

JOB INTERVIEW ETIQUETTE

By Margaret Page

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You'll find that interviewers are watching for etiquette faux pas. Be sure you know what's expected before your interview by follow the guidelines below:

GETTING READY FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

- Do your research. Find out everything you can about the organization where you're interviewing. Learn about its culture and find out the dress appropriate to that culture (ask people in the HR department about the dress code). If you're unsure what to do, plan to dress "up" rather than "down" (i.e., dress a more formal way rather than a more casual way).
- If you plan to bring your portfolio or any other information, take time to organize it well. Most often, bringing less information is better than bringing more.
- A day or two before your scheduled interview, scope out your interview location. Find out where you can park. Determine how long it will take you to get there on the day of the interview. Once inside, find out the location of the rest room closest to your interview room.
- If you carry a purse, make sure it's well organized. That way, if you're asked for additional information, you can retrieve it easily, saving time and embarrassment.
- Make sure the vehicle you drive to the interview is clean. Sometimes employers view how you maintain your car as a way to see how you'll take care of their tools or equipment.

THE DAY OF YOUR INTERVIEW

- Make sure your clothing is clean and doesn't need repair. Avoid wearing ill-fitting clothes and extravagant jewelry. Definitely don't wear anything provocative (unless you're interviewing with a strip club).
- Take time to look your best. Be well groomed. Get a haircut. Make sure your hands are clean and manicured. If you wear nail polish, keep it understated, not outrageous. Don't wear any scents; they may bother others.
- Before your interview time, stop at the rest room to check your hair, teeth, and clothing. To make a great first impression, look your best!
- Stand up when being introduced to your interviewer. Make eye contact, shake hands (depending on the culture; in North America, palm to palm with two quick pumps). Greet the person and say how pleased you are to meet him or her.

- Follow the interviewer to the interview location. Do so with confidence and don't sit down until you're invited to do so.
- Place your purse or briefcase on the floor, not on the interviewer's desk or a conference table. Don't touch anything or move items nearby.
- During the interview itself, don't fidget. Be relaxed and confident.
- If you are being interviewed at lunch or dinner, observe all dining etiquette rules. Follow your host's lead. Don't order any alcohol (except if you are being interviewed by an alcohol-producing company or related to that industry).
- Listen intently and answer questions confidently. Don't ramble and repeat what you've already said.
- If you don't know an answer, be honest and simply say you don't know.
- When answering questions, don't criticize a former employer no matter what.

AFTER YOUR JOB INTERVIEW

- Within 48 hours of your interview, send a handwritten "thank you" note to the person who interviewed you. Word your message positively and genuinely. To make it more personal, refer to an incident or two that occurred during the interview if you can.

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