



College and Career Programs Division

QUESTIONS TO ASK AN INTERVIEWER



The Job

1. What does a typical day look like?
2. What would my key responsibilities be?
3. What are the skills and experiences you're looking for in an ideal candidate?
4. What qualities does someone need to have to be successful in this position?

Your Performance

Understanding how your performance will be measured is key to understanding your supervisor's expectations and the company's overall goals.

5. What are the most important things you'd like to see someone accomplish in the first 30 days?
6. What goals will my performance be evaluated against?
7. What is the performance review process here? How often would I be formally reviewed?

Training and Development

Think of each new job not just as a job, but as the next step on your path to career success.

8. What type of training would I receive?
9. Are there opportunities for advancement or professional development?
10. Where have successful employees previously in this position progressed to?

The Company

Learn a little bit about where you might work. *I've read about the company's mission, but can you tell me more about ___?*

11. What are the current goals that the company is focused on, and how does this team work to support reaching those goals?

12. Where do you see this company in the next few years?
13. What gets you most excited about the company's future?

The Team

14. Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?
15. Who will I work with most closely?
16. Who will I report to directly?
17. Which other departments work most closely with this one?
18. What are the common career paths in this department?

The Culture

Is the office conservative or informal?

19. What is the company and team culture like?
20. How would you describe the work environment here—is the work typically team-based or more independent?
21. What's different about working here than anywhere else you've worked?
22. What is the expected work attire?

Next Steps

Before you leave, make sure that you're clear on the next steps.

23. What are the next steps in the interview process?
24. Is there anything else I can provide you with that would be helpful?

Show interest in wanting to do the job and how you can meet the employer's needs. Avoid asking about salary or benefits during the first interview.



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Successful Workplace Etiquette Guidelines

Congratulations, you got the job! Now you want to keep it! Practicing good manners is essential in your daily encounters in the workplace and makes a difference in your career advancement and relationships with others. Remember, each company has their own workplace expectations.

What you Say Matters

1. **Say hello and good bye.** Greet people when you encounter them. In the morning say, "Good morning." Similarly, when you leave say, "Goodbye" or "Goodnight."
2. **Say please and thank you.** If you're asking for something or asking someone to do something, say "please." If someone does something for you, or gives you something, say "thank you."
3. **Say excuse me.** If you want someone to get out of your way, or you bump into someone, or you walk between two people having a conversation, or you must interrupt a conversation, say "excuse me."
4. **Say I'm sorry.** If you intentionally or unintentionally hurt someone, or if you are rude or short, or if you make a mistake that costs someone else in any way, take ownership and say so. Don't establish a reputation for placing blame or being distrustful.
5. **Speak politely at all times with everyone.** Resist yelling or screaming at others. Cursing and profanity are absolutely unacceptable. Companies have actually terminated employees for foul language. Exercise compassion and empathy--*a soft answer turns away conflict.*

Basic Communication Tips

- Clearly speak and write politely. Choose words carefully--words spoken out of your mouth cannot be swallowed again. They are permanent records in the mind and on paper.
- Speak or write with a positive attitude avoiding making the hearer feel bad. Reading and writing skills are crucial for effective communication.
- Watch your tone and body language to ensure it matches what you are saying.
- Actively listen when someone else is speaking; curb the desire to prepare your response before the person finishes. Hear the heart of the person and what is really being stated.
- Don't jump to conclusions before listening carefully; ask relevant questions to gain understanding of what is spoken or written.
- Realize that sometimes no matter how hard you try, you may fail in your efforts to communicate with others - don't always take it personally. Keep trying. Get books from the library, view free online videos or attend workshops to help you.



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Business Telephone Tips

The telephone is a highly personal medium of communication and is one of the most critical skills that one needs in business. The phone is the most significant first contact many people have with a company and it leaves a lasting impression on the caller.

Don't underestimate the power of proper telephone manners; companies can either keep or lose clients because of them. And, 96% of customers who experience poor telephone service will never say a word—they'll simply take their business to a competitor!

- **Answer calls quickly and return calls quickly.** When responsible for answering calls for a business, make every effort to answer a call within three rings. Always return calls, at least within 24 hours.
- **Identify organization and yourself.** This affirms the correct number and name of business for the caller. *Example: Good Morning, Food Bank Company, this is Amy Jones speaking. How may I help you?*
- **Speak clearly, slowly and distinctly** while pronouncing words.
- **Smile while speaking.** Voices sound brighter and more pleasant. Watch tone and attitude. No eating or drinking during call. It all comes across while speaking to callers.
- **Be as helpful as possible.** Don't force caller to pull information from you with one word or one sentence responses. Go out of your way to assist the caller.
- **Remain calm when handling rude or aggressive callers.** In a workplace, it is never acceptable to become argumentative,

use profanity or engage at the level of the irate caller. Show willingness to resolve problem or conflict.

- **Permission to place on hold.** Make every effort to ask permission of caller to place on hold before simply telling them and doing so. Persons may not have time to be placed on hold, for example, if entering an area with low cell phone reception. Allow callers the option to tell you they want to call back or leave a message.
- **Speakerphone etiquette.** Always ask permission of the other person before talking to them on the speakerphone; identify the people in the room.
- **Take clear messages for others.** A written message should state the date and time of call, the caller's name, company, phone number and if possible, reason for the call.
- **Voicemail messages.** When there is no answer, leave a message; keep short, clear and reason for call. Always state the time and date and indicate whether you desire a return call; don't assume a returned call because your number may appear on caller ID. Repeat contact number slowly. End message positively.
- **Wrong numbers.** If you have interrupted someone's day by calling a wrong number, it's your mistake. *Suggested remark, "I am very sorry. I've reached the wrong number. Please excuse the call."*

The way an employee answers the phone is a first impression of the business for the caller. Ensure it is professional and friendly to keep or gain a new customer.