



How to prepare for an in-person interview

You've completed an online application and made it past the phone interview. Now, it's time to really show your prospective employer what you've got.

The on-site interview is an exciting step that can also cause a lot of anxiety for job seekers. To ease your burden, we've prepared 13 tips and tricks to help you nail an in-person interview and close the deal.

1. Show up 5 to 10 minutes early

- Do a dry run the day before: find the building, locate visitor parking, and determine where you'll walk in the building. The next day, show up 10 minutes before your interview time at most. Trust me: if you show up in the lobby more than 10 minutes early, you'll cause a minor disturbance, as the HR folks and hiring team will be preoccupied with your presence in the building.
- If you insist on showing up really early, don't walk into the building until 10 minutes before.

2. Research!

- This is an obvious tip, but so many candidates do not take the time to conduct research on the job, the company, and the personnel interviewing them. You should at least spend a half hour studying for this interview. Take the time to really understand what factors will determine whether or not you'll want this job, and formulate questions based off of them.

3. Ask your human resources contact about what to expect

- Your HR contact coordinating the interview will provide you a lot of information that can help you prepare. Don't be afraid to ask for pieces of information, including expected dress code, length of the interview, a schedule, interview format (i.e., should I expect to answer behavioral interview questions?), and anything else you can think of within reason.

4. Bring supporting materials

- Always bring 3 to 5 extra copies of your resume.
- Take a pen and notebook to take notes and reference questions you wrote beforehand.
- If possible, bring a portfolio that highlights your work. Do not reveal proprietary information. The portfolio should be used to help guide the conversation along and add visual emphasis to points you're trying to make. Don't force it on anyone and use only when it helps your cause. This tactic will often impress everyone you interact with.



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5. Ask for water

- A glass of water buys you precious time when you're stumped by a question an interviewer asks you. Calmly take a sip while gathering your thoughts, then wow them with your response.

6. Dress to impress

- Look good, feel good! As a rule of thumb, you should dress in business formal attire unless the company tells you otherwise. Dressing well during an interview is a sign of respect for the company, the role, and the people taking time to meet you.

7. Nervous? Put tissues in your pockets

- This tip always gets a laugh, but it works. Many folks get sweaty palms when nervous. Trust me, that type of handshake makes the wrong impression. To counteract your body's instincts, place tissue paper in your pockets, squeeze them, then extend your dry hands for a firm handshake.

8. Prepare for behavioral interview (STAR format) questions

- Take the time to list at least 10 examples of memorable events over the last few years of your career. If you're a new college grad, think about your internships or extracurricular activities. Potential ideas include major projects completed, people you've won over, difficult situations you've endured, and failures you've learned from. The idea is these examples will be fresh in your mind and you won't be caught flat-footed trying to think of examples while you're likely a little nervous!

9. Be personable

- While this tip seems glaringly obvious, it's important to note that many folks become inward-facing when they are nervous. So, if the on-site interview has you feeling jittery, you're going to focus a lot more on anxiously monitoring your own behavior and you'll miss out on a great opportunity to establish rapport with your interviewer. If you are prepared for the interview, allow yourself to feel confident and focus on making a personal connection with your future colleagues.

10. Read the room

- A couple minutes into the interview, you should be able to get a feel for the tone and tenor of your talk. Sometimes, recruiters read from a script. Others are more free-form and want to see how you react while talking to a real person. Pick up on those cues, adjust your style accordingly, and watch your stock rise.



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11. Match your skills to their pain

- During an interview, candidates often fall into the trap of simply playing defense, meaning you answer the question and wait for the next one. Ideally, however, you'll gather critical information about why the job is open and what is keeping the hiring manager up at night. If you can match your skills and experiences to those pains, you'll greatly increase your chances of closing the deal and receiving a job offer.

12. Prepare questions

- Write at least 3 questions you can ask at the end of the interview, if time allows. Always ask about the next steps in the process and reiterate your interest in the position and joining the team.

13. Send thank you notes

- Any recruiter or manager will tell you: very few candidates bother to send a follow-up note of thanks. By simply sending a quick email, you'll stand out from the sea of candidates while reaffirming your interest.
- If you'd like to be really efficient, consider bringing thank you notes to the interview and leaving them with the receptionist on your way out!

If you would like to learn more about how to increase your chances of landing your dream job or hiring game-changing talent into your organization, contact us at clarkharvey@arrowheadtalentsolutions.com or 330.316.0867.



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