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 percent of jobs are won or lost in the first five 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 extracurricular activities, 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.

Planning for success

Have you been asked what your major is? When you started to answer did you feel uncomfortable or feel like it was the wrong answer? Did you not know how to answer this question? You might be able to prevent some of the stress with choosing your major by just making a plan.

The following questions provide you with some thought about three important areas: creating an action plan, following through, and going to work. Our job at the Career Center is to help you begin to make a career plan. Many students get stuck at the beginning and that is where we come in!

CREATE AN ACTION PLAN

Determine a career goal

- Education requirements?
- Admission requirements and procedures?
- Some programs require a special admission process, do you know what it is?
Informational Interviewing

Skillfully used, an informational interview is one of the most valuable sources of occupational information. While it may cover some of the same ground as printed material or on a company Web site, it presents opportunities for an intimate and flexible inside view of a job field unmatched by other sources. The informational interview communicates the first hand experiences and impressions of someone in the occupation, and is directed by your questions.

Beyond the advantages of gaining valuable career information, the informational interview provides the opportunity to build self-confidence and to improve your ability to handle a job interview.

You should regard each interview as a business appointment and conduct yourself in a professional manner. If you have made clear, in advance, the explicit purpose of your interview you will, in all probability, find your contact an interested and helpful person. Remember the appointment time and appear promptly for your interview. You should neither be too casually dressed nor overdressed. Regular business attire is appropriate. Be sure you know the name of the person you are meeting, the correct pronunciation of his/her name, and the title of his/her position.

Sketch out a brief outline of the topics covered and the information gained as soon as possible after the interview. This will require only a few minutes, and will ensure that you remember the important points discussed. Later, working from your outline, you can construct a more detailed report of the interview.

Write a thank you note to the people who interviewed you. Report back to them if you have followed up on any suggestions. By building strong rapport with career contacts you enhance the likelihood that they will offer assistance with your job search when you are ready for that phase of your career planning process.

Below are some guidelines for arranging an informational interview.

- Identify someone working in the profession in which you are interested.
- Check with family, friends, or teachers.
- Call the person and indicate that you are a student interested in learning about his/her career.
- Ask if you can interview him/her for information to learn more about his/her career field. Indicate that you will only take 15 to 30 minutes.
- If you are invited to his/her work place, accept graciously; you will learn more about the work environment.
- For some very busy professionals a telephone interview may be all the time he/she can give you. Accept this alternative graciously as well.

The following questions are suggested to get you started. Feel free to ask other questions that will help you get the information you need.

- What kind of education and/or training prepared you for your current position?
- What skills are the most important for this field? How did you acquire them?
- What professional associations are related to your industry?
- What advice would you give someone like me who is considering this field?

Information was obtained through an article written by Alison Doyle on about.com.

Career Planning is a Necessity

Planning a career means establishing future goals for yourself and figuring out the steps needed to reach those goals. Your career decision will affect all areas of your life: with whom you associate, where you live, the amount of leisure time you will have, and even the clothes you wear. It means making an effort to find out more about yourself, so that you can make good decisions as to where you would like to see your life and career go.

(Continued from page 1)

- Cost of education...financial aid, scholarship, loan?
- Time frame to reach your goal?

GOING TO WORK

- Evaluate your employability skills, who would hire you?
- Is my resume up to date?
- Am I ready for the interview? Have I practiced?
- Do I look like a professional in my career field?

After making your plan, we hope that you are ready for the last step. At the Career Center we can offer assistance with your resume, looking professional, and preparation for the interview. We always love to hear from our students, “I got the job.”

FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE ACTION PLAN

- Did you meet your career goal or do you need to set a new one?

Here is the tough part that you have to do, follow through. You are the only one who can determine if you reached your goal or even got halfway there.
As with any job that requires long hours in front of a computer screen, technicians may be susceptible to eye strain and muscle pain.

Salary
According to the BLS, median annual earnings of medical records and health information technicians were $23,890 in 2002.

Job Outlook
Medical records and health information technician jobs are expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through 2012. As insurance companies, courts and others increasingly scrutinize medical records, the need for accurate record keeping will spur job growth.

Pros and Cons
Forty-hour work weeks are standard for medical records and health information technicians. They usually work in pleasant, comfortable offices and have little or no contact with patients. There are plenty of opportunities for advancement; technicians may choose to specialize or become managers.

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