

# ACING THE JOB INTERVIEW



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# WHAT WILL YOU DO?

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- The real purpose of interviews
- Types of interviews and how to succeed with each
- Steps to prepare for an interview
- How to deal with difficult questions
- Tips to make your interview stand out



# PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

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- For you
  - Showcase your strengths
  - Demonstrate your fit in the organization
  - Learn about the job
  - Learn about the company





# PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

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- For the interviewer
  - Assess skills
  - Assess fit
  - Determine next steps



# INTERVIEW TYPES

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- Structured
- Unstructured
- Job skills
- Personality traits
- Interview formats
  - One on One interview
  - Group interview
  - Technical seminar



# INTERVIEW PREPARATION

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- Behavioral Interviews
- Self assessment
- Preparation of “instances”
- One-Minute Professional Autobiography
- Company & Salary Research



# SELF ASSESSMENT

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- What can you do?
- What do you like to do?
- What are your core values?
- What type of person are you?
- In what kind of work environment are you at your best?





# PREPARATION

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- Gather Important Experiences
- Convert Experiences into Stories
  - A situation with a problem, and the potential for conflict of some type
  - The actions taken by the main character (you) to solve the problem
  - The resolution
  - Append a moral or a “lesson learned”



# COMPANY RESEARCH

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- The Industry as a whole
  - Stock Points ([www.stockpoint.com](http://www.stockpoint.com))
- The company
  - Yahoo financial ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com))
  - Wall Street Journal Research Net ([www.wsrn.com](http://www.wsrn.com))
  - Companies online ([www.companiesonline.com](http://www.companiesonline.com))
  - Hoovers ([www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com))
  - Biz Web ([www.bizweb.com](http://www.bizweb.com))
- The specific position



# SALARY COMPARISONS

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- What are you worth?
- How much do you need?
- On-line salary calculators (e.g., Monster, Careerbuilder, or IEEE- USA salary calculator)





# DURING THE INTERVIEW

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- What really matters
- Appearance
- Behavior, good and bad
- Topics to avoid
- Questions to ask
- Salary negotiations
- Afterwards



# IMPACT OF YOUR PRESENCE

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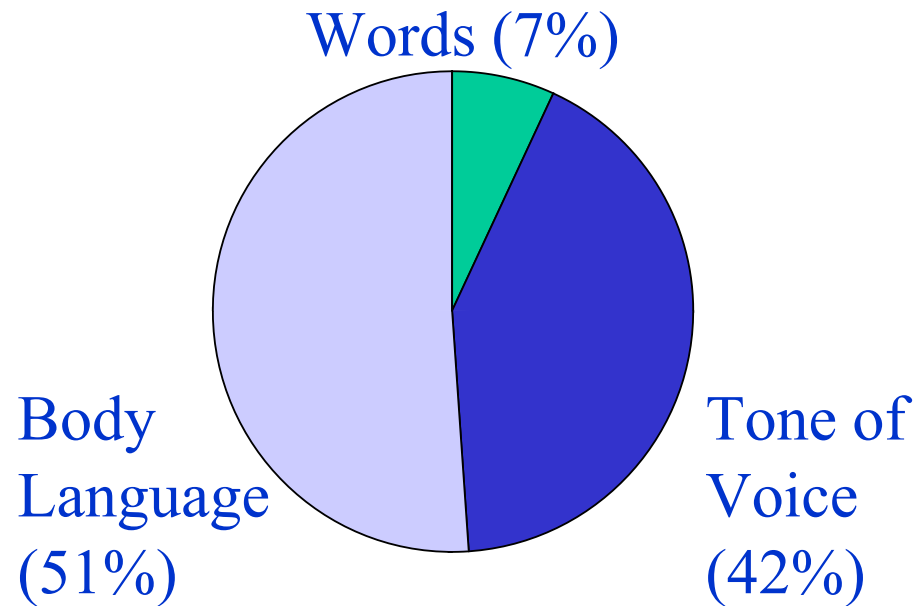
- Never distract the interviewer
- Emphasize the impact of your presence:
  - Appearance
  - Confidence
  - Demeanor





