

You are  
seeking a  
promotion  
or a new  
position  
in 2014

# GET THAT JOB

Tips on  
first impressions,  
job interviews,  
cover letters,  
résumés and  
resources



**by Michael Buschmohle**



# Make a Great First Impression



To look good, **stand tall.** Pretend a string is attached to the top of your head and is pulling you up.

See **How to Connect in Business in 90 Seconds or Less** by Nicholas Boothman

Introduce yourself using the voice tips in this handout. Always go **down in pitch** on the last syllable of your last name.

**W**HEN YOU MEET ANYONE—a receptionist, interviewer, or a client, you want to create a positive first impression. Why? Because first impressions often trigger a decision to hire you or not. Here are some things to do to make a positive first impression.

## DRESS DISTINCTLY

Dress the way the interviewer would expect you to dress, which is often for the job you are interviewing for. What you wear—clothing, accessories, shoes, handbag or briefcase—and how you're groomed cause an instant, spontaneous reaction in the person you meet. Dress in a way that calls no attention to how you look, so that the person will pay more attention to what you're saying.

## SHARE A SMILE

Greet everyone you meet with a smile to show that you're pleased to see this person. A friendly face is your passport to prosperity. It initiates trust and confidence. *"If you meet someone without a smile, give him yours."*

## IDENTIFY EYE COLOR

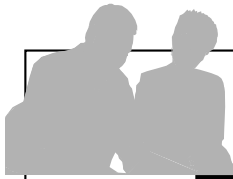
Look into the eyes of the person you meet and *identify the person's eye color* (not to remember it, just to notice it). This intensifies your eye contact and creates confidence. Be aware of cultural differences with eye contact, so don't stare. Eye contact is really "I" contact.

## TRY A HANDSHAKE

Extend your hand vertically if you wish to shake hands. Most people in the world use handshakes, there are a few exceptions. Shake firmly, not with bone-crushing power or feel like a cold fish. If you choose not to shake hands, a head nod to the person works well. A woman who wishes to shake hands should offer her hand first to hesitant males.

## SPEAK LIVELY

When you meet someone, instead of *"Hi, how are you?"* try a line that compliments the person: *"It's a pleasure to meet you."* Or, *"It's good to see you again."* To make conversation (small talk), start with: **"Tell me."** *"Tell me about your family."* *"Tell me about your vacation."* Continue the conversation: *"Tell me more."* Secret tip: Comment on something in the person's office, such as, *"Tell me about that award on your wall."* Get the person talking about what he or she has or likes. As a person speaks, *listen* carefully, without resistance. Pay attention and you begin building a friendly relationship and increase your odds of a successful interview. ***People remember us for how we make them feel.***



# Introduction to Interviewing

**F**INDING A GOOD JOB OR POSITION in tough times can be challenging, but worth the effort. William Glasser, M.D. said, "We need two things for a fulfilling life: loving relationships and meaningful work." I hope these practical tips on interviewing, résumés, and communications will lead to a meaningful promotion or new position.

## Interviewing Tips

Once you've landed an interview, you'll wonder, What should I do to get ready? (pages 3-5). What questions will you be asked? (6). What should you do during the interview to look and sound intelligent? (pages 7-8). Should you do anything after the interview? (page 9). [Be aware of trick questions some employers use: "Why are manhole covers round?" "How many gas stations are in America?" They may be testing your problem-solving abilities or ability to think quickly.] These tips come from several years of interviewing job applicants and keeping up with the electronic job search revolution. I have coached people interviewing for promotions, court witnesses, spokespersons facing the media, local elected politicians, and authors going on book tours on Oprah, Good Morning America, and the Today Show.

## Cover Letters and Résumés

See a sample cover letter on page 10. Some experts believe a cover letter may initially be more important than a résumé because it is the first thing the reader sees. Therefore, make it short (2 or 3 paragraphs), friendly, yet professional in tone with correct grammar, spelling, and appearance. To connect immediately with the reader of the cover letter, I recommend including the word "you" (or your) in the first sentence, such as: "Your add on the Internet caught my eye." "I'm excited to be writing to you to apply for the position of..."

