

*Bravo!*  
**RESUMES**

Interviewing  
**101**

Job interviews are among the most stressful events in a person's life. With the right tools and minimal training, they no longer have to be. This guide features interviewing gems certain to help you maximize your chance at getting hired next time you partake in a job interview.

## Interviewing 101 by Bravo Resumes

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## 1. Telephone Techniques

- The telephone is very useful in the job search. It is a necessity.
- Always take time to prepare before you start calling.
- ALWAYS identify yourself. Don't expect the person on the other end to recognize your voice or name. They are probably working with other candidates.
- Take notes while on the phone; ask all of your questions while you are on the phone.
- Call from a quiet place. Background noises like the television, loud music, children playing will be a turn off to the person on the other end. A quiet place will also help you concentrate on your conversation.
- Speak clearly and at a modest rate of speed. Many people speak too quickly when on the phone.
- Watch the tone of your voice. Make sure that you communicate that you are an enthusiastic, friendly person who will be a good employee.
- Use your best manners on the phone. It is often better to repeat times and dates of meetings, etc. so they can be verbally confirmed.
- The telephone is used to locate openings and secure appointments for interviews. If an employer asks several interview-type questions, it is best to answer the questions and ask for a person-to-person meeting as well. You are after the in-person interview.
- When you receive the job-related calls, make sure you are ready to speak to the caller. Don't be afraid to ask the caller to hold for a moment while you prepare for the call. You might say something like "please hold for a moment while I change phones." Focus your thinking on this call. Try to have your resume in front of you during the call.
- Make sure that anyone who may answer your phone knows that you are expecting job-related calls. Callers should be treated politely and courteously.
- Don't have a "crazy" greeting on your voicemail or answering machine if you are expecting calls from prospective employers. Most employers will leave a message if the machine is user friendly.



## 2. Helpful Hints for Effective Interviewing

- Be prepared to answer any question in any location.
- Research the company you are interviewing with.
- Know your knowledge, skills and abilities and how they relate to the position for which you are applying.
- Know what the job requires.
- Show the employer your desire, willingness, ability and value to the company.
- Answer questions directly and honestly.
- Keep your answers focused on the questions being asked.
- Smile, relax and be friendly.
- Ask the employer appropriate questions.
- Thank the interviewer for their time.
- Follow up the interview with a thank you note.



**It's not the cards you are dealt that dictates the outcome of a game but the way you play your hand. The same applies to job searching - Be prepared and play smart!**



## 3. Typical Interview Questions

### 1. Tell me about yourself.

Sell yourself! This question is used as an “icebreaker” and often gives you an opportunity to make a connection with the interviewer. Talk about your accomplishments, skills, and abilities: NOT your family or hobbies.

### 2. What do you see yourself doing in five years?

Employers want to see that you are goal oriented, but realistic. You can site actual positions you learned about when doing your company research.

### 3. What do you consider to be your greatest weakness?

This is a hard, but necessary question. Use a weakness that is actually something positive in the working world.

### 4. What qualifications do you possess making you ideal for this position? Why should I hire you?

Elaborate on your skills that are applicable to the job. Use your fingers and count off the skills. Discuss how your abilities match the needs of the company.

### 5. Tell me a major problem you encountered and how you handled it.

Think of something related to work, civic, or leisure activities. Tell it as a story. Give details. The interviewer wants to see how you define problems, identify options, decide on a solution, handle obstacles, and obviously solve the problem.

### 6. What motivates you to do a good job?

Money is not a good answer. A good answer is something like, “having responsibilities and being acknowledged when the job is done right.”

### 7. Why did you leave your previous employer?

Regardless of the circumstances, be sure that you do not speak badly about your last employer. This is very important, because the interviewer will assume that if you make negative comments about your last company, you will do the same concerning the next company that hires you. Do not put blame on others, remain calm and answer the question.



8. Why should I hire you?

This question may be preceded by “We have many qualified candidates, so...” State that you are not in a position to evaluate other applicants (because you can’t compare qualifications) but, go on to discuss how your particular background and abilities do qualify you. Again, briefly summarize what you have to offer and assure the interviewer that you can do the job.

9. What type of salary are you looking for?

Try not to limit yourself to a specific dollar amount. Give a range. The employer needs to be sure they can afford you, but you don’t want to undersell yourself! Put the ball back in their court and say “I’m not really sure, what is the starting salary for this position?” Remember NEVER write down minimum wage on a job application.



10. Would you rather be in charge of a project or work as part of the team?

“Either. I am not afraid to take responsibility and I’m not afraid to roll up my sleeves and pitch in.”

**NOTE: REMEMBER TO KEEP EYE CONTACT THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW.**



## 4. Questions To Ask The Interviewer

An interview is not just a time for an employer to ask you questions. It is also a time for you to gather information in order to determine whether your skills, abilities, values and needs match those of the job for which you are interviewing. During the interviewing process, it is appropriate for you, the candidate, to ask questions such as:

- What would my responsibilities be?
- Could you describe a typical day for me?
- Will you tell me a bit about your workplace?
- Could you describe your ideal candidate?
- May I meet the person for whom I would be working?  
(If that person has not interviewed you)

Never ask any questions about salary, vacations, holidays with pay, or paid sick days!

