

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

MODULE 23



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR SECOND (AND SUBSEQUENT) JOB INTERVIEWS

It's gratifying to be called for a second or subsequent interview because you are another step closer to the job. Read our second-interview do's and don'ts.

- **Do** take a practice run to the location where you are having the interview -- or be sure you know exactly where it is and how long it takes to get there.
- **Do** pat yourself on the back for being called for a second interview.
- While some career experts say your chances are 1 in 4 to get the job at this point, others say you have as much as a 50 percent chance.
- Even with the field narrowing, it's important to distinguish yourself and ensure that you stand out above your competition.
- **Do** remember these three words: More, More, More.
- Compared to the first interview, a second interview will likely involve more preparation, more people, more questions, more intensity, and more pressure -- in addition to more likelihood that you will land the job.
- **Don't** neglect to review your performance from your first interview.
- Note any questions or situations that caused you difficulty and plan how you will handle those aspects better in the second interview.
- Derive confidence from knowing that if you hadn't performed well in the first interview, you wouldn't have landed the second.
- Think about what made you shine in the first interview, and plan to do more of the same.
- Further, brainstorm new information you can bring into the second interview -- new accomplishments, new examples, new evidence of how much you know about the employer.
- **Do** prepare -- even more than you did for the first interview. Presumably you researched the company before the first interview.
- Now it's time to delve even deeper into that research using our Guide to Researching Companies, Industries, and Countries.

- Some experts suggest that talking with company insiders is one of the most productive ways to prepare for a second interview.
- Before your second interview, consider conducting informational interviews with company folks who aren't the ones who'll be interviewing you.
- If you are a college student, particularly seek out alumni from your school or fraternity who work for the employer.
- Also be sure you're up to date on developments in your field or industry by reviewing trade publications.
- **Don't** be surprised if the second interview is actually a series of interviews -- in both individual and group/panel formats -- making for a long day.
- You may interview with managers, senior executives, department heads, and prospective team members.
- You may also get a tour of the workplace and be taken out to eat.
- For college students, this second-interview day may represent the first time the student has been interviewed in the employer's workplace. Plan to bring ample copies of your resume for all the people you may be meeting with.
- **Do** try to find out in advance exactly what the agenda will be and whom you can expect to interview with.
- If you aren't given this information when the interview is set up, contact the assistant of the main person with whom you'll be meeting to see what you can find out.
- If you see that a workplace tour is not included on the agenda, ask if someone can show you around as time permits.
- **Don't** forget the cardinal rule of panel interviews: As you respond to a question, maintain eye contact with everyone on the panel -- not just the panelist who asked the question.
- **Do** be up on business etiquette if you are asked to be with representatives of the prospective employer.
- **Do** get a good night's sleep the night before this potentially gruelling day.
- Also look for opportunities to refresh yourself during the interview day.
- If there's a break in the action, splash some water on your face or take a brisk walk to rejuvenate.

- You might want to take along a pocket- or purse-sized snack in case there is no lunch break. Be careful not to run out of steam toward the end of the day. Maintain your energy, confidence, and enthusiasm.
- **Do** be aware that you might be asked to complete psychometric tests dealing with such things as skills, intelligence, and personality. There's not a lot you can do to prepare for them -- but that good night's sleep will help.
- **Do** remember these three more words: Fit, Fit, and Fit.
- A major reason for the second interview is so the employer can see how well you fit in with the company culture.
- Put yourself inside the employer's head and realize that the interviewers at your second interview want to learn how well you will get along with other team members with whom you'll be interacting with every day. Deploy your very best interpersonal communication skills.
- Keep in mind the idea of showing your fit -- but remember that it's OK not to fit.
- If you aren't a good fit with the employer, you probably wouldn't be happy working there anyway.
- And remember, that this interview is also your opportunity to determine whether the company is a good fit for you.
- Think about whether you would accept if the employer extended an offer.
- **Don't** neglect to talk to other people beyond those you are interviewing with.
- Chatting up -- not too excessively -- the receptionist and prospective co-workers serves the dual purpose of giving you a better feel for how much you'd like to be part of this workplace culture, as well as making a positive impression on as many people as possible.
- **Do** expect to be asked some of the same questions you were asked in the first interview, but some new ones as well.
- Second-interview questions may delve more into your personality, or they may be more targeted toward specific technical skills -- or both.
- Plan to keep your responses fresh yet consistent for each person you meet with during the second-interview, and don't worry about repeating yourself since you will likely have a different audience every time you give roughly the same response.
- If you've followed the advice above to obtain the full list of interviewers, a good way to keep your answers fresh is to try to find out something about each interviewer and tailor your response specifically to that person.

- ♦ You can also vary your delivery to freshen your responses.
 - ♦ **Do** expect behavioural questions, which are commonly asked in second interviews, even if they haven't been in asked in the first interview.
 - ♦ The second interview is also a likely venue for case questions, especially in HR firms.
 - ♦ **Do** listen for clues that get at the heart of what the employer seeks in the person recruited for this position and key into the needs, concerns, issues, and problems that you would be expected to handle.
 - ♦ **Do** prepare for as many kinds of questions as possible.
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- ♦ You've already interviewed with this employer, but it wouldn't hurt to do a mock interview with a friend, family member, or career counselor/coach to prepare for the second interview.
 - ♦ You may also want to prep with our Practice Interviews.
 - ♦ **Don't** be shocked if some of the people you meet with aren't very competent interviewers.
 - ♦ While managers trained in interviewing often conduct first interviews, the array of people who might talk with you during the second-interview experience may include people lacking skills and training in how to conduct an interview.
 - ♦ **Do** be prepared with lots of questions to ask.
 - ♦ You will likely have more opportunity to ask questions in the second interview and will be expected to make more sophisticated inquiries than you did in the first interview.
 - ♦ Although these questions are designed for informational interviews, many of them also work in a second-interview situation in which you are attempting to make a personal connection.
 - ♦ **Do** get a feel for what second interviews are like.
 - ♦ **Don't** be caught off guard if an interviewer raises the subject of salary and benefits.
 - ♦ Be prepared to negotiate.
 - ♦ You may also be asked about your willingness to travel and relocate, so be ready with your responses.
 - ♦ **Don't** necessarily give an answer immediately if the employer makes an offer.
 - ♦ Ask for a few days to think about it.
 - ♦ **Do** ask about the next step in the process if you don't receive an offer. How soon will a decision be made, and how will they let you know?
 - ♦ **Do** try to collect the business card of everyone you meet with.
 - ♦ Keep a small notepad handy to write down names in case there's someone from whom you can't get a card.
 - ♦ **Don't** forget to send a thank-you note or e-mail to everyone you met with.
 - ♦ That's right -- every single person.
 - ♦ Aren't you glad you collected those business cards? You can write the same basic message to all, but vary it a bit in case they