

SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING: WHAT INTERVIEWERS LOOK FOR IN A JOB CANDIDATE

In addition to the obvious—having the right skill set for the job in question, employers probe for the following must-haves for any job:

- 1. Good manners/appearance.** Dressing appropriately, sitting erect, maintaining eye contact, waiting to sit until your interviewer is seated—these things all show respect for the person and the situation.
- 2. Energy.** Humans are drawn to energetic people because energy is contagious and an upper. Job interviewers are human.
- 3. Maturity.** Mature people know how to focus on the needs of others. Immature people are just wrapped up in themselves. Employers really prefer the first one.
- 4. Judgment.** When interviewers start questions with “tell me about a time when you,” that’s your opening to bring up examples of when you showed excellent judgment.
- 5. Problem-solving skills.** The “tell me about a time” question is also an opportunity to talk about how you effectively approach problems.
- 6. Loyalty.** Employers seek candidates who can demonstrate loyalty to something—a cause, colleagues, a company, your profession.
- 7. Cheerful nature.** A positive attitude, a smile, and an easygoing attitude tell an employer you will be a pleasure to have around. That’s important.
- 8. Some evidence of achievement and commitment in your personal life.** Employers ask about your hobbies and passions as a way of getting to know you, and because they like to see some success here, too.
- 9. Financial responsibility.** Lots of jobs involve a credit check. So if you have a problem in this area, start working now to fix it!
- 10. Demonstration that you finish what you start.** This is an opportunity to talk about the volunteer work you’ve been doing, your involvement in campus activities, or that part-time job you’ve held during college.
- 11. Follow-through.** Not quite the same as #10. Follow-through is a habit of mind highly valued at most companies. A good example is writing a thank-you note after the interview.
- 12. Demonstration of an ability to go above and beyond.** Employers dream about these kinds of employees. Think of a time you’ve shown this quality and find a way to talk about it.

13. Ability to handle criticism. When interviewers ask about “your greatest weakness,” they want to see that you’re capable of recognizing you do have weaknesses, and that you’re willing to put in the work to correct them.

14. Ability to cooperate with others. Be nice to receptionists/assistants/colleagues. Show that you would be an asset to the team.

15. Intelligence. For example, in interviews, employers notice how well you appear to understand questions and whether you answer them clearly, in complete sentences, using reasonably good grammar.

16. Evidence that you know something about the employer’s business. A no-brainer.

17. Long-term goals. Learn to talk about your career in a way that shows you have a plan. What you want to do here is demonstrate that you are a thoughtful person with goals.

18. Punctuality. The reason you need to be on time for interviews is that this is the employer’s first clue that you can meet a deadline.

19. Flexibility/adaptability/resilience. Tell about times when the plan fell through and you had to improvise. Can you still perform when the going gets tough? Think of examples from your personal and work life or college courses, and try to work them into the interview.

20. Attention to detail. Your resume is the classic platform for showing an employer that you can produce a meticulously accurate product.