Wait for the interviewer to bring up the issue of wages and benefits. When they ask what kind of wage you expect, ask what the standard wage for your qualifications is. Force the interviewer to throw out figures first.

Can you ask for the job?

Absolutely! Most people, who go on a job interview, never tell the interviewer if they want the job or not. If you want the job, look the interviewer in the eye and tell him or her you want the job.

How will I know the interview is over?

The interviewer will usually ask if you have any other questions. Then they will stand up and thank you for coming. Regardless of the outcome, be a good sport. Thank the manager for taking the time to talk to you. Give a sincere handshake. If the interviewer says they will make a decision within the next week or so, ask if you could call to inquire about that decision.



## 5. The Job Interview Do's and Don'ts

### DO

- Do stress your qualifications for the opening.
- Do recount experiences that would qualify you for the job.
- Do indicate your stability, attendance record and safety experience.
- Do research the facility and learn about its products/services.
- Do be well groomed and appropriately dressed.
- Do approach the employer with respectful dignity.
- Do have a positive attitude.
- Do try to overcome nervousness.
- Do keep an open mind.
- Do answer questions honestly.
- Do take time to think before you speak.
- Do have a resume readily available.
- Do indicate your flexibility and willingness to learn.

### DON'T

- Don't stress your need for a job. Make the employer think that he/she needs you.
- Don't be untidy in appearance.
- Don't be overconfident.
- Don't beg for consideration.
- Don't mumble.
- Don't express your ideas on compensation, hours, etc. early in the interview.
- Don't prolong the interview when it should be over.
- Don't arrive late for the interview.
- Don't be caught unprepared. Preparation is the most important part of the interview.
- Don't let distractions bother you.
- Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- Don't hesitate to complete an application, give references, or take a physical exam.





## 6. Create A Good Impression

There are three basic things that create a good impression.

1. Your Appearance
2. Your Attitude
3. Your Manners

### Appearance

- If you look neat and clean, the impression is that you take pride in yourself and your work.
  - If you look like a slob, it implies that you might be a sloppy worker.
- First impressions are very, very important!

### Attitude

- If you act enthusiastic and eager, the impression is that you're an enthusiastic and eager worker.
  - If you act too timid or too quiet, it implies that you may need a lot of supervision.
- It separates the winners from the losers.  
It can be more important than experience.

### Manners

- If you're courteous and thoughtful, it says that you get along with people and have a respect for seniority.
- The first manner an employer looks for is punctuality.



### 7. Last-Minute Check List

- Get good nights sleep.
- Take a shower.
- Shampoo your hair.
- Shave.
- Brush your teeth.
- Use a mouthwash.
- Use a deodorant.
- Comb your hair.
- Clean and trim your nails.
- Wear clean, freshly pressed clothes.
- Wear the proper clothes.
- Shine your shoes.
- Avoid flashy colors.
- Avoid loud fashions. Avoid excessive jewelry.
- Avoid strong perfumes or colognes.
- Bring your resume.
- Bring your work permits.
- Bring your Social Security Card.
- Bring any samples if needed.
- Bring money for gas, tolls, public transportation or the telephone.
- Bring a new notebook and pen that works.
- Write the manager's name, department, address and phone number in the notebook.
- Write in the names, addresses and phone numbers of three people to use as references.
- Plan to arrive 15 minutes before the interview begins.
- If you are going to be late – call the manager.



Checking each item off this list TWICE will maximize your chances at not forgetting something. When it comes to interviewing for a job, better check twice!



### 8. Interviewing Success

1. **Look Sharp.** Before the interview, select your outfit. Depending on the industry and position, get out your best duds and check them over for spots and wrinkles. Even if the company has a casual environment, you don't want to look like you slept in your clothes. Above all, dress for confidence. If you feel good, others will respond to you accordingly.
2. **Be on Time.** Never arrive late to an interview. Allow extra time to arrive early in the vicinity, allowing for factors like getting lost. Enter the building 10 to 15 minutes before the interview.
3. **Do Your Research.** Researching the company before the interview and learning as much as possible about its services, products, customers and competition will give you an edge in understanding and addressing the company's needs. The more you know about the company and what it stands for, the better chance you have of selling yourself. You also should find out about the company's culture to gain insight into your potential happiness on the job.
4. **Be Prepared.** Bring along a folder containing extra copies of your resume, a copy of your references and paper to take notes. You should also have questions prepared to ask at the end of the interview. For extra assurance, print a copy of Monster's handy Interview Planner.
5. **Show Enthusiasm.** A firm handshake and plenty of eye contact demonstrates confidence. Speak distinctly in a confident voice, even though you may feel shaky.
6. **Listen.** One of the most neglected interviewing skills is listening. Make sure you are not only listening, but also reading between the lines. Sometimes what is not said is just as important as what is said.
7. **Answer the Question Asked.** Candidates often don't think about whether or not they actually are answering the questions asked by their interviewers. Make sure you understand what is being asked, and get further clarification if you are unsure.
8. **Give Specific Examples.** One specific example of your background is worth 50 vague stories. Prepare your stories before the interview. Give examples that highlight your successes and uniqueness. Your past behavior can indicate your future performance.