### A New Trend?

#### SPEED INTERVIEWING

Much like speed dating, at least one company is using Speed Interviewing. You have one minute to sell your skills to a hiring manager. If you fall short, you're out the door.

The company, MediConnect Global, first, however, has candidates complete skill, IQ, and a personality test before the one minute interview.

Can you sell yourself in just one minute? Read on.

**Résumé tip:** Instead of ending: "References available on request," try this. If you have a letter of reference from a former employer, school, professional friend, or academic colleague, quote from it. Create a heading on the left side or top: **From a Letter of Reference** or **Recommendation**, and quote the best sentence or two that describes the benefits the writer got from your work, along with the person's name and title.

And, never give up. The first four letters of the word career say it all: CARE. The best **career** is doing what you **care** about. Pay careful attention to what you like. It's your gift to the world.



# Virtual Interviewing Tips

## How to make the most of a Skype or iPad interview

**T**HERE'S A GOOD CHANCE your first interview will not be conducted in person, but on Skype or an iPhone or iPad. Some experts say virtual interviewing is taking over the corporate world. So, it pays to prepare as much as you would for a face-to-face interview to do your best.

### Advantages to Both Parties of Virtual Interviewing

You don't have to fly or drive to an in-person interview, saving time and cash. The employer also saves time and gets an indication as to whether to follow up with a face-to-face interview. Here are tips for successful virtual interviews.

### MAKE THE TECHNOLOGY WORK

Most agree that the biggest challenge is making sure the Skype or iPad is working correctly.

1. Beforehand, become familiar with the working of the equipment by trying it out with a friend.
2. Test the Internet connections on both ends to make sure they are working.
3. Keep the interviewer's phone number handy in case you have to call about technical difficulties.

### ARRANGE BACKGROUND AND LIGHTING ON YOUR FACE

1. Be sure you are not sitting in front of dirty dishes or unfolded laundry. Go for a neutral background, such as a bookshelf, potted plants, or a dark wall. I recommend a darker rather than a lighter background because a white background or bright light from a window can make faces look darker.
2. Control the lighting on your face to avoid darkness or shadows. Ideal is light coming from both sides toward the front.

### LOOK YOUR BEST

1. Use the screen-within-the-screen to check your appearance.
2. Look straight ahead, not up or down. Most people look best with the camera slightly above rather than below the face. Sit leaning slightly toward the camera, rather than straight up or leaning back.
3. Wear a friendly face as you begin and through most of the interview (not a grin, just a friendly smile), unless the question deserves a serious look.
4. Try to keep your head **straight**, not tilted or angled to the side like this



### SPEAK YOUR BEST

1. Use all the voice techniques: short phrases, pauses, drop pitch endings.
2. Answer questions carefully. See tips throughout this booklet and on P. 21.
3. Talk to one single viewer. Don't talk to groups. Think of the interview as an intimate one-to-one conversation.

## Create a “Personal Marketing Statement”

**B**efore you write that résumé or head off to a job interview, here’s an exercise to help clarify **who** you are, what you’ve **achieved**, what you **enjoy**, and **where** you really want to go. This can also help in interviews. Suppose you’re at a party and a stranger asks: “So tell me, what do you do?” How would you answer right now?

Most of us label ourselves: “I’m an accountant, engineer, software developer, teacher, project manager, government worker, gardener.” There is another way of answering, one that lets people know not what you do, but the value others **receive** from what you do. Try this: Start your response by saying, “**I help people...**”

Instead of saying, “I’m a school teacher,” try something like:

“I help children develop a love for learning.”

“I help people complete home projects they hate to do.” (Handyman)

“I help people manage their pet’s health.” (Veterinarian)

“I help small businesses save money on taxes.” (Accountant)

Instead of telling what you do, name the **benefits** others get from your work, not how you do it. Aim for a statement of as few words as possible that anyone can understand. This is your “**personal marketing statement.**” It summarizes what you enjoy doing most, and can therefore reveal your potential value to an interviewer.

