



Road Map

Volume 1, Issue 3

2006

NWCC Career Center

On the Road to Success

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What you need to know about making a good First Impression!

Most interviewers form an impression of a job candidate in the first 30 seconds or less after first meeting the applicant. Although jobs are never offered solely on how a candidate is dressed for an interview, making a good first impression is very important. You want to make sure your first impression is a good one that contributes to the overall success of the interview process.

To make a good first impression during an interview, your paperwork, preparation, and appearance must be top-notch. H. Anthony Medley writes in his book, *Sweaty Palms: The Neglected Art of Being Interviewed*, "More often

than not, it is the small things that occur in an interview that spell the difference between getting an offer and being rejected."

Career management experts say that more than 80% of jobs are won or lost in the first 5 minutes of conversation.

Start your job search with a resume that creates a stellar first impression, then back those facts up with your extraordinary interview skills.

A key element to successful interviewing and making good impressions is not your experience, your grades, what classes you took, your extra-curricular activi-

ties, or any of the other basic necessities. Those skills are what got you the interview. The key element to being a success can be summed up in one word: attitude. If you want to rise above others you will need to work on developing a highly positive work attitude.



Get yourself organized!

The key to making a good first impression relies on...

- * Paper presentation
- * Being prepared
- * Appearance
- * Attitude

Paper Presentation

Prospective employers start to formulate first impression even before the interview occurs. These are based on an applicant's paperwork: the resume, job application, and list of references. Accuracy, neatness, and a clear, concise message are the key elements to success in pre-

senting a good first impression on paper. An application is often used by employers to measure an applicant's ability to follow directions and present a neatly and completely filled-out document. Resumes, on the other hand, provide a different sort of information. They provide an

easy-to-read format for viewing an applicant's strengths for doing the job. Having a list of references handy is a good idea. A list of references should include 3 or 4 individuals who are willing to verify the claims that you have made in your resume and application.

Be Prepared

Making a good first impression during the actual interview requires that you know something about the company and the job opening, and are able to discuss your strengths and weaknesses. You can learn more about a company through on-line research, reading company brochures and annual reports, talking with other employees, and carefully reading the job description. You'll need to come to the interview with questions you want answered.



- What is the most important part of this job?
- Could you describe what my responsibilities would be?
- What skills do you think are important for this position?

One of the more difficult preparations is to fully understand your skills, capabilities, weaknesses, and strengths. Most interviewers use open-ended questions, meaning questions that have no "right answer," in order to get a sense about who you are

and whether you can fill the position they have. As you prepare your answers to the following questions, focus on ways to structure your responses to show how you can fill the requirements of the job.

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What makes you more capable than someone else of filling our position?
- What are your weaknesses?

Give examples of your work, how you

Dress for Success

When you approach your wardrobe decisions for your interview, think clean, simple, and understated. Wild hairstyles, platform shoes, excessive jewelry, sloppy athletic shoes, the latest fashion and overstated makeup do not make a good first impression. Interviewers want an applicant's skills and abilities to stand out, not his or her apparel. Your first impression is determined by the way you "package"

yourself for the interview. You want your appearance to communicate respect for authority and the position as well as confidence in your ability. Making a good first impression depends on your choice of attire including accessories, the way you are groomed, and the manner in which you greet the interviewer.

Paying attention to detail in grooming

yourself signals to your prospective employer that you will pay attention to detail and take pride in your job responsibilities.

**"To be a great champion, you must believe that you are the best. If you're not, pretend you are."
Muhammad Ali**

No really, what do I wear?



"Dress for Success" was the title of a popular business book in the 70's, and while the rules have relaxed somewhat, employees at certain service companies

(i.e. carpenters, plumbers, etc...) may dress more casually than employees in more business oriented companies (i.e. bankers, salesmen, etc...), there is simply no excuse for wrinkled shirts, thigh-high skirts or coffee-stained ties at an interview.

Follow these guidelines for successful interview dress:

- Conservative suit (dark blue or grey)
- Clean, polished shoes
- Well-groomed hair style
- Clean, trimmed fingernails
- Minimal cologne or perfume
- Empty pockets (no bulges or tin-

klung coins)

- No gum, candy or cigarettes
- No visible body piercing (nose, eyebrow)

Pitfalls

- ◆ Poor handshake
- ◆ Talking too much
- ◆ Negative talk
- ◆ Showing up late
- ◆ Treating others rude
- ◆ Asking about salary, benefits or vacation time
- ◆ Not preparing
- ◆ Not enough/too much eye contact



You will have made yourself a better candidate by avoiding some of the “interview pitfalls” and no one will have to talk about you as the candidate who “almost” got the job.

Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure.” - Normal Vincent Peale_

All the Right Moves

Another consideration when talking about appearances is manners. As you enter the room, stand tall. If the interviewer extends his or her hand, accept it with a firm handshake. Greet the interviewer by looking that person in the eye, smiling, and saying a pleasant, “Hello, Ms. _____. My name is _____.” Wait to be offered a seat, and then accept it with a gracious “thank you.” Sit up straight with your hands

folded loosely in your lap or resting on the arms of the chair. Slouching is bad manners. It gives the interviewer the impression that you do not care and find the whole experience a waste of time. Listen with your eyes and your ears. Not only will this help you give the correct answers, but it will also show the interviewer that you are giving your undivided attention. As you leave, be sure to shake the inter-

viewer’s hand and close with a warm “Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.”

“Thank you for your time, I look forward to hearing from you.”

Great Expectations

Employers hire people to perform specific tasks in the course of producing quality goods and services. Workers are more than warm bodies hired to fill up space at desks and machines, and employers expect them to be enthusiastic and show genuine interest in the company. If you can get excited about your job, you will be eager to be successful doing it. Some important employer expectations that show em-

ployee interest in the company are as follows:

- Quality Work
- Productivity
- Punctuality
- Honesty
- Responsibility



You could be the next employee of the month!

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Helping students build futures.



Visit the NWCC Career Center! We want to help you in your academic and career-decision making process. We encourage students to take advantage of our computerized center where you can learn about careers and occupational environments that will be compatible with your interest, personality, values, and skills.

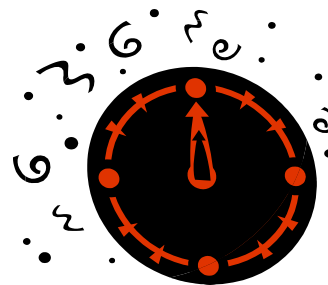
- We offer several career assessments to assist you in the exploration process. These include: the CHOICES Interest Profiler, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Strong Interest Inventory, and the Self-Directed Search.
- You can research occupations and expand your awareness of emerging careers, job titles, salaries, and employment outlook.
- Find answers to your questions about building a resume, writing a cover letter, handling an upcoming interview, or informational interviewing. Make an appointment with one of our career counselors for one-on-one assistance with choosing a major or career, or to figure out your next step in the career decision-making process.

Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

On your way to success...

Emily Post suggests that if you do the next 5 things with EVERYONE you meet, you will be on your way to success!

1. Look them in the eye.
2. Give a firm handshake.
3. Greet them, "How do you do?"
4. When saying your name, say it slowly and clearly.
5. Smile!



Paperwork, preparation, appearance, and attitude all contribute to an interviewer's first impression of an applicant. With only three to five minutes to make a good one, make sure yours is first-rate!