similar types work well. The less conventional and more daring fonts make a poor impression and can be difficult to read. If in doubt, read the employer material and adopt a similar font.
- *Have someone else proofread your resume for typos, spelling mistakes or omissions.* This is in addition to running spell check. It is nearly impossible to read your own work with the same eye as someone who isn't familiar with it. If you can't find someone to proofread, do the next best thing and read it out loud, every word and number. Another proofreading trick is to read the material backwards because it causes you to focus on each and every word.
- *Use a laser printer to make resumes, if available.*
- *Use light/neutral bond paper.* White, ivory, beige, and light gray bond paper are all acceptable. Remember, you don't want to give the employer a reason to toss your resume. Play it safe and use conservative colors. Use the same paper and matching envelopes for cover letters and lists of references.

Resume Content Guidelines.

Now that the format is elegant, clear and concise, you need to address content. The key is tailoring your resume for specific employers. Do not overstate or understate your qualifications. Make the reader interested in learning more about you.

- *Make several versions of your resume.* You need to tailor your resume for specific employers. As you do that, you will realize that no resume is ever in final form, and you will need to keep making new versions of your resume as you continue your education and employment/career.
- *Your name.* Center and use a slightly larger or bold-faced font.
- *Your address, phone number(s) and email.* Center your address under your name, along with your phone number. If you plan to relocate to another area where family members live, list both your school and your family address. Label one “school” and one “permanent”. This shows the employer that you consider New Jersey, California, or Minnesota your “permanent address” and indicates ties to those areas. Your email should be professional in nature, ex. `firstname_lastname@msn.com`.
- *“Career Objective” or “Professional Goal”.* Oftentimes, your Career Objective or Goal is stated in your cover letter. If you don’t want to state an objective in your resume, at least clarify a job industry or job title somewhere up front, i.e.: immediately following your Name and Contact info, indicate “home health professional” or “data entry specialist” and center it on a line by itself.
- *Your education.* Using reverse chronological order, list the names of the schools you have attended, as well as their locations by city and state. If you are in high school, don’t go back prior to High School; instead, include your expected graduation date. If you are in college, do the same with your expected graduation date.
 - For each school, list the degrees sought or obtained and date of graduation. If you obtained a degree, there is no need to include the dates of attendance, simply the date of graduation. If you are pursuing a particular degree you may want to list it, especially if you are seeking employment in that area.
 - You may want to list honors, student activities, special skills and specialized concentrations under schools. Play around with this. Sometimes these work well in separate categories. If you graduated *magna cum laude* the proper format is, for example: Bachelor of Arts, Chemistry, *magna cum laude*, May 2003. Depending on the employers you are sending versions of your resume to, you may want to emphasize certain honors and awards and eliminate others.

- ***Experience.*** Use this as a category instead of “Employment”. Experience allows you to include clinics, internships, volunteer positions, without having to delineate paid or unpaid. In describing your positions in reverse chronological order, use active, power verbs.
 - Try to start each sentence with a powerful word, such as: accomplished, launched, managed, coordinated, researched, wrote letters and reports, assisted with preparation of mass billing. Try to avoid such language as: “Duties included”... followed by a laundry list of activities. Take advantage of this opportunity to show a prospective employer how forcefully you can write. Similarly, “responsible for the preparation of” is not as strong or clean as “Prepared the _____ of.” Also, use key words from the job description.
 - Eliminate all unnecessary words. In general you can take out adverbs and adjectives, articles. “drafted pleadings on a variety of matters” becomes “drafted pleadings” because “on a variety of matters” adds nothing of interest and simply clutters the page.
 - Use numbers if you need to quantify prior accomplishments or responsibilities, ex: %’s, \$, #.
 - Use bullet points
 - When listing the place where you got your experience, list name, location (city and state) and dates you worked, Use dates effectively by sticking to months or seasons, e.g. “August 2001 — Present”, “Fall 2006”, “Summers 2000-2003”.

