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## **How to Excel at Your Interview**

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### **How to Walk Into an Interview Prepared:**

- Research the company. Try to talk to sales representatives who are in the industry.
- Research the industry.
- Research the product or service.
- Purchase thank you cards and postage stamps.
- Invest in an organizational binder to hold notes, company information, directions, and business cards.
- Prepare a list of questions you have for the client (See Sample Interview Questions Handout).
- If you are an entry-level candidate, make sure that your resume is no longer than one page, and your objective fits that job description.

### **What to Do at an Interview:**

- Always try to arrive at least 20 minutes early for the interview.
- Bring the phone number of the company, and/or the direct number of the person you are interviewing with.
- Bring a notepad with a binder and pen.
- When you introduce yourself to the client, you need to have good eye contact, a firm handshake, and a bright smile.
- Don't just sit down, ask the interviewer where they would like you to sit.
- Ask for permission to take notes during the interview (have a notepad & pen).
- Practice a short concise answer to the opening question, "Tell me about yourself?"
- Only talk about what's being discussed, and don't respond to questions with overly lengthy answers. Stay focused on what is being asked.
- Have a list of questions prepared about the company and their product.
- You will need to have a rehearsed and thought out plan to close the interview. Don't leave without receiving a commitment by the client to

proceed to the next step; i.e., "What reservations would you have in regards to moving me to the next step in your process?" "What are your concerns?" "Can you tell me how to alleviate these concerns?" "When can I schedule my next interview?"

- Get the client's business card.
- Never leave without extending a handshake and a thank you to both the client and the receptionist.
- Immediately after the interview send a thank you card to the client.
- Be very precise as to how you follow the directions set forth by the client in regards to moving forward with the company; i.e., make sure that if a client gives you an exact time to call on a certain date, that you call precisely at that time. If you can't get through on that day, follow up by calling them each day until you contact them.
- Be pleasantly persistent and courteous. Reminder: Remember to show a bright smile and lots of enthusiasm during the entire interview.

**Key Attributes:**

1. Have a professional appearance.
2. Perform good follow up.
3. Show lots of enthusiasm.
4. High organizational skills.
5. Be Persistent.
6. Utilize strong closing skills.
7. Show good presentation skills.
8. Emphasize proper communication skills.

**Interviewing Dress Code:**

Suggestions for Men:

1. A freshly pressed and dry cleaned suit (navy, dark gray), shirt (white), and a conservatively colored tie
2. Freshly polished shoes
3. Belt color should coordinate with shoe color

4. Well groomed hair and nails
5. Professional binder to hold resumes and notepad

Suggestions for Women:

1. A freshly pressed and dry cleaned skirt-suit (no shorter than knee length)-navy blue, dark gray
2. Freshly polished, low heeled shoes, coordinated with purse and belt
3. No scented products (includes perfume and/or hair care products)
4. Conservative jewelry
5. Well groomed hair and nails
6. Professional binder to hold resumes and notepad

**Reading Materials to Strengthen Your Sales Abilities:**

1. Spin Selling - Neil Rackham
2. Periodicals:
  - o Selling Power, P.O. Box 5467, 1140 International Pkwy. Fredericksburg, VA 22406 - 800.752.7355 - fax: 540.752.7001 <http://www.sellingpower.com>
  - o Sales and Marketing Report - 800.562.2706 <http://www.salesandmarketing.com>
  - o Selling - 800.621.5463 <http://www.lrp.com>
3. Knock em' Dead 2003 - Martin Yate
4. I Wanna Be a Sales Rep.- The Insiders Guide To Landing Great Paying Jobs in Sales - Lydia M. Afeman
5. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People - Dr. Stephen Covey

**Summary of Interview Tips:**

- Research the company, their products, services and the industry.
- Prepare a list of questions for the client that is broken down by subject.
- Dress professionally.
- Arrive at least 20 minutes early for the interview.
- When you introduce yourself to the client, you need to have good eye contact, a firm handshake and a bright smile.
- Practice a short concise answer to the opening question "Tell me about yourself?"
- Stay focused on the questions being asked.
- Have a rehearsed thought on how to close the interview. Don't leave without receiving a commitment by the client to proceed to the next step.
- Get the client's business card.
- Never leave without extending a handshake and a thank you to both the client and the receptionist.
- Immediately after the interview, send a thank you card to the client.
- Follow up with the client. Be persistent and courteous.