

# General Guidelines for an Interview

## **1. Prepare and Anticipate Questions**

Anticipate questions that may be asked of you in an interview by finding out about current events, topical items, 4-H, local and national news. Do your research either by using the internet, news, newspapers, talking to people. Prepare answers beforehand to some of the possible questions they may ask you. This does not mean memorizing responses. Also, prepare any questions you would like to ask your interviewers.

## **2. Practice Good Communication Skills**

It is important that you use good communication skills during an interview. Practice with a friend or family member. Work on the following communication skills:

1. presenting yourself in a positive and confident manner
2. offering a firm handshake before & after if appropriate
3. speaking clearly and effectively
4. listening attentively and maintaining eye contact
5. smiling
6. maintaining a confident posture
7. avoiding the use of unnecessary verbal distractions such as: “umm”, “ahh”, and “like”

## **3. What your clothes say about you**

In an interview your attire plays a supporting role. Your conduct, your interpersonal skills and your ability to articulate intelligent and well thought out responses to questions are the most important elements.

Appropriate attire supports your image, as a person who takes the interview process seriously. If you are primarily remembered for your interview attire, this is probably because you made an error in judgement! Dress nicely and appropriately it is a compliment to the person you meet, so if in doubt, err on the side of dressing better than you might need to. Don't dress for a party or a date!

Even if you would or could wear jeans on the job or the work environment is outdoors and very non-suit, wearing a suit to the interview shows you take the interview seriously as a professional meeting. Everything should be clean and well pressed.

### **These are recommendations:**

#### **Men**

- Dress pants or business casual pants (NOT JEANS)
- Shirt
- Tie
- Jacket or Sweater
- Clean shoes (NOT work boots, sandals or sneakers)
- Facial Hair: If worn, should be well groomed.
- Jewelry: Conservative

#### **Women**

- Suit pants/skirts **or**
- If you wear pants, they should be creased and tailored, not tight nor flowing
- Your skirt should cover your thighs when you are seated. A skirt that ends at the knee when you're standing looks chic and professional. Longer skirts are professional too.
- Tops/Shirts: Don't show cleavage, underwear or stomach.
- Jewelry/Cosmetics: Conservative
- Shoes: Flip flops, Crocs are **not** okay. Avoid extremes.

#### **4. Be punctual**

Be on time for the interview. Plan to arrive about 10-15 minutes early. Give yourself time to relax. Use your waiting time to check your appearance and review the questions and answers you prepared.

#### **Interview Dos and Don'ts**

##### **Interview Dos**

- Know the exact time and location of your interview; know how long it takes to get there, park, find a rest room to freshen up, etc.
- Arrive early; 10 minutes prior to the interview start time
- Dress appropriately for the industry; err on the side of being conservative to show you take the interview seriously. Your personal grooming and cleanliness should be impeccable.
- Treat other people you encounter with courtesy and respect. Their opinions of you might be solicited during decision making.
- Offer a firm handshake, make eye contact, and have a friendly expression when you are greeted by your interviewer.
- Listen to be sure you understand your interviewer's name and the correct pronunciation.
- Even when your interviewer gives you a first and last name, address your interviewer by title (Ms., Mr., Dr.,...)and last name, until invited to do otherwise.
- Maintain good eye contact during the interview
- Sit still in your seat; avoid fidgeting and slouching
- Respond to questions and back up your statements about yourself with specific examples whenever possible.
- Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question.
- Be thorough in your responses, while being concise in your wording.
- Be honest and be yourself. Dishonesty gets discovered and is grounds for withdrawing offers.
- Treat your interview seriously and as though you are truly interested in the opportunity presented.
- Exhibit a positive attitude. The interviewer is evaluating you.
- When the interviewer concludes the interview, offer a firm handshake and make eye contact. Depart gracefully.

##### **Interview DON'TS**

- Don't falsify answers to interview questions
- Don't be unprepared for typical interview questions. You may not be asked all of them in every interview, but being unprepared looks foolish.
- Don't assume that a female interviewer is "Mrs." or "Miss". Address her as "Ms." unless told otherwise. Her marital status is irrelevant to the purpose of the interview.
- Don't chew gum or smell like smoke.
- Don't allow your cell phone to sound during the interview. (If it does apologize quickly and ignore it). Don't take a cell phone call.
- Don't take your parents, animal, friend to an interview. If you are not grown up and independent enough to attend an interview alone.