

3 STEPS FOR A PERFECT JOB INTERVIEW



One of the most important steps in landing a new job is the employment interview. For most employers, the final hiring decision is based primarily on the interview. Therefore, it is crucial to do everything you can to make the best possible impression. Fortunately, there are several things you can do to increase your odds.

- 1. The first step toward making a good impression is to learn as much as you can about the potential employer.** Coming into the interview armed with information such as the company's products/services and its history will show the interviewer that you are genuinely interested in the position. Most public library branches have staff members who can help you locate this type of information.
- 2. The second component of a successful job interview is appropriate physical appearance.** Studies have shown that our first impression of another person is determined in the first few minutes of interacting with them. Therefore, dressing and behaving professionally can be an effective way to gain an advantage over your competition. For example, the basic rule in dressing for the interview is to wear clothes that are one step dressier than you would wear to work for this type of position. Arrive at the appointment a few minutes early and never smoke or chew gum. Finally, do your best to maintain eye-contact throughout the interview.
- 3. The third component of the job interview is effective communication.** Before beginning to speak, take a few minutes to think through your response. Although this silence can be uncomfortable, it is better than answering too quickly and misrepresenting yourself. When you are asked questions regarding your previous employment, try to be positive. If you must convey a situation that is negative, phrase it in terms of what you have learned or gained from the experience. Having a positive, pro-active attitude can be one of the biggest deciding factors during the interview.

Overall, the most important advice to remember about the employment interview is to be honest. This goes beyond truthfully stating your previous work experience. Being straightforward about your likes and dislikes as well as strengths and weaknesses, can help you to avoid landing a job for which you aren't well suited.

A good example of this occurred while I was in college. I had just moved to Madison and was in fairly desperate need of employment. It took me only a few days to secure an interview at a restaurant just four blocks from my apartment. Looking back, it turned out to be the worst interview of my life. The manager simply stared at me. When I finally tried to break the silence with questions regarding the restaurant, he just grunted, "Well, what do you think?"

I left that interview feeling terrible. I needed the job but I was so frustrated during the interview I couldn't help but let it show. As I walked home, I felt a sudden rush of relief. What if I had acted as if the manager's behavior was acceptable? I may have ended up working for him. I had never been so happy to be unemployed in my life!