



Interviewing Tips

By Jerry Grohovsky

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Probably one of the most interesting aspects of this business has been the opportunity to personally interview hundreds of candidates over the years.

From this experience, I have developed my own list of recommended tips when it comes to interviewing *the right way*:

- Arrive on time. Even better, being there 10 to 15 minutes early is advisable, as it provides ample time to get mentally composed from a long commute, fill out paperwork, do a restroom stop, etc.). Important: If you are late, avoid making excuses. Be honest with the reason and apologize.
- Dress to a “business professional” level. Big “turn offs” are: jeans, tennis shoes, sweat shirts. For men, three-piece suits are not necessary
- It may sound like an old cliché, but a good place to start is always with a firm hand shake, eye contact, and a friendly smile.
- Bring a well-organized and representative portfolio of work samples. This can include separate manuals, books, handouts, etc. Laptops may be necessary for showing on-line documents or help systems. (Important: Lack of sample makes more challenging to assess background and experience. Plus, it raises questions for interviewer.)
- Bring an extra resume and list of references.
- Be ready to describe your involvement with a project sample. (Examples: Did you write it “from scratch”? Did you update the document? Were you simply the project coordinator?)
- Be prepared to provide the interviewer with a brief summary of your background and career, starting with your last assignment or position, then moving backwards to the next previous assignment, and so on. Other topics for discussion that you may anticipate: 1) identifying your current career objective, 2) describing how you entered your current career path, 3) emphasizing any skills or strengths that set you apart from other candidates.
- Always maintain good eye contact; it shows confidence and interest. An occasional smile is always a positive way of engaging the interviewer.
- Avoid sounding defensive when asked to clarify certain omissions from your resume. Being combative or difficult is a “red flag” to the interviewer.
- Don’t insult the interviewer by saying such things as: “your place is difficult to find,” or “your web site needs improvement”, or “I found a mistake in your literature”. Even though some of these suggestions may be helpful, it shows poor judgment and lack of diplomacy. Show your best “people skills.”
- Answer questions thoroughly, but concisely. A big “turn-off” is interrupting the interviewer, or controlling the conversation. Let the interviewer control the conversation, as he or she most likely has an interviewed format to follow. Additionally, there is a limited amount of time to gather information about your skills and experiences.
- Bring a list of prepared questions. This may include questions about: 1) the company or agency doing the interviewing, 2) current market trends, 3) a specific company mentioned in a recent job posting, 4) career-path questions (i.e., compensation, contract versus direct-hire, etc.).