9. Ask Questions. Many interviewees don't ask questions and miss the opportunity to find out valuable information. Your questions indicate your interest in the company or job.

10. Follow Up. Whether it's through email or regular mail, the follow-up is one more chance to remind the interviewer of all the valuable traits you bring to the job and company. You don't want to miss this last chance to market yourself.



**9. Top 10 Ways NOT to get the job you're applying for:**

1. Answer your cell phone during the interview
2. Arrive late
3. Know nothing about the company or position
4. Bad-mouth your last boss
5. Act over-eager about salary
6. Be negative
7. Use slang and/or profanity
8. Don't listen
9. Talk endlessly about your personal life
10. Dress inappropriately



**Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early for your interview.  
In the event you cannot make it on time be prepared to  
call and inform the manager or recruiter of your tardiness.**



### 10. Follow-up after the interview

Fewer than half the people who go on a job interview will bother to send the manager a note thanking them for their time and consideration.

- What is the big deal?

Since most people don't bother sending one, it could give you an edge, especially if there is real competition between you and another applicant.

- What goes into a thank-you note?

Keep it brief. Thank the manager for meeting with you. Repeat that you do want the job. Say that you would like to call in a week or so to see if they have made a decision. Write the note as soon as you get home from the interview. You want the thank-you to get into the manager's hands before he/she forgets who you are.

- Should you call the person who interviewed you?

Absolutely! Calling recruiters or managers to thank them for their time and consideration is key in showing your interest for the position. A phone call is often what will separate you from the competition. When calling be alert and focused. Make sure the environment you choose to make the call is quiet and conducive to a professional phone call during which you may be asked additional questions pertaining to the job.

- Suppose that I don't want the job?

If you decide that you are not interested in the job, be professional and send the manager a note. Thank him/her for his or her time. Say that you have decided to seek employment elsewhere and ask that he/she remove your name from consideration. You can bet most managers don't get too many notes like that.



### 11. Sample Thank You Letter

**First Paragraph** – Express appreciation for the opportunity to be interviewed, referring to the position for which you were applying.

**Second Paragraph** – Indicate one or two areas discussed in the interview that were of particular interest. Mention your strong qualifications or background that will enable you to perform the job. Add relevant experience that you omitted during the interview.

**Third Paragraph** – State that you would like the position and the reason you would be an asset to the company. Indicate that you are looking forward to the results of the interview.

July 31, 2009

Mary Jones  
Director of Personnel  
Bank of Sandusky  
123 Main Street  
Sandusky, OH 44870

Dear Ms. Jones:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me yesterday to discuss the teller position. It was great to learn more about the Bank of Sandusky. After speaking with you I am confident that I would make a great addition to your team.

I wanted to follow up on a few points from our discussion about the teller position.

You had expressed that the person who fills this opening will need to be able to work during peak hours quickly but even more importantly properly. This is a challenge that I've faced many times at my current position. I am able to handle a long line of impatient customers with ease, maintaining a cool, calm and collective attitude. Being an assistant manager I understand the importance of properly counting money. This is an area that I excel in, I have only once had an incorrect drawer.

I am enthusiastic about the company and I am sure that my qualities are perfect for the position you wish to fill. I hope you will not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Jane Scott

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### 12. Networking

Why do employers prefer the friends and relatives of their employees?

- An unknown person who answers your advertisement,
- An unknown person who mails you a resume – out of the blue, or
- A friend recommended by one of your best workers?

The “friend” wins hands down. All other applicants are unknowns. See, as a manager, you might say to yourself, “Sue is a good employee. She works hard. She is always on time. She likes her job. She’s someone I can count on. I’ll bet her friend has these same qualities too.” So you invite Sue’s friend in for an interview.



Now, there is no guarantee that Sue’s friend is going to get the job. But, more than likely, the friend will get first crack at the opening.

Unfortunately it can have just the opposite effect if Sue is a poor worker.

Be careful about asking “anyone” to help you with a job possibility. Use your instincts. You can tell who is hardworking and who is not.

**If 75% of the job openings in the United States are not advertised how do employers fill those jobs?**

**Most employers fill those openings by hiring friends, relatives, and acquaintances of the people who work for them.**





### 13. Do “good looking” people have a better chance of getting hired?

Hiring managers say it is the appearance of confidence they find attractive, not the presence of physical beauty. And they contend the attractiveness has more to do with how you carry yourself and the energy you exude – rather than having perfect features or a great physique.

According to Gordon Wainright author of Teach Yourself Body Language, anyone can increase their attractiveness to others if they maintain good eye contact, act upbeat, dress well (with a dash of color to your wardrobe), and listen well.

Wainright also stresses the importance of posture and bearing and suggests that for one week you stand straight, tuck in your stomach, hold your head high, and smile at those you meet or pass. Based on many such experiments, Wainright predicts you will begin to be treated with more warmth and respect and start attracting more people to you.



## Interviewing 101 by Bravo Resumes

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