

# 5 ways to ace an interview

BY PETER HANDAL  
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

WITH COMMENCEMENT season approaching, it's time for a fresh batch of graduates to enter the workforce.

While some of the brightest minds from the country's top schools are eager to get down to business, they need to make it through rounds of interviews first.

It's more important than ever that applicants come prepared with updated resumes, a list of questions — and most importantly, confidence!

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

Taking the time to research the organization, even if it's just a quick online search, will arm you with a wealth of information that can help you make a memorable impression.

You will be better clued into what important projects are on the horizon, who the senior executives are, who the organization's competitors are, and more.

### COME PREPARED

Jot down a list of your own questions beforehand so you can demonstrate your interest in the position.

Be ready for curveballs. Job candidates should be aware that a potential employer has probably done their homework on them as well. Be prepared to talk about what information a company can find by conducting an online search on yourself, and craft appropriate responses beforehand.

### ACT ENGAGED

Demonstrate that you are genuinely interested in what the interviewer is saying by paying close attention to the conversation. Make a strong first impression with your handshake and eye contact, and establish a rapport with the interviewer. Address him or her by name and be friendly. People are more inclined to agree with others if we have friendly feelings towards them.

### BE CONFIDENT

If you believe in your own abilities to succeed, you'll be better able to communicate that message during your interview. Dress appropriately and professionally. Loving the way that you look will help you exude confidence during the interview. You can also practice your "elevator speech" about yourself until you are confident that you've got it down.

### FOLLOW UP

Always send a thank you note to your interviewer. It's extremely important to personalize the note based on your conversation. Send it via email, and via regular mail if you have enough time between your interview and the final decision.

Peter Handal is CEO of Dale Carnegie Training

The way you dress for interviews is often the key to success.



PHOTOS: DREAMTIME

# Dressed to fulfill

## Graduates chasing career goals need to look the part

BY FRAN GOLDEN  
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Whether you're a new graduate looking for your first gig or making a job change, the way you dress for an interview can be key to success.

You want to be noticed for your smarts, not your outfit.

"The more you can blend in for an interview looks-wise, the better (it is) so they can focus on what you're saying and the value you'll add," says Abigail Kies, director of the NYU Stern Career Center for Working Professionals.

"You want your clothes to be in the background."

Also important is showing through what you wear that you're serious about the job and understand the corporate culture, says Susie Hall, president of digital creative recruiting firm Vitamin T.

"Go to the company's Facebook page to see people in that work environment," Hall says.

"LinkedIn is also a great resource. Companies are doing a lot to show their personality and integrating video. That's where they show, 'This is us and how we act.'"

Always dress one level above what you think the company's dress code is, the experts say. Wear khaki, never denim, and go conservative.

Hall says

occasionally outlandish gets the job — she had one art director hired by a large corporation after wearing a purple felt hat to an interview — but that's not the norm.

You can, however, show your creativity by wearing, say, a nice piece of jewelry.

"Keep in mind you want to put your best foot forward," Hall says, adding she has seen people make the mistake of going too casual. The result: They lost out on the job.

Dress for success advice from the career experts:

### NO CELLPHONES OR SMARTPHONES.

Turn them off. Career coach Sarah Hathorn of Illustra Consulting, a former Macy's executive, says you reduce your chances of getting hired by 50% to 75% if your cellphone goes off during an interview.

**GET GROOMED.** A sloppy haircut or bitten fingernails will get noticed. Get a manicure and visit your barber or hairdresser.

"A new haircut also gives you confidence," Hall says.

Skip or go light on the perfume or cologne and check your teeth in a mirror for food bits before you enter the interview.

**HIDE THE PIERCING AND TATTOOS.** Unless your nose stud and tattoos are a big part of who you are, it's generally best to keep them out of sight

until after you get hired. You can show that side of you later, Hall advises.

**DRESS EVEN FOR VIDEO.** Dress the part even if your interview isn't in person. Be aware of what's in the background, too — a pile of clothes or outlandish painting will distract the interviewer.

**WATCH THE COLORS.** "You don't want your colors to stand out too much. Solid colors are better than patterns. Have something overall neutral with a splash of color — a shirt or belt or something with a little color," Kies says.

For the same reason, choose timeless rather than trendy styles.

**PLAN IN ADVANCE.** You can wear one suit to a bunch of interviews but the key is finding that suit.

"There are sales, so think ahead of time rather than last minute," says Kies.

"Think in terms of 'Oh, do I have the outfit for when I get the interview?'"

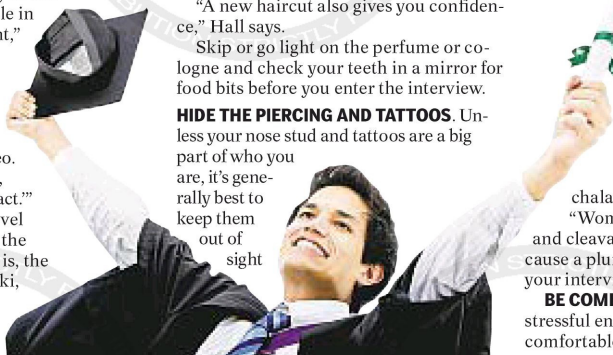
And make sure what you wear is clean and pressed.

**DON'T SHOW SKIN.**

"Neckties are to be worn with a buttoned-up shirt. Don't wear yours loose or you'll look lazy and nonchalant," says Hathorn.

"Women should avoid sheer fabrics and cleavage (yes, even in summer) because a plunging neckline can torpedo your interview."

**BE COMFORTABLE.** An interview is stressful enough. Choose an outfit that's comfortable, the experts say.



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