

How to Interview with Confidence by Heather Markel, CPC

To be successful at a job interview, it's important to exude confidence. I'm going to share my 10 interviewing techniques to help you combat nerves, and have positive interview experiences!

Tip #1: You're Interviewing Them

This is my number one confidence booster. If you expect to be interviewed, then you may feel pressured to impress everyone you meet, which could make you nervous and self-critical.

When you realize that the interview is actually the company's opportunity to impress you, it changes everything. I'm not advocating arrogance, I'm simply saying, you need to BE impressed as much as you desire to MAKE an impression.

Develop a list of questions for each interviewer as a barometer of whether or not the company is a good fit for you, such as:

- What do you like most about working here?
- What kind of career path can I expect, and what kind of upward mobility does the company offer?
- How would my skills be utilized here – best phrased as a strength. So, for me,

I might say, "I speak several foreign languages and it's important to me to use this skill at work. How can I do that here?"

If there is no way to use the skill, get creative – ask if there is openness to develop this opportunity.

Tip #2: Assess Your Personal Skills and Needs – Know What Makes You Happy

What are you really good at, and what do you enjoy doing that you want to be part of your job? What parts of yourself need to be encouraged in the office to make you happy there?

You might be a great sales person, but do you prefer working in a competitive environment or one where colleagues share information and socialize? Do you want to work from home, or be in an office setting? Take a good look at the full package. If you hate your current job, use your negative feelings as a guide to uncover what you need to be happy at work. Use your interview as a chance to express what makes you inspired at work.

The idea is to make sure your unique personality and talents can thrive!

Tip #3: Research Makes Perfect

Several days before your interview, research the company – Google them, or if you have access to Hoover.com, LexisNexis, or friends or contacts that know the company – find out everything you can. Who is the parent company? What do they produce? How long have they been in business? What cities / countries are they located in? The more you know about them, the more impressive you will be, and your questions will be more informed. This brings us to the next tip.

Tip #4: Ask Questions

Now that you know you're interviewing the company, you're on top of your skills and needs, and you've done your research, make a list of questions to ask. What are you curious about? You can ask who their competition is, and what makes them better? You might even be able to come up with strategic questions based on your research and your skills assessment.

Tip #5: Consider Yourself a Consultant

Ask what needs the company has and consider yourself someone who can meet those needs. This is especially handy when you're asked a

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tough question, like, “Why do you think you’re a good candidate for this job?” – you might consider saying something like:

“In order for me to answer that question, I’d like to understand your expectations of this role, so I can determine whether or not I’m the best fit.” This allows you to tailor your answer to fulfill their needs, rather than just listing out what you perceive to be your best assets.

Tip #6: Ask for Feedback

If you hit it off with any of your interviewers, and you’re asked to come back for a follow-up, ask them for tips and guidance on how to impress the next person you’re going to meet. Find out whether you should avoid any topics, or whether there are any key points you should mention to give yourself a competitive edge. Perhaps the VP has a hobby or interest that you have in common which would be a great ice breaker – ask questions and find out!

Tip #7: Know Your Competition

If you find yourself progressing along to higher level interviews, ask who your competition is. Find out what skills your competitors have that are making them stand out from the crowd, and ask what skills you need to demonstrate to get

the competitive edge. This is another great way to find out whether the company meets YOUR needs, and whether you feel comfortable with what they expect of you.

Tip #8: They’re Only People

When you start having higher level interviews, you might find yourself across the table from the President, or a group of bigwigs. Their title doesn’t make them any better or worse than you are. If you’ve made it that far, they are really interested in you, and will want to impress you enough to accept the job. Making a good impression is a two-way street.

Tip #9: Know Your Needs and Negotiate

When it comes to salary and benefits, stick to your guns. If you’re worth \$100,000, you probably won’t be happy making \$50,000. If you’re used to 4 weeks vacation, 2 weeks won’t be enough.

Your needs are important, even if you have no job or income. I believe that if you’re a good interviewer, **looking at several different companies at once**, and you apply these techniques, you’ll end up with more than one offer, and then you can negotiate for salary, or additional benefits. Don’t be intimidated by a

tough market – you may stand out from the competition by knowing your value and needs and expressing them.

When you line up several interviews at once, if one falls through, you have several others to fall back on – so allow yourself to be picky!

Tip #10: Trust Your Gut

This is probably the most important tip – above all else, get really curious about how you FEEL with each person you interview, and at the office space. If your stomach is twisting in knots, and you notice you don’t respect or like your potential new boss, move on. Hopefully, you’ll be working there for a while, so make sure it’s a place you’ll enjoy coming to every day.

If you don’t get the job – ask them to tell you where you fell short. Learning this information could just help you land the next job you apply for.

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