Interview PowToon

A job interview provides an opportunity for you and an employer to meet, assess one another, and make an informed decision about whether to proceed in the hiring process. You’ll probably have interview with several employers – and several interviews with an individual employer – before receiving a job offer. So, what exactly do you have to do to make sure your interview process goes smoothly? Here are the 5 steps to success when it comes to interviewing.

**Step 1: Prepare**

Before you go into an interview, you need to be sure that you’re prepared. Attend employer information sessions and read about the company online. Make sure you’re knowledgeable about the position and the people you are interviewing with. It is useful to know how your interviews fit into the company. Make sure you come up with a list of thoughtful questions to ask in the interview. Keep in mind that it is okay to ask who you will be interviewing with if this information isn’t provided. Identify what makes you a great candidate, and why you would be a great match for this employer.

**Step 2: Practice**

Practice makes perfect! It can be useful to practice answering some general interview questions before you go into the interview. Use proper language, grammar, and diction, and be comfortable talking about your accomplishments! Be prepared to acknowledge your weaknesses, and think of examples you can use to show how you’re overcoming them. Still need help? Check out Optimal Interview, where you can record answers to typical interview questions and watch the videos back to understand how an employer may view not only your responses, but also your body language and communication style.

**Step 3: Perform**

During the interview, focus on remaining calm and demonstrating your strengths. Show your enthusiasm by relaxing, smiling, and being positive. Watch for clues that the interviewer is connecting with you, and change your approach if they don’t seem interested or fail to make eye contact. If the interviewer seems puzzled, restate your reply, or ask if you’ve answered their question adequately.

**Step 4: Evaluate**

Make it a point to learn something from each interview experience, even if it didn’t go as well as you had hoped. Think back on your performance immediately after each interview, asking yourself: Was I properly prepared? Which questions did I find particularly hard to answer? Did I convey the accomplishments and values that I wanted to show? Remember what was hard for you during the interview, and practice that skill or question for your next one!

**Step 5: Follow Up**

After each interview, it can be nice to write a short and timely note of appreciation to the interviewer. This will demonstrate professionalism and give you the opportunity to make another positive impression. Include any information or documents requested during the interview, and you may want to briefly restate any points you think you may not have communicated effectively. If you haven’t heard back after two weeks, it is appropriate to send another email. This will also give you an opportunity to ask if there are any updates in the hiring process that can be shared and show your continued interest in the position and company.