

Four Steps to a Better

Job Interview

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Here's a question I often hear: **What are some things I can do to prepare for a job interview?**

Answer: There really aren't too many things in life more awkward than a job interview. You're dressed in formal business clothing, sitting across from a stranger. This stranger has the right to ask you anything from the most elaborate to the most mundane questions. And you have to spend an hour talking about nothing but yourself. Actually it sounds pretty similar to a blind date!

Just like a blind date, there are some definite no-no's you need to avoid if you want to make it to the next level.

1. Don't try to outwit or outguess the interviewer.

Most candidates go into a job interview thinking it's a contest where the goal is to defeat the interviewer in some type of battle of wits.

"Aha, Brad has asked me this question. Clearly, that is some type of trick question. I just don't know what the trick is yet. Here's how I would normally answer the question, but instead I should say what he probably wants to hear."

That thinking is when good interviews go bad. Sit back, relax, and pretend it is a conversation with a friend. Those are the best interviews.

2. Read the job description.

I call the job description the "cheat sheet" for the interview. Chances are the items listed on the job description will come up in the interview. For instance, if the job description says, "looking for creative problem-solvers" one of the questions you will receive is, "Give me an example of when you creatively solved a problem."

3. Have reasons for everything you've done.

Most companies conduct behavioral interviews. It means they are more interested in the hows and the whys as opposed to the whats. They want to know what makes you tick. An interviewer is not simply going to say, "Oh, I see that you worked as a sales rep in your last job. Cool."

That interviewer may spend about 10 minutes asking questions about the job: "What did you like about the job? What were your accomplishments? What were your biggest mistakes?" And on and on. Be sure you have answers.

4. Ask questions.

There is nothing more damaging than not having a single question at the end of an interview. It shows that you have no curiosity or interest in the organization. Almost every interviewer will leave about five minutes at the end of the interview to answer questions. Make sure you have a couple. Two or three questions is appropriate, and they can be either personal questions -- "What do you like about working here?" -- or they can be business questions -- "How has the Internet affected your business?"

There you have it. Four quick ways that you can make sure you ace the interview and have the job offers rolling in. Good luck!