

Interviewing-Part I: Preparation Redux

By Melanie G. Lammers

Preparing for an interview so that you can project the best first impression under any circumstances is just the first step in the process. Once you walk through the door, the journey is far from over. There is always the potential for something to be thrown by the wayside or forgotten by complete accident that could make or break your interview experience with an employer. For this reason, I have compiled a list of items one would need during an interview, be it an interview for a job at a store in the mall or at corporate headquarters in New York City.

First and foremost, you will want to appear extremely prepared—perhaps more prepared than you actually feel. When you first meet a person and he is fumbling through his pockets for something or cannot seem to remember his own phone number off the top of his head, it impacts your long-term perception of him. Some of the items on this list may not seem particularly significant, but they are just as important as the major issues that may come up during an interview.

Documents:

The firm has probably already seen your resume and/or cover letter if you are going in for an interview, but that does not let you off the hook when it comes to preparedness. A couple of extra copies of your resume are absolutely necessary, especially if you know you will be interviewed by multiple people. If, for some reason, an employer has seen the documents but does not have copies on hand, you will not only appear efficient and prepared, but you will also help him or her save face with colleagues.

Creating one document heading to be used on all application documents is an excellent way to appear to be an organized professional. To this end, if you have any references to provide, be sure you print them in a cohesive, organized list format using the same heading and the same type of paper. Remember that you want to look like the “total package” for the position. If requested, it is also appropriate to list salary requirements with your references—but only if specifically requested. You will want to be as open to opportunities as possible.

Supplies:

If you are not at least carrying a portfolio into the interview, you are not thoroughly prepared. Along with your resume, cover letter, and list of references, you should have at least one black and one blue pen, a notepad to write anything down that you want to remember from the interview, and business cards, if you have them.

Business cards are not usually necessary because your document headings should all contain your contact information right below your name, but if you are asked for a business card anyway, it is better to hand one over than it is to correct potential employers by reminding them that they already have the information they have just requested.

Carrying two pens of different colors may also sound like a minute detail, but black, as everyone should know, is the universally acceptable ink color. However, blue is best when signing any type of legally binding document because it allows one to make a clear distinction between originals and copies.

I previously mentioned showing up early for interviews. If you have the time, show up in the general area early enough to go through a final checklist in your head. *Do I have everything I am going to need? Have I checked the mirror one last time to make sure there are no crumbs left over from lunch stuck in my beard? Are my pantyhose visibly snagged?*

Who knows? Maybe attending to these small details will give you the confidence boost you need to have a great interview.