- ***Be selective in the positions you list.*** After a while, it becomes impossible to list every position you have held. Concentrate on showing the ones that will interest and be of value to the reader. Doing lawn maintenance over the summers during college may not be that significant, but establishing, running and managing your own lawn care business shows initiative, entrepreneurial skill and hard work.

- ***Include military experience.*** List branch, dates of service, and rank attained, include citations or commendations. If you are in an active reserve unit, say so.

- ***List special qualifications, interests and skills.*** Foreign languages, memberships, public speaking, special training, licenses and certifications should almost always be included. Depending on what they are and how much space you have, you may want to highlight them under education, experience or their own category.

- ***Include “interests” if you do not have other examples of significant unrelated activities already in your resume.*** Including hobbies in an “Interests” or “Activities” section at the bottom of your resume can show the employer your range of talents. Employers are drawn to resumes that reflect something different about the applicant. Students have gotten favorable responses to extensive traveling, athletics and interesting hobbies.

- ***Omit any personal information such as marital status or health.*** Employers are not supposed to ask you about this, so leave it off. It is generally considered unprofessional and may indicate that you are unaware that this is inappropriate material to include.
- ***Omit the phrase “References available upon request”*** It is expected that you will furnish references upon request. Prepare a sheet with your name and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of at least three references. You will not ordinarily include this when sending a resume and cover letter to an employer but will bring it with you when you are granted an interview.
- ***Review your resume for relevance to a particular employer.*** Scrutinize every item on your resume for relevance, How is a particular employer going to view each entry? How you tailor your resume may make the difference between an interview and a rejection, so spend some time working on this. You may want to tailor a resume particularly for one job, adding in old information that is more relevant and omitting more recent jobs that are less relevant. Prior to each interview, make sure you are thoroughly familiar with the version of your resume that you supplied to the particular employer. You may have chosen to highlight a particular experience or relevant coursework so make sure you have taken the time to reflect upon these so that you will be at ease speaking about them.

SALLY STUDENT
2010 Wisteria Lane
Dunedin, FL 22654

Phone *(Landline or Cell)* [Make certain that you have an appropriate answer message]
Email Address [Grown-up sounding-No HelloKitty23@yahoo.com]

Education

In the education section of your resume, list the school you attend and any awards or honors (like the National Honor Society) you have earned.

Dunedin High School

2009-present

Anticipated graduation date May 2011

Dean's List every semester

National Honor Society, initiated in sophomore year

National Thespian Society, Currently serving as president

Experience

This section of your resume includes your work history. If you have had a job before, list the company you worked for, dates of employment, the positions you held and a bulleted list of responsibilities. If you haven't had a regular job before, it's fine to include positions like baby sitting or pet sitting and any volunteer experiences you might have. You might include special projects like organizing a banquet for your scout troop or being responsible for operating the sound at church. These are the kinds of things that show both your skills and your reliability.

Company #1
City, State

Dates Worked

Job Title
Responsibilities / Achievements

Company #2
City, State

Dates Worked

Job Title
Responsibilities / Achievements

Skills

Include skills related to the position / career field that you are applying for i.e. computer skills, language skills.

Make certain that this resume reflects the skills, attitude, and experience you bring to this job even though it may be your first compensated employment.

Remember that the two most powerful positions on your resume are the first and last things you say. Do not waste this valuable real estate.

JAMES WILLARD
3360 Rogan Drive Apt. 110
Tampa, FL 33602
(813) 555-7710
jwillard@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Chamberlain High School **2008 – present**
Tampa, FL

- Anticipated graduation date is May 2012
- Honor roll, freshman year
- Member of track and field team, freshman year through present date
- Librarian's assistant, 2009 through present

WORK EXPERIENCE

Quizno's Restaurant **May 2010 - present**
Tampa, FL
Cashier

- Duties include accepting payment, making change, preparing food, working as part of 10-member team, and accommodating customer requests in position with high customer contact

Garrett's Lawn Maintenance **May 2008 – May 2010**
Tampa, FL
Lawn Service Technician

- Duties include all aspects of lawn care and yard work in accordance with customer requests

