



# ***2021 Job Competition is Stiff: What You Need to Know...***

First impressions and personality are 80% of a successful job interview. You will never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

## **What is a Job Interview?**

This is where your potential employer contacts you to arrange a meeting, or a phone interview, to get to know you. They liked what they saw on your job application or your résumé and want to know more: Do you look professional, can you carry on an intelligent conversation, and will you get along with other employees? The next few sections describe a few things to keep in mind when preparing for an interview.

## **The Most Important Rule About Resumes and Job Interviews**

***Do NOT ever LIE!***

Not on your application, your resume or in the interview. Even if you think it's a just a little white lie such as where you may have lived or that you have a high school diploma versus a GED. These days everything can be validated with a quick on-line search or even a quick phone call. And the second a potential employer catches you in a lie, you are completely out of the running for the job. No one will knowingly hire a liar. Also, in most cases, if your lie is discovered after you are hired, its grounds for immediate termination. So, just don't.



## Employer Homework

Get on the Internet and look up the company for which you want to work. Find out things like what the business does to make money, how big the company is (how many employees, how much money it makes in a year, in how many states or countries it has offices) and any other interesting tidbits of information such as the company culture and any “buzz words” they might use. Pictures can help give you an idea of how employees dress; perhaps you can also see examples of how they interact with each other or clients.



This type of information might just come up in the interview and you don’t want to look like an idiot.

## What to Wear

***Rule #1: “It’s better to be overdressed than underdressed.”***

Again, do some homework: You might be able to get an idea by looking up the company on the Internet. Ideally, you will find pictures of employees. The other option is to drive by the company and look at employees in the parking lot. If neither option works, then go with **Rule #1** above.

If you really aren’t sure, it’s always best to err on the more conservative side. Here are a few general guidelines:



- Women, stick with conservative necklines, skirt and dress hemlines to the knees and nothing sleeveless unless covered by a jacket. The more skin you show, the less seriously you will be taken. Right or wrong, that is just the way it is. Solid colors are the most business-like. Also, keep your accessories simple.

- Men, go with slacks, shirt and a tie. No wild graphics or words written on the tie.

Add a jacket that can be removed if you find that your (male) interviewer is not wearing one.



There are many Internet sites that offer tips on how to put forth a more professional image: Take the time to look at a few.



## Tattoos and Piercings

Yeah, they seem pretty cool to you and your friends. But unless you plan on working for your friends or relatives or having minimum-wage jobs for the rest of your life, I strongly suggest you have these things done on a body part that is easily covered.

Take a minute to think about who runs and works for the companies for which you want to work; They are usually people in their 30s and up. The **paying** customers of those companies are around that age too, if not older. If it's a very successful business, then management probably wants all of its employees to look professional. That is to say, to look like the majority of the **paying** customers it serves. And guess what? The majority of **paying** customers don't have nose rings, eyebrow piercings or extreme tattoos.

Argue all you want, but this is the way it is in the business world. ***So, downplay the unusual piercings and cover the tattoos.***

## What to Bring with You

- A pen
- A notepad
- A **turned off** cell phone: Some would say that you could use this for notes. But tapping into a cell phone *gives the impression* you are not present or paying attention: not good.
- A copy of your resume. If this is your first job you can still type up a sheet containing your name, address, contact info, education info, special skills, and three references w/their contact information.
- Your driver's license and your Social Security card – Used for identification and payroll taxes only *after* you have been offered a job.



## What Not to Say

- Don't ask to "borrow a pen" to fill out an application or take notes. (*Refer to previous section, "What to Bring with You."*)
- Don't bad-mouth your previous employer, boss or coworkers.
- Don't say those people weren't ready for your amazing ideas (*Arrogance is not a marketable skill*).
- Don't talk about how you couldn't get along with someone, regardless of the reason.

## Acceptable Answers to the Most-Asked Interview Question

Why did you, or are you, leaving your current employer?



- I've heard a lot of great things about this company and I'm excited for (*looking forward to*) the opportunity to be a part of it.
- I'm relocating (moving to another city or state).
- I've gone as far as I believe I can go at (current company name) so I'm looking for more opportunities for growth in a company such as this. I've read, "this that and the other thing" (*fill in the blanks*), and I believe I can add to "blah blah blah (*fill in the blanks*)" part of the business and, at the same time, expand my skill set.

*Learn more information about the job hunt and more in **Shifting to the Business of Life**. If you are a recent high school or college grad, email me directly for your free eBook: [jan@janetmnast.com](mailto:jan@janetmnast.com)*

*Sincerely,*

**Jan**

