

Congratulations! You've made it through the door with a great application and the next step is the interview. No matter if you're being interviewed for your first job or have been through the interview process ten times or more, here are some important pointers to keep in mind.

- Take the time to do some research about the company – check out their website for their mission, leadership, etc. You'll be able to ask informed questions and show that you've done your homework.
- Make sure you're at your best for the interview. Get a good night's sleep.
- Keep in mind the importance of a first impression. Make sure you're dressed appropriately by being neat, clean and well groomed. You can wear dress pants/khakis and a nice shirt. Some helpful tips are:
  - o Keep makeup and perfume to a minimum
  - o Never wear jeans or shorts
  - o No crop tops or tank tops
  - o No low cut shirts or anything revealing
  - o No short skirts - wear one preferably that is knee-length
- Arrive ten to fifteen minutes early.
- Do not chew gum during the interview.
- Use your best manners – give a firm handshake and wait to be asked to take a seat. Once you're seated, sit up straight and don't fidget or slouch. Avoid scratching, pulling up your socks, adjusting any part of your clothing, touching your face or mouth or playing with your hair.
- Smile and make good eye contact to convey honesty and confidence.
- Pay attention to the interviewer. Be self-confident and polite.
- Use professional language; avoid slang.
- Be honest and be yourself. Dishonesty gets discovered and is grounds for withdrawing job offers and for firing.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time and shake their hand before you leave.
- Follow up with a thank you note to the interviewer.

### The Interview

The whole idea of an interview is to talk about your positive traits. Don't worry if you don't have much job experience. You can simply tie in the answers to experiences at home or school. Employers want to know how you handle problems and if you are a team player.

Along with the typical interview questions, be prepared to answer behavioral interview questions. These type of questions focus on your actions and behaviors by providing real, factual information about your past behavior and how it relates to the job you are interviewing for. You will be asked for specific examples of how you handled certain situations.

The following are some common interview questions you might get asked and sample answers to them.

Question: Tell me about yourself.

Answer: Last year in school I played on the basketball and soccer team. It kept me busy, but I learned to manage my time. I'm also involved in volunteering with my sister's Girl Scout troop. That's been a great experience in learning how to work as a team with other leaders plus plan activities.

Q: Why do you feel you are the best candidate for this job?

A: Because I'm responsible, reliable, and a hard worker.

Q: Do you have any experience in this type of work?

A: Not exactly, but I am a fast learner and want to learn as much as I can about (blank).  
*Answers to this question should be based firstly on experience relevant to the position, then any other experience. This does not have to be paid work. If you lack experience in the area, you can present other experiences as examples such as sporting situations – these can show leadership skills as well as working within a team unit, commitment, dedication and goal setting. School activities – show diversity and work ethic.*

Q: Tell me about a strength of yours.

A: I'm a good listener and I like to be around people.  
*Some stand out strengths employers are looking for are: easily adaptable, quick learner, works well as part of a team, self motivated, hard working, eager to learn. Has the ability to work well under pressure and good communication skills. Also give strengths relevant to the position you are applying for.*

Q: Tell me about a weakness of yours.

A: I've been called a perfectionist, but I like to do things right.  
*In terms of weaknesses, be honest if you feel there is something relevant that you want to improve on then let the employer know. It will show the ability to self reflect, which is a strength.*

Q: Are you available on week-ends?

A: Yes I am. And if ever I'm not, I'll be sure to let you know in advance.

Q: Tell me about how you would handle a difficult customer.

A: I would politely listen to their complaint without interrupting them, and then try to help them solve the problem.

Q: Why should I hire you?

A: Because I'm a reliable person, I have a positive attitude and I'll work hard every day. If you hire me, you'll get someone who isn't afraid to learn.

#### Behavioral Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time you had a problem and how you solved it.
- What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?
- Give an example of when you had to work with your hands to accomplish a task or project.
- Give an example of a time when you used good judgment in a situation.
- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How/why was this person difficult? How did you handle it?
- Give an example of when you worked with a group or team of people to complete a project.
- Talk about a time when you were faced with a difficult decision and describe how it turned out.
- Describe a situation when you made a mistake. How did you resolve the issue?