SKILLS

- Able to work as team member
- Able to multi-task
- Detail oriented
- Prompt

JESSICA RIVERA
2213 66th Avenue North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701
home: 727.644.5555
cell: 727.722.1110
email: jrivera88@tampabay.rr.com

Education

St. Petersburg High School, St. Petersburg, FL
2009 - present

Experience

Baby Sitter
2008 – present

- Provide supervision and entertainment to children ranging from 2 years old to 12 years old

Achievements

- Academic Honor Roll: 2009, 2010

Interests/Activities

- Conversational Spanish language skills
- Reading
- Acting

Computer Skills

- Proficient with Microsoft Word
- Proficient with Internet

Personal References

- Ms. Jamilla Jacobsen
(727) 555 – 8898
- Mr. Eric Oberwise
(727) 555- 2311

INTERVIEWING SKILLS: PUTTING YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

All your hard work has paid off and you have gotten to the next step: the job interview. In most cases, this means that you have made a tough first cut and that the way you look on paper inspires these employers to learn more. This is your chance to sell yourself and convince the employer that you are the special person they have been looking for. Do not rely on your paper application, because what happens in the interview is crucial to what happens in your future.

During the interview, the employer is looking for a number of different qualities, the most important of which is “fit”. The question is, “Is this applicant the kind of person that I want to work with?” This is key to almost all employers. If they do not feel comfortable with you and vice versa, no one is going to benefit. Even though it seems quick, interviews allow an employer to assess your:

- oral presentation skills;
- interpersonal skills;
- judgment;
- commitment to the job;
- attitude, energy and enthusiasm for the work;
- level of knowledge and maturity;
- professional demeanor; and
- ability to work well with this employer.

With all this going on in a meeting of probably less than an hour, you can see how getting it right the first time helps. As with resumes and cover letters, employers are looking for reasons to narrow choices for further selection. Be as professional and prepared as possible, and make yourself the one they want to talk to further.

It is important to note that many employers dislike conducting interviews. If you feel that you are not getting a positive response during the interview, do not let this stop you from being positive and upbeat.

Interview skills can be learned.

There probably are a few people who have always interviewed well, but for most of us interviewing is a learned skill. There are some basic features of interviewing you need to be aware of and some specific questions and ways of addressing certain issues that are helpful to practice.

Before the interview.

Learning about the employer

Learn as much as you can about the employer. Use on-line research, traditional research and networking to uncover more information about employers. Do not wait until the last minute to do this. It is better to read through material and take some notes at least a day or two before hand.

Being prepared helps in several ways:

- You show initiative and commitment in doing extra research.
- You have greater self-confidence because you know about the employer.
- You can ask more intelligent questions of the interviewer.
- You are more likely to have a sophisticated and interesting discussion with the employer.
- You will be more relaxed and focused on the interviewer rather than your performance.
- You will have the perspective to evaluate the interviewer's concerns and how you can address them.
- You will be more likely to assess whether this employer is a good match for you.

Be sure that you confirm the interviewer's name, the time of your appointment and where the interview will be held before the interview.

Materials to bring to the interview

Gather your information in advance. You should bring with you a number of documents so that you can impress the employer with how well prepared and organized you are.

You should plan to bring a duplicate set of everything you sent the employer, including at the least, a copy of the application that you submitted and your resume. Also bring a copy of your high school transcript if you have one.

This may feel like overdoing it, but employers sometimes forget or misplace parts of your application.

Practice and Prepare

Because "you only have one chance to make a first impression," be sure that you have practiced and prepared for your interview.

- Go through the sample questions for interviewers and interviewees provided in this packet. Have an answer for each one of them. Practice your answers.

- Review your application materials that you provided to the prospective employer.
- Why did you want to work for this employer?
- Be prepared to discuss everything on your resume positively. If you can't talk about an entry in a positive way it doesn't belong on the resume.
- Plan what you want to get across to the employer. It is a good idea to have six or seven points about yourself (with examples) that you will try to weave into the interview. Have two or three points that you want to learn from them as well.
- Visualize yourself being confident, relaxed, personable and comfortable before you go into the interview.
- Give yourself a dress rehearsal and practice the interview the day(s) before.
- Role-play interviews with your friends can also be helpful.

