

The interview is your greatest opportunity to sell the skills and qualities you have to offer an employer. In an interview, the “winners” exhibit confidence and enthusiasm about the career opportunity. Through words and behavior, they demonstrate a desire to learn and a strong work ethic. The interviewer feels the winning candidates will be capable of doing the job with little training or supervision. Below are some guidelines for winning your interview.

First Impressions are Critical:

- Dress appropriately, be early, and plan your trip and parking arrangements in advance.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Make all correspondence neat and error-free.
- Make small talk. Look for a connection to the interviewer, such as a common interest, in order to establish rapport.
- Treat the receptionist or administrative assistant with the same respect you would the interviewer.

The Art of Answering Questions Effectively:

- Take your time. Pause to think through and formulate your answers. Do not be afraid of momentary silence. Prepare in advance and do not attempt to wing it. Remember, hope is not a strategy!
- Answer the questions directly and concisely. Back up your assertions with concrete, real-life examples.

Your Turn to Ask Questions:

- In advance, write down big-picture questions that address large organizational issues, such as company goals, educational philosophy, industry questions, etc.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions because it allows you to demonstrate a sincere interest in both the position and organization as well as to establish rapport with the interviewer and clarify any uncertainties.
- Do not, in the first interview, ask any questions related to salary, vacation, holidays, or other benefits. These questions are best addressed at a later time.

The Follow-Up:

- Send a thank you note to each interviewer.
- The note can be handwritten on a thank you card or typed as a business letter; however, handwritten notes are more personal. Thank you cards are available at OSU Career Services, 360 Student Union.

Make the Difference!

- Given two candidates with similar qualifications, the candidate that demonstrates good grooming, direct eye contact, courtesy, enthusiasm, confidence, and a down-to-earth, positive attitude will always be hired first. Remember to be yourself and enjoy the experience.