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## 17 IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER AS YOU PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

### Several Days - One Week Before the Interview

1. Spend some time to research the organization and the position at hand. To find company-specific information, visit your local library, run a search on the internet, or talk to current or former employees about their experiences and impressions of the company. Study up on the company's products and services, industry, target market, annual sales, geographic location(s), structure, history, officers, and any other key information. Are there any new trends in the industry?
2. Identify the organization's major competitors and do some basic research on how they differ (either positively or negatively) from the company at which you are interviewing.
3. Prepare specific examples of how your skills and experience make you a strong fit for the organization's needs. Practice answering directed questions about your experience, education, and skills and how they relate to the position at hand. Being prepared to draw correlations between your experience and the needs of the organization is one of the most important interviewing skills you will need.
4. Identify your strengths and weaknesses. Be prepared to talk about your weaknesses, but find a way to frame them positively. For example, "My biggest weakness is that I am a perfectionist. It may take me a little extra time to get a project done to my satisfaction, but you can be guaranteed that the work will pass even the most stringent review, be 100% accurate, and that no detail will be overlooked."
5. Prepare several intelligent questions about the company and position that will demonstrate your knowledge of the company and your sincere interest in the position.
6. Try on your suit and make sure that it is still well-fitting and in good repair. If necessary, make arrangements to have it altered or find alternate dress.

### The Day before the Interview

1. Contact the company to confirm the date and time of your interview. Also confirm the name and title of the individual(s) you will be meeting.
2. Get directions to the interview site. Be sure to double check the directions using a map. This will ensure that you know the way and also give you an approximate travel time – don't forget to allow for extra time for rush hour!
3. Lay out your entire interview outfit. Check it for any spot, wrinkles, or snags.
4. Print off a few extra copies of your resume and cover letter on nice paper. Even if the interviewer has a copy of their own, it's always a good idea to have a backup copy. This is also helpful if you end up interviewing with multiple individuals, since the head interviewer may be the only person with a copy of your resume.

### Get a good night's sleep!

1. Your brain needs fuel to run at peak performance and if there is ever a day you needed 110% from your brain, it's today. So don't skimp on meals. Be cautious about eating large amounts of carbohydrates right before your interview though, since carbs are known to cause sluggishness and may lead to a "post-lunch" naptime.
2. Get dressed early so you do not feel pressured to dash out the door. Pay attention to the details (brush off any lint, comb your hair, brush your teeth, use deodorant, etc.) and remember that a first impression can reveal a lot about you and your character.
3. Don't forget to take copies of your resume, your cover letter, and your portfolio if you have one.
4. Leave yourself plenty of time to get to your interview. If you arrive more than 15 minutes early, it's best to wait in the car or outside the building. Arriving too early gives off the impression that you have a lot riding on the interview (and have nothing better to do with your time), and also pressures the interviewer(s) into feeling that they have to adjust their schedule to accommodate you.
5. Smile and shake everyone's hand when you are meeting for the first time - you should also smile and shake hands when the interview concludes.
6. Relax! If you have done your homework you are well-prepared for the interview. Take a deep breath and spend a moment collecting your thoughts if you need to when being asked a question. Ask confused about a particular question you are asked, don't hesitate to ask for clarification.

### After the Interview

Write a quick "Thank You" message to the individual(s) who interviewed you.