

## Expert Advice on Interviewing

By Megan Fleming

Your resume did its job and you've landed an interview for a position you really want. Now what? We asked recruiters and human resource managers around the country for their interviewing tips. Based on their input, you have some work to do before the interview.

### **Know the Company**

Employers expect you to know about the company so don't disappoint. Do some research online or talk with someone who works at the company. "Another thing candidates will do is that they'll get on the phone or apply for the job and they'll say things like: 'I don't know the job description.'" says Jason Kreuser, corporate technical recruiter for Information Builders Inc., a software development company. "You have to be on your toes. That type of thing can put off a corporate recruiter because it says you're not prepared."

### **Review You**

Candidates often forget to review what they know best: themselves. Before an interview, go over your work history and your technical skill set. "If you're a design engineer in circuit design, you should be prepared for theoretical questions to be asked of you. Brush up on your theory," suggests Dawn Dryer, contract recruiter for L3 Photonics.

Don't forget to inventory your "soft skills" including communication, teamwork, and leadership, and be ready to share examples that illustrate your talents. "The main weakness I see is the candidate's inability – or unwillingness to explain what they've done," says Tricia Bielinski, resource manager at K2 Partners, an IT recruiting company. "Some consultants are very much of the mindset that it's on their resume and you should be able to read it...Obviously, what's on a resume and what a person can tell you about it are two very different things."

### **Dress to Impress**

The workplace may be more casual these days, but interviews aren't. First impressions count, so dress professionally and be on time. And don't forget to turn off your cell phone during the interview.

### **Ask Questions**

A good interview should be a give and take. Shailesh Bokil, director of recruiting and partner at CEI, an IT contracting and solutions business, encourages candidates to ask questions during interviews. "It shouldn't be a one-way interview. When they interview, they should be able to ask questions, ask what the environment is, what their day-to-day responsibilities are going to be, and what their challenges are going to be. They should be able to strike up a conversation."

### **Communicate and Relate**

When asked about their perfect candidate, employers said the candidate must have technical skills, but the ability to communicate well is crucial. In describing their ideal candidate, they used phrases like "a can-do person," "someone who can articulate," and "someone with good communication skills."

How well do you communicate? And how do you relate to new people? Ask trusted friends and colleagues for honest input on your communication skills. Some questions to consider include: Do you speak clearly? Do you project enthusiasm and confidence? Do you answer questions directly? Can you think on your feet? Work on areas that need improvement. Remember that communication is a two-way street. “It’s the ability to communicate and the ability to listen, too,” points out Dani Woolwine, a recruiter at Columbia IS Consulting Group.

### **Follow Up**

A formal thank you letter isn’t expected, but a follow-up email is a smart, professional – and easy – gesture that can set you apart.