



THE DAY AFTER PRISON

REENTRY SERVICES

Courses & Learning

MASTERING INTERVIEW SKILLS



A Brief and Comprehensive Guide for a Successful Interview

There's a good chance you will have your first interview out of prison within just a few days from release, if you haven't had it already. Here are a few suggestions to help you maximize your chances of success.

1. Listen Closely:

One of the best techniques you can use in your next interview is to listen closely or active listening. You want to show the interviewer that you're paying close attention to what they are saying.

For example: Periodically re-state what the interviewer said to you, saying something along the lines of: "Just to clarify, this position requires weekend availability, correct? or, "Did I hear you say you require a valid driver's license?" Be engaged in the conversation.

Also, use short statements to show that you're paying attention.

For example: "I see what you mean;" "That makes sense;" or, "Can you explain that?" And be sure not to interrupt the interviewer in mid sentence.





2. Give Concise Responses:

You want to be able to communicate effectively and concisely during an interview. It's important to give brief and straightforward responses to the questions asked.

For example: "I have two years of experience managing a printing press and customer requests simultaneously while maintaining a calm and efficient approach."

3. Answer Questions with Examples:

Be sure to prepare examples from previous roles that relate to the type of skills and qualities the interviewer is looking for in the job applicant.

For example: "I see you require experience working with heavy equipment. I obtained my forklift license in 2019 and I have three years of experience working at a shipyard as a heavy equipment operator."





4. Research the Company:

Researching the company is very crucial to impressing the interviewer. Go through the company's website, job description, and company's social media pages to understand the work culture and how you fit in that culture.

For example: "I see that your company started in Seattle in 2015 with only four employees and today you have over 20 employees and over 50 volunteers delivering produce to over 50 food banks throughout the state. It sounds like a fast-paced operation. My job history has prepared me well for a dynamic environment like this one."

5. When to disclose your felony conviction:

Timing matters: You don't want to disclose your conviction too early, as it may negatively affect the employer's perception of you before they learn about your skills and qualifications.

However, it's crucial to be honest if specifically asked about your criminal record.

If the background check is brought up during the interview, be prepared to discuss the steps you have taken to rehabilitate yourself. Share any relevant information about completing probation, participating in counseling or support programs, or obtaining certifications or education to demonstrate personal growth and commitment to positive change.

If the background check is not brought up during the interview, you might consider disclosing it later in the hiring process, such as during the background check or if you are selected as a top candidate.





6. Finish Strong:

At the end of the interview, it is important to thank the interviewer for the opportunity and reaffirm your interest in the position. It's also a good idea to ask the interviewer when you could expect to hear back regarding next steps.

For example: Thank you for your time and thank you for considering me for this interview. I am very much interested in joining your team. When can I expect to hear from you on the next steps?

Resources:

1. "Essential interviewing: A programmed approach to effectively communicate with people" by David R. Evans - This book delves into the fundamentals of communication and interviewing.
2. "Interviewing Skills For Managers" by Lothar Katz - This book discusses interviewing techniques that managers can use to ensure they spot the best candidates for a job.
3. "The Balance Careers" - The Balance Careers website provides a wide range of articles on job searching and interview skills, including How to Prepare for Common Job Interview Questions; and "Tips for Answering Interview Questions About Communication."
4. "Common Interview Questions" by Indeed- Indeed website provides several articles related to common interview questions and the best way to answer them.
5. "When to Disclose a Criminal Record" by The Wall Street Journal:
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB109347819251301442>
6. "Getting Back to Work: Tips for the Job Seeker with a Criminal Record" by National Employment Law Project:
<https://www.nelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Report-The-Job-Ahead-Advancing-Opportunity-Unemployed-Workers.pdf>