What to Wear

Dress for interviewing is different from dress for work. Even a laid-back employer who allows everyone to dress casually for work expects that when you are being interviewed you will dress up. You need to show respect for the person you are meeting by dressing appropriately. Dressing inappropriately may also convey the impression that you don't have good judgment, because you have chosen not to dress professional.

It is important that you feel comfortable in what you are wearing. Don't let the interview be the first time you've worn these clothes. Practice walking, sitting and standing in them. Check yourself out thoroughly in the mirror or have a friend give you feedback.

Jewelry should be kept to a minimum. When in doubt, leave it off. You don't want your accessories to distract the interviewer from your credentials and skills.

Your interviewer may have allergies or simply be offended by strong fragrances so keep perfume or cologne to a minimum or don't use it at all.

Suggested Interview Attire

Men: Neutral pants (black, brown, navy or khaki are always appropriate). Polo shirt or button up shirt. If you wear a tie with the button up shirt, go for smaller prints and patterns and avoid anything too wild. Wear dress shoes and dark socks. No flip flops.

Women: Neutral professional dress, skirt or pants. If you wear a dress or skirt, make sure it is at least knee length. No mini-skirts. Blouse or dress shirt should not be provocative. Closed toe dress shoes with a medium heel. Keep hair in a professional style—pulling it back is always acceptable. Stick to subtle, simple make up and pale or neutral nail polish, if any.

At the interview.

Arrive ten minutes early, and take the time to review the employer's materials as well as your own.

The Opening

While maintaining eye contact, greet the interviewer cordially with a firm handshake. Smiling is nice. Sit down where indicated. Be professional but relaxed. An interviewer will be forming an initial opinion about you within seconds. After the opening, determine the interviewer's attitude as early in the interview as possible. Try to adapt to the interviewer's style. This is easier to do when you are feeling comfortable, so practice interviewing.

The Main Event

Follow the interviewer's lead in the conversation. Answer questions in a concise, well thought-out manner. If you suddenly find that you have become long-winded, direct the initiative back to the interviewer by saying: "Perhaps you have some other questions to ask me." Remember that your oral communication skills are being evaluated. You need to know what you are going to say and how you are going to say it.

- Don't ramble.
- If you need more time, you can repeat the question, ask another question, or pause for a minute to gather your thoughts.
- Be specific in what you say.
- Avoid conclusory or subjective language.
- Do not use profanity.
- Express ideas in concrete terms. Saying "I've made the honor roll three times" is better than saying "I am a good student." As with cover letters, you want to show, not tell, the employer why you are a good match.
- Avoid giving the impression you are less than sincere about your interest in this job. You are going to need to sound positive, excited and enthusiastic about this job and your opportunity to interview for the job.
- Make sure you are ready with a variety of questions to ask the interviewer. Failing to ask questions shows you are not prepared, lack curiosity, or simply don't care about this interview or this employer.

Body Language

Convey enthusiasm, interest and attentiveness by sitting slightly on the edge of your chair and leaning slightly toward the interviewer. According to those who study

human behavior, this is the optimum "attentive listening" position, and the one you want to adopt.

Also according to these experts, most people respond to nonverbal messages as much or more than they do to verbal ones. This means that how you talk about something is at least as important as what you say.

Avoid:

- Crossing your arms — if you're feeling nervous, squeeze your fingers together under the table, where they are not visible to the employer.
- Excessive hand movements — occasional movements for emphasis are fine, but if your hands move all over the place, consider placing them on the table in front of you or holding them in your lap.
- Leaning back — tends to imply arrogance to the interviewer.
- Covering your mouth — suggests insecurity about what you're saying.

The Closing

Be alert to signs from the interviewer that the interview is about to conclude. Sum up your interest and enthusiasm for the job and thank the interviewer for his or her time and consideration. Don't be afraid to ask what the next step is or when the employer anticipates making a decision. Smile, shake hands and show as much confidence in leaving as you did in arriving.

