

Ten Rules of Interviewing

Before stepping into an interview, be sure to practice, practice, practice! A job-seeker going to an interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing.

To help you with the interview process, keep the following ten rules in mind:

1. **Keep your answers brief and concise.** Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.
2. **Include concrete, quantifiable data.** Interviewees tend to talk in generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant is skilled. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.
3. **Repeat your key strengths several times.** It's essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the company or department goals and how they might benefit the potential employer. If you repeat your strengths they will be remembered and -- if supported with quantifiable accomplishments -- they will more likely be believed.
4. **Identify 10 skills and a story to tell about each skill.** In preparing for interviews, make a list of your skills and key assets. Then reflect on past jobs and provide illustrations of each skill you used successfully. Using PAR on the following page.
5. **Put yourself on their team.** Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer's name and products or services. For example, "As a member of ____, I would carefully analyze the ____ and ____." Show that you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful, though, not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.
6. **Image is often as important as content.** What you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Studies have shown that 65% of the conveyed message is nonverbal; gestures, physical appearance and attire are highly influential during job interviews.
7. **Ask questions.** The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation. Just as you plan how you would answer an interviewer's questions, write out specific questions you want to ask. Then ask a question(s) when prompted by the interviewer (don't ask about benefits or salary). The interview process is a two-way street whereby you and the interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match.
8. **Maintain a conversational flow.** By consciously maintaining a conversational flow—a dialogue instead of monologue -- you will be perceived more positively. Use feedback questions at the

end of your answers and use body language and voice intonation to create a conversational interchange between you and the interviewer.

9. ***Research the company, product lines, and competitors.*** Research will provide important information to refer to during an interview and help you decide whether you're interested in the company.
10. ***Keep an interview journal.*** As soon as possible, write a brief summary of what happened. Note any follow-up action you should take and put in your calendar. Review your presentation. Keep a journal of your attitude and the way you answered the questions. Did you ask questions to get the information you needed? What might you do differently next time? Prepare and send a brief, concise thank-you letter. Restate your skills and stress what you can do for the company.

*For more information, visit: <http://fastweb.monster.com>

