Ten minutes will give you time to relax a little before your appointment. You can also use that time to look around and gain additional insight into the company. Be careful of arriving too early though; this may rush the interviewer who was not expecting you until a few minutes before your scheduled time.

First impressions

First impressions are critical! Be confident, approach people you meet with a nice smile, appropriate eye contact, and a firm handshake. People often judge you by how you look, what you say, and how you say it. Be polite to the receptionist, be respectful to the people you meet in the elevator, and do not do anything that will cause people to question your judgment. Use formal titles when addressing people, and wait to be invited to sit. Remember, your interview begins when you walk into the building.

Documents

The employer may already have your documents, but it is a good idea to bring them anyway. Print these documents on quality paper and bring several copies.

Before the Interview

Research the company

When preparing for your interviews, consider that you will impress the interviewer and be better prepared for the interview if you research the field/industry, the job, and the employer.

Not sure where to start researching? Visit our website (careers.byu.edu) for a list of online resources available to BYU students.

Know yourself

One of the best things you can do before an interview is get to know yourself. Also, learn how to present yourself in an impressive and professional way to the employer. Some things you might consider are:

- What have you accomplished?
- What are your strengths?
- Why are you a good fit for this position?
- Develop your “Me in 30 seconds” statement.

Know the process

There are many different types of interviews: conversational, behavioral, stress, case or situational. There are also many different formats: one-on-one, rotational, panel or committee, assessment, marathon, group, and meals or receptions.

Ask the recruiter or person setting up the interview what to expect. Ask other employees of the organization, or other students who have completed the process before you. Once you have an idea for what to expect, do a little extra studying on how to do well in your particular situation.

Practice

Practice, practice, practice! Remember, most questions are about what you have done to prepare and what life’s experiences have taught you. Think of work environment questions – what would you be doing with this job and what kinds of things will they ask you about?

A mock interview can be helpful practice. The person conducting the mock interview can give you feedback on what they are hearing. Watching a recording of your interview can also give you helpful insight. And remember: there is no right or wrong answer; it is more about what your response tells the recruiter.

Now, how will you answer these questions? Remember the points you want to drive home, but do not memorize your answers word for word. It may be helpful to start by writing down your answer.

Have a good attitude

Have you ever noticed that people with jobs usually have an easier time getting a new job than people who are unemployed? This is often because of their attitude – they are not desperate, and the employer can tell they are only going to take the job if they see it as a good fit.

During the Interview

Be on time

Leave yourself plenty of time to get to the interview. Get to your interview a few minutes early.
Be yourself

Employers are looking for signals of your qualifications, your intelligence, and honesty. They are also trying to determine if you are a likeable person and whether you will get along well with their current employees. Be yourself, and help them know what makes you different from the other candidates.

Body language

Body language can speak louder than words. Be aware of what your body language is saying about you. Show energy and enthusiasm. Demonstrate openness and responsiveness. Be aware that some common actions can give a bad impression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you do</th>
<th>What it says</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slouching</td>
<td>Lazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoiding eye contact</td>
<td>Shy, poor communicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous tick (rocking back &amp; forth, clicking a pen, rubbing your hands, etc..)</td>
<td>Not confident; cannot perform under pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting as far away from the interviewer as possible</td>
<td>You have something to hide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answer intelligently

Remember, there is not a wrong way to answer a question. It is only a matter of what your response is telling the employer. Listen to what the employer is saying/asking; don’t jump the gun before they finish asking the question. A brief pause after the question can give you time to determine the best example for you to use.

It is helpful to know the STAR approach to answering questions. Just remember to describe the Situation, the Task that was involved, the Action you took, and the Results of your action.

Ask questions

Usually, the employer will ask if you have any questions. This is a great opportunity for you to demonstrate the research you have completed. Have at least three prepared questions, and be genuinely interested and curious about your question. Avoid asking about salary or other benefits.

Close it strong

Reaffirm your interest in the position, and if appropriate, ask for the job or to be passed on to the next step. Sometimes if an employer has a concern about you, they will voice it in response to that question, and then you have the opportunity to correct that concern.

Make sure you know the next steps before the end of your interview. Will there be a second round interview if you are selected? How long will it be before they have their decision? How should you follow up? Thank them for their time and the opportunity to interview, and ask for a business card of each interviewer so you can follow-up appropriately.

After the Interview

Follow up

Send a thank-you card, letter, or note within 24 hours of your interview. It can also be appropriate to call the employer, or email them, to follow up. Use good judgment. Ask in the interview when you should follow up, and stick to that time frame. Be cautious of being too aggressive – a phone call or two is appropriate, but calling every day could be overwhelming.

Evaluate yourself and them

After you conclude the interview, evaluate yourself. What things did you say poorly, and what questions gave you difficulty? Keep these notes in a job search journal and use them to improve for the next interview.

Remember, you are also evaluating the company. The interview can help you decide if you really want to work for them and if the organization and/or position will be a good fit for you.

Expect some rejection. You are not going to receive an offer from every organization you interview with, but you can still benefit from the experience. Learn what you can do better, ask for feedback on what you could have done better, and find ways to stay positive.

Negotiation

Start out by asking if the offer is negotiable. If it is, you can proceed by explaining why a larger salary is necessary, or why other perks should be increased or added.

If salary is not negotiable, perhaps you can ask for help with relocation expense, or more vacation days. Whatever you do, do not try to keep negotiating after it is apparent they do not want to negotiate. If you push too much, you will tarnish your reputation from day one.