## Name 3 Words That Describe You

What are 3 words that describe you? “I’m efficient, team-oriented, and hard-working,” or, whatever words fit the job you are applying for and honestly describe you. Don’t name words that while true, don’t apply to the job you seek. And be able to back up each word with a sentence or two: “I’m hardworking. I never rest until a project is completed on time.” You can use these three words when asked: “Tell me about yourself.” Or, if asked, “So, why should we hire you?” “I know that if I am hired, you will have a person who is \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.” You can also begin: “I am good at ....” and list things you do well.

## For Someone Who Has Had a Difficult Background

If a person has had workplace difficulties, a bad record, such as having served time in jail, how can he/she acknowledge the situation positively? Speak the truth humbly. For example, I developed these words for people who have been incarcerated.

*“I want you to know up front that I’m grateful for the opportunity to meet with you. I’m aware of my past record and I realize that I have made mistakes that have brought pain to others. I am not proud of my past behavior. But I’ve accepted the consequences of my actions and paid society my due. I have learned a lot of lessons along the way and gained a dose of humility. So, I’m not looking for pity or a handout. I’m looking for someone who is willing to give me a break and a chance to prove that I can be a valuable employee who will work hard. I’m looking for a job that will allow me to use my skills to make a contribution to a company’s success.”*

## What to do BEFORE a job interview

### 1) Take stock of yourself.

- Why do you really want to work **here**? (what you **like** about the employer).
- What are you proudest of having **accomplished** in your life or career?
- What **three things** can the employer count on from you? (dependable, hard-working, positive, cheerful, a problem-solver, calm personality, etc.).
- How do other people describe your work or working style?

### 2) Find out everything you can about the company/industry.

- Talk to an employee or two: learn what they like or dislike about work.
- Phone and ask about the interview: **when** is it (date, time), **where** (get directions: street address, cross streets, building name, floor, room or office number, availability of parking/public transportation), number of interviewers (get spelling/pronunciation of names), how formally or how casually interviewees typically **dress**.

### 3) Rehearse your answers and statements out loud (it really helps).

- Practice answers out loud vigorously in your room or driving a **car**.
- Record answers on audio/videotape (listen), or use a friend to role play.

### 4) Shop for the right outfit, if necessary.

- Men: Take a friend who knows clothes, styles. You'll often want to show up in the kind of clothing worn by people in the job you're applying for.
- Neatness, good grooming, conservative colors/fabrics, shined shoes help.

### 5) Plan for the interview day.

- Fill the gas tank, check bus schedules, call a taxi. If you plan to park on the street take either plenty of quarters or dimes for the meter or a credit card.
- Schedule the day so you have extra time (arrive early to find parking and plan an extra hour after, in case the interview takes longer).
- Bring something to write on: notebook, pen, pencil and **extra résumés**.

### 6) On the day of the interview.

- Get plenty of sleep the night before, take a hot shower, go very light on the perfume/cologne/after shave (better: wear none), eat and drink lightly.
- Rehearse out loud again, as you drive to the interview, or before you leave home, warm up your voice by singing. Review your résumé (so it's fresh) and bring along a few fresh copies of it to give the interviewer(s).
- Plan to arrive about 15 minutes early (to relax, use restroom).
- Treat the **receptionist** with friendly courtesy (this person may be a boss's spouse). Ask for the correct pronunciation of the interviewer's name(s).

## Typical Interview Questions You Might be Asked

**Note:** Early on, you might ask the interviewer, "Can you tell me, what are you really looking most in this position?" Surprisingly, many interviewers are happy to tell you what they want, thereby giving you a reference point to compare your qualifications against.

