Even if you prepare well, your actions during an interview can either raise your application to the top or push it to the bottom. Use proper interview etiquette to impress your interviewer and increase your chances of getting hired.

1. **Demonstrate your thought process**
   - Sometimes interviewers are more interested in how you arrive at an answer rather than the answer itself. The thought process counts, too. Showing how you think through a problem will demonstrate how you’ll respond to situations on the job.

2. **Admit what you don’t know**
   - The skills you think are important to an interviewer might not be the biggest priorities. Being open about what you don’t know can only help you. If they like you, they can teach you what they need. If you aren’t transparent about your skills, they may entrust you with more than you’re equipped to do.

3. **Listen closely**
   - Questions can have multiple layers or sound very similar to one another. Make sure you answer what they are truly asking. Don’t avoid the question by dancing around it because they might wonder what you’re trying to hide. If you aren’t sure about the question, ask them to clarify.

4. **Act confident, but not arrogant**
   - If you aren’t sure of your abilities, your interviewer won’t be either. However, don’t push it so far that they begin to question your ego. It’s important to be confident in your abilities, but being overconfident can hurt you. Nobody wants to work with someone who is constantly pointing out their accomplishments and aptitudes. Rein it in to present yourself professionally.

5. **Answer consistently**
   - Make sure your answers aren’t conflicting. Interviewers will sometimes ask the same question, or variations of it, during multiple interviews to see if you answer similarly. Different responses will cause them to wonder which is correct. If you are afraid of forgetting what you said during one interview, write down what you remember afterward so you can review it before the next interview.
6. **Be courteous**
   - Using good manners and being polite can go a long way during an interview. Take out your headphones, turn off your cell phone, and don’t look at your watch. Each of these is a small gesture that shows you’re focused and present during the meeting. Don’t give them any reason to think the interview is a burden to you.

7. **Be yourself**
   - Don’t try to be who you think they want to hire. They want to get to know you, so don’t try to be someone else. An interview isn’t just to see if your skills match the job description, but also to see if your personality will fit in with the rest of the team. This goes both ways, as you should be evaluating if you would feel comfortable working with them as well.

   "If you try to be something you’re not and get the position, you will soon find you have to maintain that image to keep the job. You won’t like what you’ve become, and your bosses and coworkers will catch on quickly enough. If they hire you because of who you really are, you’ll find you actually fit into the organization and will work harder for it.”

   - Mat Johnston, Idaho Air National Guard

8. **Be honest**
   - Being upfront about your experiences and expectations will keep everyone on the same page. If the interviewer brings it up, don’t be afraid to tell them you’re looking at other positions as well. Make sure the company knows if there are conditions for you to accept the job, such as professional development opportunities or specific work hours because you rely on public transportation. They’ll respect you more for telling the truth right away rather than finding out later they wasted their time.

   “Be genuine. I was interviewed by a large advertising firm and asked, ‘what is your favorite book?’ My initial thought was to rattle off the name of a leadership book I had been forced to read. I decided to follow my gut and gave my last favorite book I read "My Sisters Keeper" and talked about why. The interviewer commented that he was so glad I was honest instead of saying some ‘trendy’ business book.

   - Chrissy Vasquez, Executive Director of Back on My Feet
9. Smile

- A smile is contagious, and you want both you and your interviewer to be in a good mood. Never underestimate the power of positivity. Smiling will make you feel better, look more confident, and be more at ease during a conversation. A smile could be all it takes to push your candidacy over the top.

Your skills and abilities will get you the interview, but your personality and stature will get you the job. During an interview, remember to focus on your actions just as much as your answers.

More in the Interviewing Skills Series:

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