



Power-to-Change

Inspiring people to reach their full potential

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7 Key Interview Tips

I have just finished reading a really interesting article about the lack of preparation by many candidates prior to attending a job interview and it really amazes me how even those who appear on paper to be very competent and capable of doing the job fail to get the job because of poor performance in the interview. With the current state of the market there are even more people chasing even fewer jobs, it is imperative that can present yourself well in an interview. In a nutshell, it really comes down to research and preparation and so here are my top 7 tips:

1. First impressions really do count. It takes around 3 seconds for someone to form an opinion of you based on your appearance, body language etc. It may seem like stating the obvious, but be sure to dress the part, have a strong handshake, make eye contact, smile and let your personality shine through and do your best to appear confident (see issue 8 of my Inspirational Toolkit – ‘7 Tips to increase your confidence’).
2. Preparation – you can never do enough and with so much information available on the internet, there really is no excuse for turning up at an interview unprepared. Read up about the company: what are its values and mission; what are the future plans for the company; what are its requirements. Read between the lines of the job advert: what skills are they really looking for and be able to give examples of where you have used these skills in the past. Find out who is going to be interviewing you and look them up on LinkedIn – it may be that you share a common interest which you could talk about with ease and which gives you a great opportunity to connect on a personal level. Think about the type of questions you are likely to be asked and how you would answer them but not to the point of making it obvious that you have memorised your answers.
3. Be enthusiastic and be ‘present’ the whole time. This means keeping up eye contact, sitting up straight and feeling full of energy as this all helps to make you appear confident. You’ll also come across as being far more genuine if you just be yourself.
4. Actively listen to what the interviewer is saying. Make sure you know what they are asking you so that you do not give what appear to be scripted answers. The interviewer will be looking for someone who can think on their feet and you can do this if you have spent time preparing and understand the needs of the company. By listening actively, you can also pick up on the language that is being used and then mirror it for example, if the interviewer talks in terms of numbers and percentages, then try and incorporate this into your answers as this will build more of a connection between you.
5. Know your strengths and able to talk about them confidently. Be able give examples of when you have used these strengths successfully in the past. If you haven’t been working for some time you should still be able to give examples of where you have used these strengths to the benefit of yourself and/or others.
6. Know your weaknesses and be able to speak about them with confidence. Show what you are doing to turn this weakness into a strength. This will show that you are open and honest as well as someone who is willing to learn and work on their personal development and these can only be seen as strengths.
7. Ask intelligent questions as this gets the interviewer talking more and gives you a good insight into what their requirements are. But make sure you don’t ask anything that you could easily have found the answer to by reading up on the company.

And on a final note, remember that if you do not get the job, it is not the end of the world, it’s just good interview practice. Do not give yourself a hard time. If possible, ask why they did not find you the right candidate and learn from the experience. Maybe it wasn’t the right job for you anyway.

‘Communication—the human connection—is the key to personal and career success’. - Paul J. Meyer

Anne Galloway - Career & Small Business Coach

www.power-to-change.eu email: anne@power-to-change.eu

tel: 0615561377



Linked in®

blog: www.theinspirationalcoach.wordpress.com