1. Tell me about yourself. (Ask: What would you like to know about me? Other tips on p. 4)
2. What interests you about this position? (have at least 2 or 3 honest reasons)
3. How much do you know about our company/industry? (learn all you can beforehand)
4. What experiences have prepared you for this position? (roles you've held)
5. Describe your working or management style. (give your philosophy, beliefs)
6. What did you do in your last job? (emphasize challenges and achievements)
7. Why did you decide to leave that job? (**never** criticize a former employer; in fact, express appreciation for your last job; consider mentioning a former boss or colleague who has helped you along the way, or praise someone else's work. Or, say: "I'm grateful for the experience I gained, but I want to work with a company that offers more opportunities in line with my career goals.").
8. What are your weaknesses? **No one has weaknesses.** People either do things or they don't. I'd never label this a "weakness." Two approaches to answering this question. (1) Name something you haven't **learned** as well as you'd like: "I'm still trying to master Spanish [or computer languages, accounting, etc.] and that's why I'm taking classes, but I'm not there yet." Or, (2) If you *have* to mention a **shortcoming** make sure it is minor and tell how you overcame it, and ultimately turned it into a strength. Say, for example, "I used to hate meetings. But a friend pointed out to me how much I have to contribute in meetings. So, now I prepare thoroughly and enjoy having an opportunity to share ideas and influence decisions."
9. Think of a time when you faced a work problem. How did you solve it?
10. What do you see yourself doing in five years? (continue learning/developing skills)
11. If you ran into this situation (sample), what would you do? (first, second, etc.)
12. If I call your references, what will they say about you? (summarize 3-4 qualities)
13. What can you offer us that someone else cannot? (ideas from page 4)
14. Aren't you overqualified for this job? (experience, yes. I'm eager to work hard)
15. Do you have any questions of me? (You may want to interact with the interviewer as you go along with questions. Or, have questions ready: "Can you tell me more about the role that needs to be played in this job?" Or, ask the interviewer, "I like what I'm hearing about the job. I'm curious, what do you most enjoy about working here?")
16. What are your salary requirements? (quote a range, not a specific dollar amount)
17. When can you begin? (be sure to give adequate notice to present employer)

## What to do DURING a job interview

### 1. Greet the interviewer cordially (if you have a sense of humor, don't hide it).

- Wear a face that says "I'm happy to be here." A smile improves the sound of your voice and immediately makes you more likable and believable.
- Look and talk directly into the interviewer's eyes 95% of the time.
- Shake the interviewer's hand firmly yet gently (keep your hands clean and dry, not drenched in smelly hand cream or cologne).
- Say your name ("I'm Alice Dixon"), or the interviewer's name ("I'm pleased to meet you Mrs. Interviewer"). To say your name as well as broadcasters, try the model on the right: start in the middle of your voice's pitch range and stair-step your pitch down. **ALWAYS say your name so the last syllable goes DOWN in pitch, never up, or you'll sound uncertain, nervous, or afraid.**

Try these methods used by broadcasters

I'm Sharon An der son.  
I'm Jed Blas ko.

(PAUSE after saying your name.)

### 2. Take a seat when you're motioned to.

- Sit upright, leaning slightly forward from the waist so there's air between your back and the back of the chair, with hands resting on your lap.
- Take notes if you want to, after asking: "Do you mind if I take notes so that I won't forget any important things we discuss?"

### 3. Adjust your attitude for the interview.

- Don't act desperate. If you get the position—great, if not, you'll survive.
- Turn every interview into a learning experience. What can you learn from this interview about the job, the interview process, and yourself?
- Use the interview as a lead for other interviews. Possibly, ask for referrals.

### 4. Compliment the interviewer sincerely.

- Comment on something in his/her office you like: the view, art work, photos, furniture, anything the interviewer is proud of. Say, "Tell me about your...."
- Compliment the interviewer about the business: it's reputation, specialities, or awards. Do this sincerely. Example: "I want you to know I'm pleased to be interviewed for this position. I've always admired the excellent reputation you have in the community." "I've looked forward to serving as (job title) for some time and I can't think of a better organization to be associated with." Try to use the word "**you**" often: e.g., "I know **you** are looking for someone who knows (fundraising, community relations, or whatever.)"
- Remember, interviewers love their companies and want to find the right person for the position . . . and someone others will be pleased to work with. You want to display your best, most positive nature.



## What to do DURING a job interview

### 5. Show that you are listening.

- **LEAN** slightly toward the person speaking. **Nod** your head when you sincerely agree. **Look** at the eyes of the person as he or she is speaking.
- **ASK QUESTIONS** to be sure you understand: "Can you tell me some of the in-service training or learning opportunities you provide your staff?"
- **RESTATE** what the person says in your own words to check your understanding: "If I understand correctly, you ask your employees to work overtime about once a month."

