

1. Research the industry and company.

An interviewer may ask how you perceive his company's position in its industry, who the firm's competitors are, what its competitive advantages are, and how it should best go forward.

2. Clarify your "selling points" and the reasons you want the job.

Prepare to go into every interview with three to five key selling points in mind, such as what makes you the best candidate for the position.

3. Anticipate the interviewer's concerns and reservations.

Put yourself in their shoes and ask yourself why they might not want to hire you ("I don't have this," "I'm not that," etc.). Then prepare your defense: "I know you may be thinking that I might not be the best fit for this position because [their reservation]. But you should know that [reason the interviewer shouldn't be overly concerned]."

4. Prepare for common interview questions.

Pick any list and think about which questions you're most likely to encounter, given your age and status (about to graduate, looking for a summer internship). Then prepare your answers so you won't have to fumble for them during the actual interview.

5. Line up your questions for the interviewer.

Come to the interview with some intelligent questions for the interviewer that demonstrate your knowledge of the company as well as your serious intent.

6. Practice, practice, practice.

It's one thing to come prepared with a mental answer to a question like, "Why should we hire you?" It's another challenge entirely to say it out loud in a confident and convincing way.

7. Score a success in the first five minutes.

Some studies indicate that interviewers make up their minds about candidates in the first five minutes of the interview – and then spend the rest of the interview looking for things to confirm that decision

8. Get on the same side as the interviewer.

Many interviewers view job interviews as adversarial: Candidates are going to try to pry an offer out of the interviewer, and the interviewer's job is to hold onto it. Your job is to transform this "tug of war" into a relationship in which you're both on the same side.

9. Be assertive and take responsibility for the interview.

An interview is like any other conversation – it's a dance in which you and a partner move together, both responding to the other. Don't make the mistake of just sitting there waiting for the interviewer to ask you about that Nobel Prize you won.

10. Be ready to handle illegal and inappropriate questions.

Interview questions about your race, age, gender, religion, marital status, and sexual orientation are inappropriate and in many areas illegal.

11. Make your selling points clear.

12. Think positive.

No one likes a complainer, so don't dwell on negative experiences during an interview.

13. Close on a positive note.

If there are two equally good candidates at the end of the search – you and someone else – the interviewer will think you're more likely to accept the offer, and thus may be more inclined to make an offer to you.

14. Bring a copy of your resume to every interview.

Have a copy of your resume with you when you go to every interview. If the interviewer has misplaced his or her copy, you'll save a lot of time (and embarrassment on the interviewer's part) if you can just pull your extra copy out and hand it over.

15. Don't worry about sounding "canned".

Some people are concerned that if they rehearse their answers, they'll sound "canned" (or overly polished or glib) during the interview. Don't worry. If you're well prepared, you'll sound smooth and articulate, not canned. And if you're not so well prepared, the anxiety of the situation will eliminate any "canned" quality.

16. Make the most of the "Tell me about yourself" question.

Consider responding to this question with something like: "Well, obviously I could tell you about lots of things, and if I'm missing what you want, please let me know. But the three things I think are most important for you to know about me are [your selling points]."

17. Speak the right body language.

Dress appropriately, make eye contact, give a firm handshake, have good posture, speak clearly, and don't wear perfume or cologne!

18. Be ready for "behavior-based" interviews".

Step 1 is to anticipate the behaviors this hiring manager is likely to be looking for. Step 2 is to identify at least one example of when you demonstrated each behavior. Step 3 is to prepare a story for each example. Many people recommend using SAR (Situation-Action-Result) as a model for the story. Step 4 is to practice telling the story.

19. Send thank-you notes.

Write a thank-you note after every interview. Type each note on paper or send them by email, depending on the interviewers' preferences. Customize your notes by referring specifically to what you and the interviewer discussed; for example, "I was particularly excited about [or interested by, or glad to hear] what you said about

To write a good thank-you note, you'll need to take time after each interview to jot down a few things about what the interviewer said. Also, write down what you could have done better in the interview, and make adjustments before you head off for your next interview.

20. Don't give up!

If you've had a bad interview for a job that you truly think would be a great fit for you (not just something you want badly), don't give up!