

Tech Students,

The following information may prove useful to you as you **PREPARE** for an interview. Please review this information carefully. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me via email or stop by my office. It is very important to be **PREPARED** for an interview.

Mr. Honor

### **Employability Skills: Typical Interview Questions**

Fifty percent of all interviews will consist of questions about you and your background, experiences, interests, likes and dislikes, attitudes, skills and abilities. Prepare yourself for all types of questions in an interview. Following is a sample list of questions to think about before your interview.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What did you learn from your previous positions?
- Describe a pressure situation you've experienced and how you handled it.
- Why should we hire you?
- What can you do for our company?
- What interests you most about this job?
- How do you organize and plan your activities?
- What would you like to be doing in five years from now?
- What type of decisions did you make in your last job?
- Why do you want to leave your current position?
- In what ways have your job and education prepared you to take on greater responsibility?
- What are your expectations for this position?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- Why do you feel qualified for this position?
- Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job? Why?
- Do you consider yourself a leader or a follower? Why?
- Describe your attendance record at school.
- What was your easiest academic subject in high school/college? Why?
- What was your most difficult academic subject in high school/college? Why?
- What are your plans for continuing your education?
- What extracurricular activities do you enjoy outside of school?
- What extracurricular activities do you enjoy in school?
- Do you prefer working with others or by yourself? Why?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What are your specific skills as they relate to this job?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- What were your duties and responsibilities in your previous job?
- Identify a mistake you've made in the past and how you corrected it.
- Why do you want to leave your present job? or Why are you not working now?
- What was your supervisor like to work for?

# Dress For Interview Success



You've got the skills, right? So, who cares if your tongue is pierced and you've got tattoos down both arms? Will an employer be turned off by the tattoos? One nationally known employer insists on clean-shaven employees, but is that the rule for most employers? Check out our two interviewees and guess which one most employers would pick.

# Ten Steps to Interview Success

## ***Step 1 - Know The Company***

Companies like candidates who know what they want. They are also impressed with someone who has done some digging before arriving at the interview. Make the effort to research your target organization, and you'll find yourself ahead of the competition. Given two equal candidates, the one who shows the most interest usually wins.

You can find out about larger organizations by using Web search engines or, even better, by going to your target organization's Web site. There are other Web-based sources, too. If your company is smaller or local, visit the library and ask the research librarian for help.

## ***Step 2 - Know the Company***

In an interview, your job is to sell yourself . . . so you need to know precisely what you're selling. Once you define that, you can apply these insights to the needs of your target company. Connecting the two successfully is the best way to get yourself hired. Above all else, be authentic. Like a dog that can sniff fear on a person, an employer can intuit your sincerity and true level of interest and commitment.

You're "selling" your skills and yourself as a person. First: Your skills. An easy way to uncover yours is to list your accomplishments and then think of which skills it took to do them. Did baby-sitting require psychological sensitivity? Did selling kitchen knives require skills of persuasion? Review your list, and refine your skills into a "package" you can explain easily in a minute or two.

Next: You as a person. Most organizations want honest, smart, friendly, motivated, and responsible employees. Do you deal well with people? Are you flexible and open to learning? Did you, for example, show determination to get back on the slopes after you broke your leg skiing? Again, after you make your list, refine it so you can explain your personal "assets" in a minute or two.

## ***Step 3 - Practice***

You can make all the lists you want, but there's no substitute for rehearsing how you'd handle an interview. Ask your parent, sibling, or best friend to be the interviewer, and give her or him a list of questions to throw at you. There are ways to handle each of these. If you know what they are before you're in the "hot seat," your confidence going into the interview will soar. And remember, if you get a question that you can't answer, simply say you don't know.

Then say the question is something to which you would like to give more thought and that you are willing to learn what it takes. Again, an employer will respect someone who is honest and open about his or her limitations.

Body language is the other thing to be well aware of. If you have a video camera, use it for the practice; otherwise a mirror will do. Hand and arm movements shouldn't be too large. Don't fiddle. Your posture should be relaxed, but alert. Don't slouch; if you look bored in the interview why wouldn't the recruiter presume that you'd then be bored in the job too? Communicate interest and energy. Be yourself.

Clichés aside, practice does make perfect; it works for interviewing too.

### ***Step 4 - Dress The Part***

You wouldn't wear a white suit to a funeral (unless you're in China, where it's expected), and you wouldn't wear cargo shorts to an interview. With any organization, the way to dress is the way you would dress if you got the job. If you don't know what that is, ask. If you can't get any information on the company's style of attire, dress a little more formally than you think you might need to.

Personal grooming is part of your "dress" too. A good haircut or trim will impress. So will clean fingernails, a fresh-scrubbed look, pleasant breath, and a white smile (a recent teeth-cleaning can't hurt). And please, no perfume or aftershave ... you might love how you smell with that scent, but others may not!

### ***Step 5 - Get There Early***

This may seem obvious, but if you're not on time for your interview, the game is over. Getting there early allows you to take a few deep breaths, organize your notes, refresh your memory on a few points that you've found difficult in your practices, and scan any company materials that may be available in the waiting room. It also allows you to answer the "call of nature" (if there is a call) and to make any last-minute appearance adjustments.

The result? You'll feel better about yourself, and you'll be more relaxed in the interview. So leave plenty of time, and get there early. It gives you a psychological edge.

### ***Step 6 - Make A Good Impression***

It may seem cruel, but first impressions can be deal makers... or breakers. The interviewer starts forming opinions from the moment the two of you shake hands. No kidding. And by the way, that handshake is critical. Here's how to do it correctly:

- Look the interviewer in the eye as you offer your hand.
- Shake his or her hand firmly ... but not like a vise.
- Smile at the same time, and say something enthusiastic like, "Hello Mr. McGillicutty, it's great to meet you!"