### 6. Answer questions this way.

- **PAUSE** before answering whenever you wish. Pause and look thoughtful for a second. Ask for clarification if a question is unclear.
- **PREFACE** your answers to give your mind more time. Three good ways. (1) **Repeat** part of the question as you begin your answer. Question: "Why do you want to work here?" Begin, "I'd love to work for your company because...."
- (2) Use **numbers**: "I would love to work here for two reasons...." Number information whenever possible and you'll sound smart and in command. (3) Start an answer with a **philosophy statement** of your big-picture thinking.
- **PROVE** your answers by giving statistics, illustrations, examples, stories, and personal experiences that back up what you're saying. Use the word "**because**": "I want to work for you (your organization), because...."

### 7. To sound confident and convincing try this.

- Speak in **short phrases** rather than endless rambling sentences. Aim for an average of 5 to 9 words at a time.
- **Emphasize** your main ideas by **raising** your pitch on the key words (the accented syllable of key words) while **dropping** your pitch on the last syllable of nearly everything you say. This makes you sound confident and decisive. Never end words or lines with a rising pitch inflection or you'll sound like as if you are begging for approval. Even most yes-and-no questions should end down in pitch.
- At the end of each phrase—**pause** briefly.

### 8. Always answer honestly.

- Whatever you say, make sure it's true and accurate. You don't have to reveal everything about yourself, but what you say must be true.
- If you are asked about mistakes you've made or trouble you've had, say something similar to what's on the bottom of page 4 of this booklet.

### 9. Finish with a next step clearly laid out.

- Be sure to ask **when** the hiring decision will be made and if the interviewer will get back to you. Thank him or her cordially.

## What to do AFTER a job interview

### 1. Make notes to yourself.

- Immediately after an interview, jot down your impressions. You might keep a journal of your interviewing experiences and what you've learned such as tough questions you've been asked and how to answer them better next time, what you thought of the school or the people you interviewed with.

### 2. Send a thank-you note or email within 24 hours.

- If you're interested in working with this school, send an email message as soon as possible (within hours) expressing your interest. If interviewed by a group, send it to the leader of the group. Or bring a "thank you" note and fill it out in the lobby and send or drop it off immediately. Or, send an email thank you (get someone's email address). A quick response may set you apart from others. Here's a sample brief note for email or paper.

Dear June Carlson,

Thank you for inviting me to interview with you this morning. I appreciated your honesty. Now I know why people speak so highly of your organization.

I want you to know that I am genuinely interested in the position we discussed. I would be pleased to join your team and lend my skills to your mission of bringing outstanding products and services to customers.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

### 3. Keep searching.

- These are tough times. Assuming you're employed, hold onto the position you currently have knowing that there's a position and an important role for you out there. Try not to get frustrated.

### 4. Check Internet career websites

- Internet sites (google or Bing) can lead you to jobs and helpful articles on résumés, interviewing. Search "job sites," "careers," "résumés." Four good sites are **simplyhired.com** • **indeed.com** • **go2worksource.com** • **bright.com** Type in the kind of job you're looking for and location (Seattle, for example). You may find dozens of positions you qualify for.

## SAMPLE COVER LETTER

### Your stationery or official-looking piece of paper with contact information

Date

Name of person  
Community College  
Address  
City/state/zip

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_,  
(or use the full name: Dear Pat Saunders)

Your announcement for a (name of position) caught my eye. (Or, I was excited to see your announcement for a...) You are looking for a person with proven skills in (marketing, finances, PR, engineering, systems, website design, purchasing, development, or whatever is required).

You will find on the enclosed résumé that my experience working in (name of company or industry) for the past eight years—along with my recent (name any special training, certification, or experience)—have prepared me for the position.

Because of your company's outstanding reputation for quality products and dependable customer service, I would be honored to be considered for the position of (name the position).

I look forward to the opportunity of interviewing with you. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

*Your Signature*

Name typed

Tip: Because someone took time to word the position announcement just right, repeat some of the exact words you find in the description in your cover letter, especially in the first paragraph. This shows you are paying attention. (This page is written in 12-point **Georgia** typeface, which I prefer to Times New Roman because of size and readability.)