**10 Interview Tips from John Bailey**

Great news... you have secured a job interview after weeks, or even months, of submitting your resume to several companies looking to fill open positions. A job interview is one of the most important steps in securing a new job. During a job interview, the interviewer is assessing the applicant's resume, personality, and more importantly, their ability to fit into the company's environment to ensure that the chosen applicant will produce the best output. Below are 10 tips that I think will help any job seekers to prepare for the job interview.

**Tip #1: Research the Company and Your Interviewer(s) Beforehand**

One way to prepare for an interview is to research the company you are interviewing for and the interviewer(s) who will be interviewing you. Research the history, the founders, its products/services and the current staff and their roles within the company. It's important to know about the company because that's who the interviewer(s) will be representing. Visit the company's website to find this information.

If you happen to know who you're going to be interviewing with ahead of time, research them as well, using LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a great social media business resource. You can research people on LinkedIn and see what their titles are, what they're doing, what their responsibilities are, and you can also see what kind of comments and remarks they've posted. It tells you about their interests.

Knowing about the company and the interviewer(s) ahead of time shows that you have initiative and that you care. It is a great way to showcase how you can be valuable to the company that's interviewing you. The information learned during your research will help you with my next tip.

**Tip #2: Come Up with Questions to Ask Your Interviewer(s)**

Use the information you found in your research to ask informed questions about the company and about those who are interviewing you. Ask questions about the company's struggles, accomplishments, vision, strategic plans, workplace environment and goals. Coming up with a few questions will demonstrate your interest in the company. It will also open the door for you to share how you can contribute to the company and if the company is a match for you. An interview should be a two-way street. Not only are they trying to find out about you, but you should also be trying to find out about them. You want to make sure that it is a company you want to work for. Also, ask questions that show you've been listening, understand what the position is about and based on some of the comments or questions asked by the interviewer(s). Again, it shows initiative and that you're serious about the job and working for the company.

**Tip #3: Practice Your Answers to Common Interview Questions**

Finding common interview questions is just a Google search away. Common interview questions include:

1. Why are you interested in working for this company?
2. How did you hear about this position?
3. Describe yourself.
4. What are your salary requirements?

During your research on common interview questions, you will discover that there are common interview questions that are called "stress questions." Stress questions are designed to make the interviewee uncomfortable answering them. For example, a common stress question is, “Give an example of a failure you had at work” or, “Give an example where you could have done better.” At first glance, stress questions don’t sound like questions you would want to answer. No one wants to talk about their failures or shortcomings. Interviewers know that and want to see how you handle them. The good news is there is a way to respond to stress questions that will showcase your skills and abilities. For example, if someone asks you, “Give me an example of how you failed", you could come back with a story about how you ran into a problem you couldn't overcome at the time. Then, explain what you learned from that experience and how you were able to triumph the next time. This response demonstrates that you can function under stress, as well as your ability to learn from your mistakes.

Respond truthfully to all questions asked. No one has all the answers. Be confident enough to say that you don't know when you don't know. Interviewers are fully aware that employees can't have all the answers, so when you do have the answer, share it and when you don't have the answer, share that you don't know. This will demonstrate your honesty to the potential employer.

Remember, practice makes perfect. Find common questions and practice your answers, in the mirror or with a friend or family member and show the interviewer you're prepared.

**Tip #4: Reread the Job Description**

The truth is that many interviewers don't know much about how to interview. All they know is to ask generic questions. They're not trained in how to get potential employees to express themselves in a way that demonstrates their value. So, be prepared by knowing the job description and what abilities and knowledge are required for that job. There is a lot of value to be gained by rereading the job description. You will be reminded of what is expected of you if hired, what skills and attributes the employer is looking for. You can use the job description to be more prepared for the interview.

Prepare a list of recommendations at some point. During the interviewing process, you will be asked to provide references. References are crucial because it is what other people say about you. There are a few preparations ahead of time that will make sure that your references will aid you in your job hunt.

**Tip #5: Choose Your References Carefully**

First, choose your references carefully. Are these people you have a good relationship with? Have they had any direct experience with your work? Were they someone who you took instructions from?

Second, talk to your references ahead of time about the kind of job you're interviewing for so they can speak knowingly about you with an idea of what kind of skills and background information is more likely to get you hired.

Third, share references sparingly. Respect those who are giving you references. Odds are you're going to have a lot of job interviews. You don't want the people who are going to recommend you receive too many non-serious phone calls. You only want to give references to companies you are interested in. Unfortunately, if you give references to all your interviews, odds are they will be called, and attempts will be made to recruit them.

**Tip #6: Be Prepared with Examples of Your Work**

The goal during the interview is to show the value that you can bring to the potential employer. Have a list of work-related stories you can tell that demonstrate not only your knowledge of the subject but also how you were able to add value to it. Again, it's all about your value. This is a great way to show how hiring you would be a great asset to the company.

**Tip #7: Prepare Your Interview Wardrobe the Night Before**

The day of your interview can be very stressful. You want to be as relaxed as possible. A simple way to do that is to prepare your interview wardrobe the night before so that the next morning you can be confident that your shirt is pressed, your shoes are polished, and all your accessories match. A relaxed and prepared interviewee is a hirable one.

**Tip #8: Bring Copies of Your Resumes and a Way to Take Notes**

While you have come prepared, there is a chance that the interviewer(s) may not be prepared for the interview. They could have had little or no time to review your resume to learn about you as an individual and your qualifications. They may have not had enough time to print your resume. So, help them out by bringing copies of your resume with you.

Also, bring a method for taking notes. As mentioned earlier, an interview is a two-way conversation. They are learning about you and you are learning about them. Demonstrate your interests by taking notes on what you learn. The method isn't that important. It can be paper and pencil, a digital voice recorder, or a small laptop. It doesn't matter. Taking notes means you're engaged and an active participant in the interview process.

**Tip #9: Always Arrive 15 Minutes Early to Your Interview**

Your evaluation of being a potential employee starts the moment you enter the office. It answers the question, are you punctual? Did you plan accordingly? Did you plan sufficiently to get to the interview on time? Being late for an interview makes a terrible first impression. You can avoid this by making sure that you arrive early for your interview. When planning your transportation include the extra time that it takes for traffic. There is no sin in getting to a job interview a half-hour early. In these cases, spend some time hanging around in the lobby until 15 minutes before the interview. Then go to the office and introduce yourself to the receptionist. It's a great way to demonstrate your ability to plan and your punctuality.

**Tip #10: Never Speak Badly of Your Previous Employers**

While you may not have the best feelings about your former employer, it doesn’t serve you well to badmouth them to a potential employer. You may someday leave your potential employer on good terms, but they will be concerned about whether you will speak ill of them regardless. More importantly, it could throw your professionalism into question, since there will always be people you work with who you may not get along with perfectly. Companies want to hire people who can get the job done regardless of work settings that may not be ideal around the clock, or differences in personalities.

The goal here is to separate yourself from the many other job candidates who are interviewing for the same position. In this case, being memorable. Being different from everybody else makes it more likely that you will be considered above the others for the position. By following these tips, you can walk away feeling like you aced the interview and hopefully with a job offer.