As you walk to his or her office, make some small talk-- team or sports scores, how great the lobby looks, a recent storm... you get the gist. Establish positive vibes and the rest of the interview will feel more natural and less like you're being grilled at the Spanish Inquisition.

### ***Step 7 - Answer Well***

You're going to be asked some questions, but there are some tricks to answering them well:

- Don't ramble. It's better to give a shorter answer with strong points in it than to babble on for five minutes in a disorganized fashion.
- Look the interviewer in the eye when you're answering. If you don't, he or she may think you're fabricating your answer right there on the spot.

- Gather your thoughts. If you need a minute to collect your thoughts in order to answer a specific question, feel free to say: "I need to think about that for a moment ... " or "That's a great question ...". The interviewer will respect your honesty and your desire to offer a thoughtful answer. If a question is a difficult one, try to remember how to approach it. If you blank out, be honest, but definitely put a positive spin on your answer. A little humor never hurts either.

### ***Step 8 - Ask Questions***

Usually at the end of an interview, you'll be asked if you have any questions. If you don't ask something, it can be taken as a sign of lack of interest . . . so prepare some questions before the interview. There are two areas to question -- the organization and the job itself. We recommend asking about the job first. Are you clear on the responsibilities of the job? If not, ask for clarification.

Do you see where the job fits into the structure of the organization? Do you understand whom you'll be working with, and what their expectations of your work are? By the way, do not ask about the salary or benefits -- vacation, holidays, sick days, etc. -- in the first interview. Leave that for after they have presented you with an offer.

Be sure you know what the next steps are after the interview. Are they going to contact you? When do they think they can do that? Would they prefer you to follow up with them? How is the best way to do that?

The end of the interview is also a good time to emphasize how interested you are in taking the process to the next step and why you think you'd be the perfect candidate for the job. Do not beg for the job, but let your positive energy and enthusiasm win the day. Upon leaving, make sure to shake the person's hand again and make sincere eye contact. And, of course, don't forget to thank him or her.

### ***Step 9 - Be Yourself***

This is the most important step. No matter what anyone says, you can't pretend to be someone you're not. In the interview, let who you really are shine through. Trained interviewers spot actors quickly. Be proud of that precious collection of talents, motivations, and skills that make you the individual that you are. Believe in your ability to learn, grow, and develop, and act accordingly. Show "the real you" -- sense of humor and all -- and you'll be well on the way to getting hired.

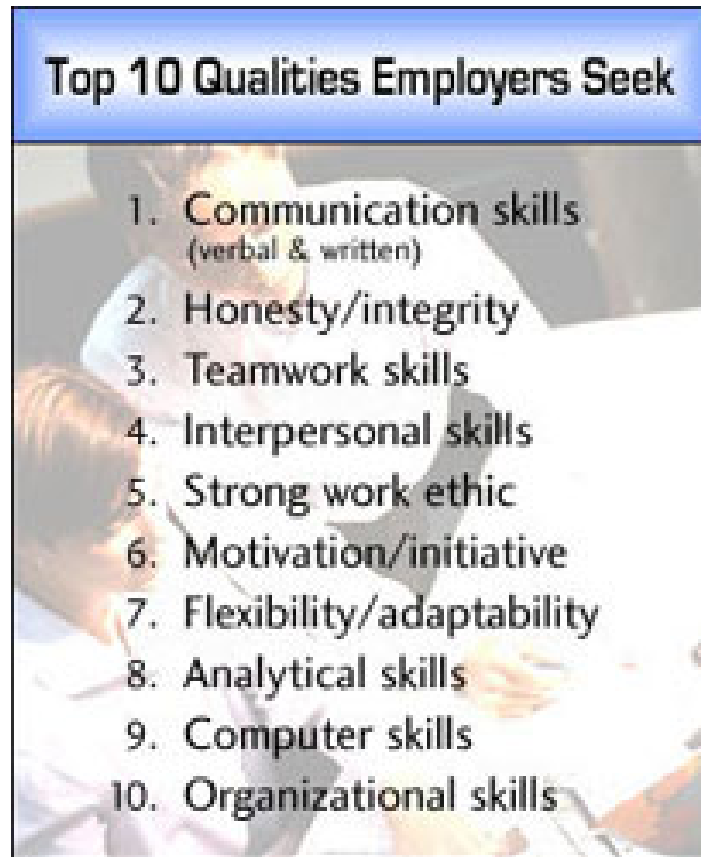
### ***Step 10 - Follow Up***

Your interview isn't over when you walk out the door. As soon as you get home, write a short thank-you note to your interviewer. You appreciated the time they spent with you and the chance to learn more about the job and the organization, so tell them.

If you promised to send something additional --writing samples or another copy of your resume, for example -- make sure to enclose it. Keep your note short, and restate your understanding of the next step. If you'd like to add something you forgot to say, this is the time and place.

You'd be surprised how many candidates never offer this simple bit of courtesy. Send a thank-you note, and you'll stand out in the crowd.

# Qualities Employers Look For When Hiring for their Part Time Jobs



This year is an employers market and in a year when employers are in control, selling yourself is critical. This year, as well as previous years, employers are impressed by job candidates who have great communication skills. They're also looking for honesty and integrity, teamwork skills, interpersonal skills, and a strong work ethic. Check out the Top Ten Qualities Employers Seek and use the list as a way to sell yourself in the interview...