

The Interview Structure

The format generally followed in an interview is Introduction, Review, Discussion, Conclusion and Follow-up. However, the personality of the employer and philosophy of the company will also influence how the interview will unfold.

The Introduction

With the initial greeting, a rapport between you and the interviewer is established. Your “image” is seen first and is based on the following:

- Your smile should be friendly and confident, your handshake firm
- Your attitude should be positive and enthusiastic
- Your appearance should be business-like (avoid trendy fashion)

The Review

Your background, interests and abilities will be probed with questions of **why**, **how**, **when**, **where**. Provide clear, concise and complete answers willingly and with enthusiasm. Do not volunteer any negative information, try to emphasize the positives.

The Discussion - (Also known as the “sell”)

This is the match-up phase of your background with the position — the employer’s opportunities and how you could fit in, both currently and in the future. This is your opportunity to sell your abilities. Describe a situation or action and the results. Keep the employer’s needs and concerns in mind when answering. Show what you can do for the company. This is also your opportunity to find out enough about the company to make an intelligent career decision.

The Conclusion

Listening carefully is just as important as providing good answers. Points on both sides are strengthened and clarified. When asked if you have any questions, ask job-related questions, not about salary or benefits. Ask if there is anything more the employer needs to know. Ask when a decision will be made or whether there will be a second interview.

Express a final statement of interest, then thank the employer for the interview.

The Follow-Up

Remember, you did your best, and any mistakes are good lessons for subsequent interviews. Write a thank-you letter to the interviewer. This is a chance for you to tell the interviewer any additional information that might increase your chance of being selected for the position (something you may have omitted during the stress of the actual interview).

Also, mark a day in your calendar approximately one week to 10 days from the date of the interview to call the interviewer to find out if a decision has been made. This will demonstrate to the interviewer your interest and enthusiasm. Remember, even if the job goes to someone else, the interviewer may know of openings elsewhere. Try to maintain the contact with the interviewer. Ask for his/her feedback about areas you may need to strengthen.

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