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Careers through
Culinary Arts Program

Secrets of a Successful Interview: Prepare and Practice Checklist

How can you improve your odds of landing a job? Work hard to get ready for the interview! Be sure you've checked off each of these "prep tasks" before the interview.

_____ Research the restaurant/company.

Search on the Internet to learn about where you'd be working. Use what you learn to think of questions to ask. Intelligent questions show the interviewer you've done your homework. For instance, you may find out the company has opened several restaurants in the last year. Ask about future growth and your potential to move up in the company.

_____ Practice answering typical questions.

Some questions are fairly common in an interview. Think about your answers now. You might write down what you'd like to say. Or practice with a friend or family member:

- "Tell me about yourself..." This is a way of asking for your education and experience. Don't tell your life story.
- "Why do you want to cook?" This is a good place to show your positive attitude and passion for the industry.
- "What did you like best about your last position?" Mention a detail about the job. Don't say something like "Having weekends off" if this job involves weekends.
- "What did you like least?" A safe answer: "I really enjoyed all parts of my job."

TIP: Do not say anything negative in an interview. Do not complain about an employer or a job. The interviewer may think you have a negative attitude. Always be positive!

_____ Prepare to explain your resume.

Have a family member or friend use your résumé to ask questions an employer might have. Practice explaining anything that's a "red flag." For instance, if there are six months when you weren't in school or working, be prepared to tell what you were doing.

TIP: Never lie in an interview. The person may guess you're lying. Employers want honest employees. Anticipate tough questions so you can give good, truthful answers.

_____ Practice asking questions about the job.

Think about the questions you have about the job. Practice asking them. You want your questions to be clear. You also want them to sound positive. For example:

- *More negative:* Do I have to work every weekend?
- *More positive:* How often would I be working weekends?



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_____ Get your body language right.

Practice looking comfortable and confident. Sit up straight. Hold your hands in your lap and don't fidget. Look the interviewer in the eyes when you speak and listen. If it makes you nervous after a while, try focusing on the person's nose or between the eyes.

_____ Know where to go and how long it takes to get to the interview.

Make sure you have clear directions. Do a test run. That way you'll know how much travel time you need. Aim to arrive 15 minutes early so you have time to relax.

TIP: Never be late for a job interview! The person may think you'll be late to work too.