Immediately after the interview:

- Record the names of all persons you met with.
- Record any information that may be important in the future, including impressions about personalities, type of practice, general attitude of office staff, subjects discussed during interview.
- Record any information about further deadlines or schedules, like when you should expect to hear back.

Things to avoid:

Avoid being defensive or negative—about yourself, your grades, your teachers, past employers or supervisors or anything else. Be positive about your strong points; try to turn something which may appear negative into something positive.

Don't ask personal questions or other questions that make interviewers feel put on the spot.

Don't get discouraged if it doesn't seem that the interview is going all that well. Sometimes an Interview can completely turn around, but this is not likely if you show your discouragement. Stay positive.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- Do you have any previous work experience?
 - If so, describe.
- Why did you leave your previous employer?
- How many hours are you looking to work per week?
- Why are you interested in this field?
- Why are you interested in working for ABC Company?
 - What do you know about ABC Company?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- What skills do you have that you think will help you in this position?
- Do you have a High School diploma?
 - What is/was your favorite class?
 - Why?
 - What is /was your GPA? (be prepared to explain if low)
 - Where you involved in any extracurricular activities?
- Are you currently in school?
 - What are you studying?
- What is your highest level of education achieved?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What are your three greatest strengths?
- What are your three greatest weaknesses?
- What is your most important accomplishment to date?
- Do you work well in a team setting?

- Do you work well on your own?
- What are your career goals for the next 3-5 years?
- How do you handle disputes with coworkers?
- Tell me about a time you had a problem and how you solved it.
- Why do you think you'd be a good fit for this position?
- What experience do you hope to gain from this position?
- Do you have your own transportation
- Have you ever been arrested?
 - If yes, Explain (be prepared to explain this as best you can)
- Do you have any questions for me?

After the Interview.

Always send a thank you letter to the person who conducted the interview. It gives you another opportunity to express your continued interest in the employer. The format of the letter should be short – only one or two paragraphs. If you have interviewed with more than one person, do not send a thank you letters to each of the interviewers. Select one person that you spent the most time with and send only to them, and mention that you also enjoyed meeting with the other interviewers. Include a sentence which will personalize each note. Emailing a thank you is acceptable in some cases. If you have already had email correspondence with the employer, an emailed thank you is fine. Remember to write a professional email and proof read it. Like your cover letter and resume, your thank you letter (or email) should be free of typos.

If you have not heard anything within the designated time frame, call or email to ask about the status of your application. Continue the follow-up until you have received some definite information about your future status with the employer.

General Thank You Letter Format

Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Phone Number
Email Address

Date

Employer Contact Information

Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Salutation

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name,

Body of Cover Letter

The body of your thank you letter expresses your appreciation of the employer's time for meeting with you and giving you the opportunity for an interview. You should select one topic the employer discussed during your interview and mention it again, which shows you were listening and engaged in the interview. Invite the employer to ask you further questions, for references and/or additional qualifications you may have. Thank the employer again for their time and state you look forward to hearing from them.

Complimentary Close

Respectfully yours,

Signature

Handwritten Signature (for a mailed letter)

Typed Signature

Sample Interview Thank You Letter # 1

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, State, Zip Code
Your Phone Number
Your Email Address

Date

Contact Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Contact,

Thank you for taking time to meet with me and _____. My interest in working for your company has only grown by hearing about your office's work in _____ (state area or type of work) and the available position. During the interview you stated _____ (ex. looking for a candidate that can handle stressful situations), though my personal experience with _____ (ex. name a stressful situation you have worked through and why this would help the potential employer) I work well under stressful situations. If you would like additional material to help you evaluate my application, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

Sample Interview Thank You Letter # 2

Your Name
Your Address
Your City, State, Zip Code
Your Phone Number
Your Email Address

Date

Contact Name
Title
Company
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Contact,

It was a pleasure meeting with you and learning about the opportunity your company has to offer. I appreciate you providing me with the time to interview for the _____ position. Since our meeting, my interest in and excitement about the position has only intensified. I believe I have a thorough understanding of the requirements and responsibilities, as well as a new appreciation for the challenges and opportunities that this position affords.

