



42 THINGS YOU NEED TO DO

Before, During, and After
Every Job Interview

WHEN YOU GET “THE CALL”

Good news: the recruiter wants to meet you. Don't waste this opportunity!

1. Use business etiquette when you answer the phone.

“Hi, this is John Smith” or “Hello, John Smith speaking” should do the trick. Address the interviewer as Ms, Mrs. or Mr.

Switch over to their first name if they encourage you to do so.

2. Find a quiet room to talk.

If you can't, apologize and try to reschedule the interview. You need to make sure the recruiter can hear your voice loud and clear and that they'll have your undivided attention.

3. Be positive and enthusiastic about the interview.

Don't overdo it, though. Be polite but not too casual. Listen carefully and stick to the point when answering questions.

4. Feel free to ask questions at the end.

Note, however, that this might not be the right time to discuss salary options. Negotiating financial issues is best left for face-to-face meetings.

5. Take notes.

Have a pen and paper at hand. Taking notes on your cell phone will be difficult and distracting for everyone involved.

Jot down important information that comes up during the phone call. Also, write down the questions and your answers as soon as you hang up.

This information will come in handy in later stages:

- Write down the time and date of the upcoming interview.
- Write down the name, title, and department of the person you'll be meeting.
- Ask if there's anything specific the interviewer would like you to prepare or bring to the meeting.

6. Be sure to thank the caller and make sure you've got the time and date of the interview right.

For example, you could say something along the lines of "Thanks again, Ms. Lee, I look forward to meeting you on Monday the 16th at 9:00."

7. If possible, ask if the recruiter could send you an email confirming the meeting.

Extra Reading:

[Step-by-step Job Interview Preparation](#)

[How to Handle a Telephone Interview](#)

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Congratulations, you've scheduled an interview! Now it's time to do your homework:

8. Learn about the company's strong suit.

Look closely at the company's website to get a feel for its culture, business goals, products or services, financial reports, and challenges they might be facing.

9. Understand the organization's mission and vision.

A vague idea of what the organization does is not enough. You should also know why it does this work and what it values. This key background information will allow you to better explore your role in helping the organization on its mission.

10. Figure out the skills and experience the company values.

First and foremost, you should know what the company looks for in a qualified candidate. This enables you to position yourself as the best candidate for the job. To understand all this, read between the lines of their job postings. Check out the employer's career page to get an idea of the type of employees they desire.

You might try to look for employer reviews to have a better picture of the work environment.

11. Research the company...

When you go into a job interview, it's always good to be knowledgeable about the company. Do a bit of googling and read through the company's website. Pay particular attention to their "About Us" and "News" pages.

12. ...its clients, products, and services.

As a potential employee, you need to have an idea of the type of work you'll be doing once hired. A general idea of who the company's clients are and types of products and services on offer is essential.

You can also read through the company's blog, case studies, and white papers to gain a better understanding of their accomplishments.

13. Get that inside scoop.

To ensure you're fully prepared for the job interview, visit websites such as Glassdoor to get insider information on the workings of the company you're applying to.

Plus, you can look at employee profiles on LinkedIn to see how their careers progress.

14. Learn about the person interviewing you.

Finally, you should find out who the interviewer will be. This will give you a leg up in the interview since you'll be able to relate to them.

Check out the recruiter's profile on social media. It's easier to talk and build personal relations if you know more about the recruiter.

Moreover, there's always a chance you've got the same (not just) professional interests. This will help you break the ice or grab their attention.

15. Get your online persona up to scratch.

We know that hiring managers use social media to research candidates. What will they find if they look you up?

Be prepared to answer questions about your social media presence or personal brand during the interview.

Think of your achievements and how they can boost your potential employer's business. This is what the employer wants to know. Plus, it will help you negotiate a higher salary.

Extra Reading:

[How to Check Your Online Presence Before Recruiters Look You Up](#)

[How To Optimize Your LinkedIn Summary & Profile To Get Jobs](#)

16. Suit up.

Literally - unless the company explicitly tells you to dress more casually. First impressions matter and an elegant outfit speaks volumes. Save that designer t-shirt for casual Friday.

17. Rehearse your pitch - learn to showcase your skills and qualifications.

You should learn to introduce yourself and pitch your candidacy under two minutes or so. Avoid making it sound as if it's a "canned" speech. Ad-libbing some of it won't hurt, though it's good to remember that the best improvisation is prepared improvisation.

18. Prepare your answers to typical interview questions in advance.

19. Make a list of questions to ask during the interview.

20. Figure out how to get to the interview location.

Use Google Maps to plan your commute. If you are particularly prone to stress, you might even give the commute a dry run a day or two before.

Hint: If it's a workday, check out what people are wearing as they enter or exit the building. This way you'll figure out the dress code.

Remember that rush hours can mess up your ETA - being on time for the interview is essential.

21. Think about your desired salary.

Most people don't know how to talk about money because they don't research the running rates. Explore Glassdoor and staffing agencies reports to find out if the salary you're about to propose is aligned with the market.

Extra Reading:

[Common Job Interview Questions and Best Answers \(20 Examples\)](#)

[65 Questions to Ask an Interviewer \(Examples for Specific Jobs\)](#)

THINGS TO TAKE WITH YOU TO THE INTERVIEW

Get a professional-looking briefcase (save that Lollapalooza tote bag for the team-building field trip.) Pack the following items:

22. A photo ID (e.g. passport, green card, driver's license).
23. A pen and a notepad.
24. A copy of the job description.
25. Three copies of the resume and cover letter.
26. Three copies of potential reference lists.
27. Samples of your work that are relevant to the job.
28. A list of at least five questions you plan to ask the interviewers.
29. Notes on the interview agenda, names of interviewers, a list of names of people you talked to at the company (e.g. recruiter, phone screener, hiring manager), and who you should ask for when you arrive.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Impressions matter - from the very first smile to the final handshake:

30. Switch your cell phone to silent mode and put it away.

31. Treat each person you meet in a friendly and respectful manner.

32. Stand up to shake hands with each interviewer who joins you to sit in for the talk.

33. Listen attentively and ask questions where appropriate. Take brief notes.

34. Don't limit eye contact to one person. Shift your gaze from one speaker to the next. Don't just focus on one person when you speak.

35. Be prepared to present a brief personal introduction - who you are and what you will bring to the table.

36. Showcase your skills by highlighting how they relate to the job.

37. Ask the interviewer for their business card or double-check you got their email address and phone number right.

38. Ask when you can expect to hear from them again, and when you could reach out to them to ask for feedback.

39. Find out who's going to provide you with status updates, and whom to contact in case you don't hear back.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

At this point, most candidates just sit back and cross their fingers. Your best course of action is to remain proactive.

40. Send the interviewer a thank you note ASAP (definitely within 24 hours of the interview).

Your thank you email can be useful when you want to highlight some crucial skill or if you forgot to mention something during the interview. Ask about the recruitment process timeline and when the final decision will be made. If you don't hear back from the hiring manager by then, feel free to follow up with the recruiter.

Extra Reading:

[How to Write a Thank You Email After an Interview \(+10 Examples\)](#)

41. Follow through on any promises you made during the interview (e.g., send them that scan, forward that portfolio link, etc.)

42. Don't give up hope! The hiring process can take weeks.

GOOD LUCK AT YOUR INTERVIEW!



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Pete is a Career Advice Expert and a co-founder of Zety. When he's not busy helping you land your next job, he builds and develops well-oiled teams and scouts talent. After hours, he puts on his favorite jazz records or tries to identify Jack Nicholson's most masterly one-liner.

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Have fun!