# COMMUNICATION BASICS

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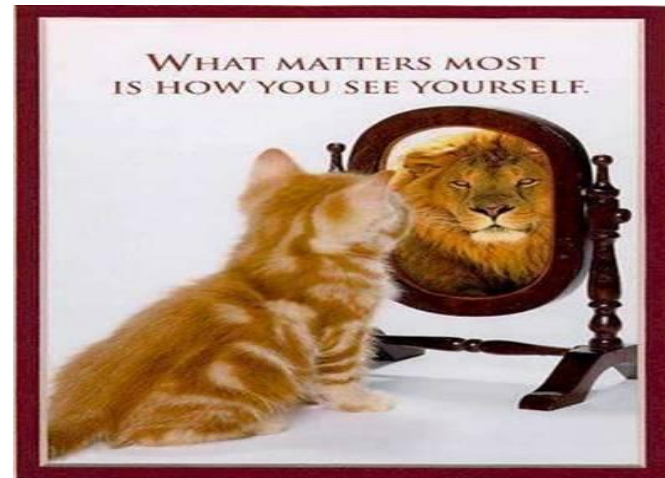
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# APPEARANCE

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- Dress to blend
- Good grooming is important
- Be on time or a few minutes early





# NON-VERBAL CUES

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- Lean forward to show interest
- Keep your hands away from face and head
- Avoid folding your arms across your chest
- Make eye contact, but don't stare
- Smile periodically
- Show enthusiasm



# THINGS TO AVOID

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- Over-talking
- Displaying arrogance
- Using profanity or risqué humor
- Distracting physical habits
- Complaining
- Making negative references to others



# THE FIRST FEW MINUTES

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- Establish rapport
- Thank the interviewer for their time
- Offer the interviewer another resume
- Shake hands





# TOPICS TO AVOID

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- Sex
- Race and ethnicity
- Religion
- Money
- Who you know in the organization





# INTERVIEW ISSUES

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- Requests for negative information
- Questions to put you “on the spot”
  - Interviewer advances an unusual theory and asks for your opinion
  - Interviewer poses a difficult hypothetical question





# NEGATIVE QUESTIONS - COPING

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- Restate the question in your own words, and ask if your interpretation is correct
- Tactfully disagree OR admit to the flaw
- Highlight a compensating strength
- Show how you learned from the experience
- Try to show the good side of weakness
- Distinguish between personality trait and behavior
- Back it up with an example, if you can



# ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

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- Answer the question?
- Don't answer the questions?
- Get a lawyer?





# QUESTIONS TO ASK

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- What is it like to work for the group manager?
- What is the corporate culture? The group culture?
- What training is available?
- What is needed for success in the job? In the company?
- Describe the group structure & prospects for advancement.
- What is the turnover rate in this job? In the company?
- Why did the previous person leave?
- Is a detailed job description available?



# SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

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- Do not mention salary prematurely
- Know beforehand what you are worth and how much you need
- Let the other person mention a number first
- Salary is not everything





# THE LAST FEW MINUTES

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- Verify the next step.
- Restate why you are the best candidate
- Say “Thank you” and smile
- Exit professionally

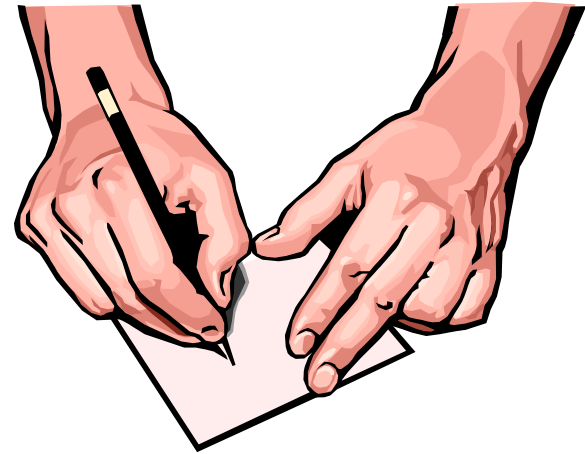




# AFTER THE INTERVIEW

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- Send Thank-You letter
- Debrief yourself
- Keep records





# MISCELLANEOUS

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- Make a practice trip to the interview site
- Be prompt - not too early or late
- Prepare questions (writing these helps)
- Practice!





# SOURCES

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- “Get Hired!” by Paul Green - Bard Books, Inc. ISBN 1885167148
- “Engineer’s Guide to Lifelong Employability” - IEEE Press ISBN 0879423145
- “What Color is Your Parachute?” by Richard Bolles - Ten Speed Press ISBN 0898156335
- “Winning Through Intimidation” by Robert Ringer - Fawcett Books ISBN 0449207862