



# SO YOU GOT THE INTERVIEW: 12 QUICK TIPS FOR IMPRESSING YOUR FUTURE EMPLOYER

*If you're seriously looking for a serious job, earning an interview is only half the battle. If you've secured some quality facetime with the company of your dreams (or at least one that will do for now), be sure to make the most of your opportunity. Preparing as much as you can ahead of time will help you make the best possible impression when it really counts.*

## 1. Know thyself:

A job interview is an opportunity to market or sell yourself to a potential employer. Would you buy a car from a salesperson who couldn't demonstrate his or her expert knowledge of that vehicle? Before your interview, honestly assess your own strengths and weaknesses. For many of us, writing helps us to brainstorm and work through our thoughts efficiently and effectively. Pretend you've been asked to write a recommendation letter for yourself. Place yourself in the position of one of your references, and write freely. What might an employer see as your most impressive assets and characteristics?

## 2. Know thy interviewer

Gather as much information about the job for which you are applying as possible. Research the company, its competitors, and its industry more broadly. Reexamine the skills you've identified, and determine how they specifically fit the job posting. If you know who your interviewer(s) will be ahead of time, learning as much as you can about their work and character will help you feel comfortable and speak confidently. Does the person interviewing you have a public LinkedIn profile, active Twitter account, or biography on his or her company's website?

## 3. Press PAWS

There's a good chance your interviewer(s) will ask you to say something about yourself. If you're given this prompt, remember the PAWS acronym and try to touch on each element. Also touch on your career goals and how the position fits into your short- and long-term plans.

- **Personal:** Focus on what makes you personally interested in the position.
- **Academic:** Talk about your educational background and relevant training.
- **Work:** Highlight any related work or volunteer experience you can.
- **Skills:** Mention any specific technical skills you possess that might help you.

## 4. Be the right kind of confident

Nobody wants a coworker who comes across as arrogant or combative. Practice a firm handshake, warm smile, and comfortable speech, and always maintain eye contact while speaking. Aim to connect with rather than to overwhelm or defeat your interviewer.

## 5. Thank your lucky STAR

Keep a handful of particularly impressive stories from your previous work life in mind. Past behaviour is a predictor of future behaviour! Structure them in the STAR format when you tell them:

- **Situation:** Nothing at work happens in a vacuum. Contextualize the story you are about to tell by providing as many details as you feel are relevant to the point you ultimately want to express. Set the stage.
- **Task:** What were your specific responsibilities in the situation you are describing? In simple language, what was it your job to do? What was the normal outcome of the situation?
- **Action:** What did you actually do? Express your actions in terms of choices, whenever possible. If you booked a venue for successful fundraiser, why did you choose it as opposed to the alternatives?
- **Result:** Articulate the immediate positive impact of your actions, but also any lessons you learned from the experience and any skill development you can trace to the initial situation.

## 6. Be specific

Research tells us that most people have a 90-second attention span in interview-type situations. In order to hold the attention of your interviewer(s), speak clearly and concisely. While nobody can write an essay on the spot, try to speak in anecdotes that have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Make specific references to your experience, and provide as much evidence as possible. Ultimately, you want to convince your interviewer(s) that you are telling the truth.



## 7. Set up CAMP

Remember that your interviewer is interested in your CAMPing skills. The ideal candidate is Competent, Ambitious, and Motivated and has a Personality compatible with the workplace culture.

## 8. Be prepared to turn the tables

Prepare at least three questions for your interviewer(s). Whenever possible, don't ask a question to which you already know the answer. Your objective is to express your interest in the position, not to pretend you haven't done your research. If you're given the chance to ask a question, never turn it down.

## 9. Practice makes professional

Many graduates and students who are applying for jobs have at least one friend, partner, or family member in the same situation. Take the time to sit down and take turns interviewing each other. Provide constructive feedback after each round to help identify and improve common issues like poor body language, verbal tics, and other areas of weakness. Book a mock interview through Career and Employment Services!

## 10. Arrive on time and on point

Bring additional copies of your resume and something to write with. Aim to arrive at the interview waiting room five to ten minutes before your scheduled interview appointment. As a general rule, dress for formality rather than for fashion. Trust dark, solid colours – but not black – and aim for a slightly more formal, conservative look than the dress code the job entails. Whatever you wear, make sure you're well groomed and well ironed. While social attitudes towards facial hair have changed in recent years, no interviewer has ever taken issue with a fresh shave. Avoid perfume, cologne, and strong scents.

## 11. Relax!

Seriously: relax. If you've progressed this far in your education, you've likely developed stress-management strategies that have helped you alleviate anxiety in the past. Once you feel adequately prepared, set time aside to go for a walk outside, hit the gym, or listen to music ahead of your interview. Do whatever works best for you.

## 12. Don't stop now

While we're confident these tips will set you on the right course, there's a world of information at your fingertips. When conducting any type of research, it's best to access and evaluate multiple sources. Consult the following resources, or employ your own research skills to find out what other people and institutions you trust have to say on this subject.

## 13. Follow up with a thank-you email

While a quick message thanking your interviewer for his or her time and consideration likely won't make or break your candidacy for a job, it's a courteous gesture that really can differentiate you from equally qualified candidates. Use this opportunity to emphasize your enthusiasm about the opportunity.

### Further reading:

- The Guardian Professional Network: Careers
- Workforce WindsorEssex WEnav
- Big Interview
- Interviews (Lifehacker)

Co-op, Career and Employment Services: [www.uwindsor.ca/cces](http://www.uwindsor.ca/cces) | mySuccess: [success.uwindsor.ca](http://success.uwindsor.ca)



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CAREER AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES OFFERS A VARIETY OF RESOURCES TO HELP YOU LAUNCH YOUR CAREER:

Job searching • Career planning • Work experience • Career preparation workshops • Personal appointments • Resume critiques  
Mock interviews • Interest testing and assessments • Job fair and networking opportunities • Volunteer Internship Program (VIP)



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