

# Secrets for interview success

## top ten skills employers want for their employees

1. Concern for productivity
2. Pride of craftsmanship and quality of work
3. Responsibility to follow through assigned tasks
4. Dependability
5. Good work habits
6. Positive attitude toward company/employers
7. Ability to write and speak effectively
8. Ability to read and apply printed matter
9. Ability to follow instructions
10. Ambition/motivation/desire to get ahead

## tips on marketing your skills

### what employers want to learn about their applicants:

- ⊙ What can this person do for me?
- ⊙ Where is the proof?
- ⊙ What did they do in addition to taking classes?
- ⊙ Did he/she set things up, create things?

### top skills and qualities employers seek in job candidates:

- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Communication skills     | 8. Interpersonal skills   |
| 2. Strong work ethic        | 9. Problem-solving skills |
| 3. Teamwork skills          | 10. Technical skills      |
| 4. Motivation/Initiative    | 11. Detail-Oriented       |
| 5. Analytical skills        | 12. Organizational skills |
| 6. Computer skills          | 13. Self-confidence       |
| 7. Flexibility/Adaptability | 14. Leadership skills     |

## skills students most need to improve upon

1. Realistic job expectations/Lose sense of entitlement
2. Communication (written and verbal)
3. Career goals/Focus
4. Professionalism/Etiquette
5. Knowledge of company/Work environment
6. Work ethic
7. Flexibility/Adaptability
8. Interviewing skills
9. Motivation/Initiative
10. Customer Service

## what college candidates lack

Ironically, communication skills not only top employers' list of most-desired skills, but also their list of the skills most lacking in new college graduates. Unfortunately, in spite of requesting this skill year after year, many employers also report that college graduates lack good grammar and writing skills.

"Time management- prioritization is key; Analysis of leadership style and awareness of what may or may not motivate others; Appreciation of other's ideas; Attention to detail; and tolerant is better for everyone. Targeting your message- shape your ideas, tone, and delivery keeping in mind your audience's goals."

# before, during and after the interview

## prepare

Research the organization and include it into the interview. While researching, note the following:

- ⊙ Names and job titles of key contacts
- ⊙ Is the organization privately or publicly owned
- ⊙ Products and/or services
- ⊙ Year of incorporation
- ⊙ Number of employees
- ⊙ Principal locations and subsidiaries
- ⊙ Types of customers
- ⊙ Key competitors
- ⊙ Sales and profit trends
- ⊙ Possible future ventures

## practice

Prepare responses to possible interview questions. Use specific examples, comparisons and/or descriptions to support your answers. Through your responses, you should present yourself as someone who will be committed to the organization and its goals, who will work hard to succeed and who will fit into the organization.

## communicate

You can now effectively communicate both verbally and non-verbally.

- ⊙ Don't be late for the interview! Drive and map out the route the day before if you are unfamiliar with the location.
- ⊙ Your outfit should be industry appropriate and you should greet with a firm handshake.
- ⊙ Make appropriate eye contact with the interviewer, correctly pronounce his/her name and be enthusiastic.

## evaluate

Write down your assessment of the process. Include basics such as the name and title of the interviewer, what the job entailed, ways you could improve your performance, and the next step in the process.

When following-up an interview, remember to write a

## thank-you letter

to the interviewer(s) within 48 hours. The note can be typed, handwritten, or e-mailed, depending on the organization's culture. Keep the note brief, but reiterate your interest in the position if you are, in fact, interested.

## top ten places employers find new hires

1. Organization's internship fair
2. Employee referrals
3. Career/Job fairs
4. On-campus recruiting
5. Company website job postings
6. Organization's co-op programs
7. Commercial career website job postings
8. Faculty contacts
9. Internet job postings
10. Student organizations/Clubs

## Illegal Interview Questions

- ⊙ National Origin/Citizenship
- ⊙ Age
- ⊙ Marital/Family Status
- ⊙ Affiliations
- ⊙ Personal
- ⊙ Disabilities
- ⊙ Arrest Record
- ⊙ Military

For a more detailed description of these illegal questions, refer to Handling Illegal Questions article within "Job Choices for Business & Liberal Arts Students", National Association of Colleges and Employers 2007.

## References

Job Choices 2010, National Association of Colleges and Employers, Bethlehem, PA  
National Association of College and Employers 2004  
"Making the Grade" by Carl Bialik on careerbuilder.com