I hope I was able to provide you with sufficient information about my qualifications and experience to give you a clear picture of what I can offer your company. If you have any other questions, please feel free to call me. Thank you again for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your Name

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOU RECEIVE AN OFFER

Salary Negotiations:

Before you go into any interview, you need to know what salary range or hourly rate you want, what is reasonable for that particular job *and* your qualifications. Many times employers will ask during an interview “What salary/pay rate are you looking for?” Not having a quick and reasonable answer makes you look unprepared and helps you lose ground while negotiating a salary or hourly rate. Similarly, asking for a salary or hourly rate that is way beyond what an employer can realistically offer may cause you to lose out on the job offer.

Determining realistic salary or hourly rate figures involves many factors, such as your debt, living expenses, comparative salaries in the area and for that industry. Before you even begin to negotiate, you need to have done your homework and know what is appropriate for the job, based on your qualifications and comparable jobs in the area. Often people are told to start negotiations high, while you don’t want to name a figure too low which might reflect that you don’t think you’re worth much, you also don’t want to price yourself out of the job.

Recognize that it is in your interest to get the employer to name a salary first, and in the employer’s interest to have you name it first. In response to “What salary are you looking at” you can say “What do you think is appropriate?” or “What range is reasonable for your company to consider?” This may get a salary amount, or it may get you “Well, we haven’t yet decided. What do you think is fair?” While at this point you may just decide to state the range of salary you are seeking, or you can ask for more information like “What are the benefits package you are offering (the employer may provide benefits such as health insurance, dental insurance, vacation, sick leave, and retirement savings)? Could we discuss that first?” If the employer does not want to offer a salary first, give a loose range and show your concern for the cost to the company, for example “I am interested in a salary of low to upper twenties, but want to be compensated at a rate that is fair to the company” rather than “I’d like \$22,000 to \$28,000”.

Receiving an Offer:

You received an offer, now what?

Accepting an Offer. If you want the job, accept it immediately. If you are unsure or think you may receive other job offers, don’t accept the offer at the moment. You never want to accept a job then call back to decline an offer because it reflects poorly on you and makes the employer mad.

If you are unsure about the offer or think you may receive other job offers, then, when you receive an offer, you need to buy yourself some time. When you receive the offer, let the employer know you need some time to consider the offer and ask when they need a decision. “Thank you for your offer, could I have a few days to think it over?” or

“Thank you for your offer, I am interested but I need to discuss it with my family. When do you need my decision?” If you are asking for more time to provide your answer, make sure both you and the employer know the deadline for your answer.

If you accept an offer over the phone, ask that the employer confirm the offer in writing.

Declining an Offer. If you decline an offer, you must do so politely and graciously. You generally do not need to tell the employer the reason you are declining. A simple thank you for the offer but at this time you decline to accept the offer, is sufficient.

INTERVIEWING FOR SUCCESS
EXIT SURVEY

Thank you for participating in Interviewing for Success. We hope that you benefited from your experience and would appreciate it if you would answer a few questions to help us enhance the program in the future.

Tell us a little about yourself:

Age: _____

Highest Level of Education completed: _____

What career goals did you have in mind when you decided to attend Interviewing for Success?

Was there anything in particular that influenced your decision to participate in Interviewing for Success?

On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the best, how would you rate the segment of the program where you reviewed and revised your cover letter and resume? Please Explain.

On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the best, how would you rate the segment of the program where you participated in the “speed interviews”? Please Explain.

On a scale of 1 – 5, with 5 being the best, how would you rate the segment of the program where you participated in a long interview and evaluation of your interview? Please Explain.

What part of the program was the most helpful to you?

Would you recommend the program to others? Please explain why or why not.

Is there anything else that you think would improve the program for future participants?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND GOOD LUCK IN YOUR CAREER!