

Lecture 10 - Interview performance

Are you invited to an interview? Congratulations! You already got much further than many other candidates for the same role.

There are various aspects you need in order to obtain this job, though!

1. **Physical aspect and open body language:** you need to look professional, neat, clean and well groomed. Please see Lecture 7 (regarding attire and behaviour).
2. **Smell:** Make sure that if you wear perfume, you don't apply too much - especially if your interview takes place in a small room, it can be quite uncomfortable for the interviewers. You can put a little bit on your hand wrists and on your neck, but don't spray it all over your chest. Use some deodorant, to make sure that if you sweat due to stress, you won't have a bad smell.
3. **Accessories and make-up, if applicable:** don't wear very many accessories (necklaces, earrings, etc.). Something discrete is much better. You can apply make-up, but don't add too much. Feel free to use a red lipstick (or another strong colour) that will highlight your personality, but don't add so much make-up that the interviewers are drawn to that instead of who you are as a professional. Use just enough for you to be comfortable and confident in your skin.
4. **Don't arrive late, but don't arrive too early either:** make sure you arrive exactly 10 minutes before the time when they requested you to come. Don't be late. This is a unique opportunity, and people don't want to wait for you. If something unfortunate happens (such as an accident) that prevents you from reaching the interview place, if possible, call the company straight away to let them know that you will not be able to attend the interview due to that problem. You might not be given a chance to reschedule this particular interview, but if there are any other opportunities in the future in the same company, they might offer you another interview. If you simply don't show up to the interview, without any explanation, it is very unlikely for them to ever invite you again for an interview in that company.
5. **Greet everyone in the building.** Be nice to the person at the reception and to the people welcoming you. It might sound surprising to you, but the employer will ask them for feedback about you. The employer doesn't know much about you, and they are about to employ you and to invest in you (to train you for the role). They want to find out as much as possible about you, and they want to know how you interact with people. Make sure you are friendly with everyone, chat and smile. If you are shy and sit in a corner by yourself, or talk on the phone, this is not going to be seen well. Instead, make friends with everyone, exchange business cards, ask people about themselves and tell them how excited you are to have this interview opportunity. Show that you are passionate about your profession and that you are grateful to be given the opportunity to interview for such a great company!
6. **Assessment centres:** Sometimes, before the interview (or before the interview stage, in a separate session), you might have some activities, so the employer will see how you interact with other people, how engaged and friendly you are, and if you have communication, leadership and teamwork capabilities. They might give you some tasks to do, and someone will watch and assess you, trying to know you as much as possible. Even though you think nobody watches you, some of the candidates in the room can be the company employers who have the role to watch you and report everything about you to the leadership team or human resources department of the company.

7. **Do a lot of research about the company before the interview:** Make sure you know projects that they are working on, connect with some people from that company on LinkedIn and ask for interview advice, etc. Learn about the company values and purpose (most companies have these on their public website). Do not stalk the personal life of the employer or the company staff, and do not bring into discussion anything personal, even if you saw a post on LinkedIn or Facebook about a personal matter, their birthday, etc.
8. **Prepare answers for the most common interview questions:**
 - Tell me something about yourself;
 - Tell me a time when you had to deal with an angry customer;
 - Tell me a time when you worked in a team, and a team member didn't do their part of the work;
 - Tell me a time when you went out of your way for a customer;

There are very many other questions, and you can practice on LinkedIn. If you go to LinkedIn, at the top is a tab with "Jobs", and then click on "Interview Prep". You will see there a lot of different questions and how you should answer them. You can also google "behavioural interview questions and how to answer", and you will find very many examples. Make sure you know how to answer the most common ones - this will give you the confidence that you need in order to perform very well in the interview.
9. **Business cards:** at the end of the interview, before you leave the room, give each person from the interview panel business cards and thank them for their time.
10. **Email after the interview:** when you reach home, write an email to the interview panel and thank them for their time:

Dear Sarah, Dan and Sasha,

Thank you so much for taking the time to interview me today. It was a pleasure to meet you and I am now even more excited to work for ABC company. I liked the interaction with you and I hope to have the chance to work with you.

Thank you very much.

*Kind regards,
Gabriela*

In case you don't have their contact details, email the person that notify you of the interview and kindly ask them to pass the message to the interview panel:

Dear John,

Thank you very much for your help with this. I would like to let you know that I had my interview today at ABC company and I was very excited to meet the interview panel made of Sarah, Dan and Sasha. They all come across as great professionals and this experience just reinforced the fact that I want to become part of the ABC team. I would like to kindly ask you to pass a message to the interview panel from me, please. I would like to let them know that it was a pleasure to meet them and I am now even more excited to work for ABC company. I liked the interaction with them and I hope to have the chance to work with them.

Once again, thank you very much and please keep in touch!

*Kind regards,
Gabriela*

For phone interviews, only points 4, 7, 8, and 10 apply.

For video interviews, only points 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 10 apply.