

# How to ace your job interview



**“IF YOU DON’T KNOW WHY YOU’D HIRE YOU,  
NEITHER WILL THEY.”**

**- FRANK SONNENBERG**

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*From our guest contributor, Frank Sonnenberg.*

## **Be selective.**

An employer can tell if you’re serious about a job interview or going through the motions. The key is to be selective enough that you’re willing to make the investment. If you’re not excited about the opportunity, odds are they won’t be excited about you.

## **Do your homework.**

An interview starts long before the actual meeting takes place. Do you know anyone who works for the employer – even if they work in a different area than the one you’re applying to? What can they tell you about the company? Can they provide you with an introduction or say something on your behalf? Who will be conducting the interview? What’s his or her background?

What do you know about the company? Did you visit their website and read the annual report? Do they discuss key

initiatives, company values, and their culture? Has the company been in the news lately? What do analysts say about their strengths and weaknesses? What does their recruiting information say about the people who work there?

### **Put yourself in their shoes.**

If you were conducting the interview, what qualities and skills would you be looking for? What things might disqualify a candidate?

### **Practice, practice, practice.**

What makes you a good fit for the organization? What will excite the interviewer or pose potential problems for you? Try to anticipate questions and prepare responses. Run your answers past a friend. The key is to think through your answers *before* the interview.

Some of the most common questions may include: Why do you want to work for this company? Why should we hire you? What do you like most and least about your current job? What are your strengths and weaknesses? Remember, real-life stories and hard facts will bring your responses to life.

You'll also be asked if you have any questions of the employer. Some questions worth consideration include: What are you looking for in an ideal candidate? What are the opportunities for growth?

### **You're always onstage.**

Some people believe that an applicant is evaluated based solely on the interview. The truth is, you will be judged on everything that takes place before, during, and after the interview. How will that Facebook post go over when the potential employer catches a glimpse? Employers will also note whether your résumé was sent with a customized cover letter; whether you were responsive in answering phone calls and e-

mails; whether you were courteous to the person confirming the interview; and whether you followed up in a timely manner.

### **Be focused.**

What key points do you want to make during your interview? Are you sure they address key factors in the employer's selection criteria?

### **Differentiate yourself.**

What qualifications or experiences make you uniquely qualified for the position? What can you do or say that'll differentiate you from other applicants?

### **Be yourself.**

Enjoy yourself during the interview. If you're comfortable, you'll make the interviewer feel at ease. Think through your answers before the interview takes place. But remember, if you try to fake your way through the interview, believe me, it will show!

### **Remain confident.**

Confidence comes with practice. Did you research the company? Did you identify questions and prepare responses? Did you select key points that you want to drive home? Most of all, remember: If you don't know why you'd hire you, neither will they.

### **Stand out.**

What can you do to stand out from the crowd? Do you have any personal interests that'll make you memorable?

### **No-no's.**

There are several things that will knock you out of the running. Here are a few: Spell-check all correspondence. Then READ through everything again to catch those "misused" words

that spell-check overlooked. Make sure that you dress properly and are appropriately groomed. When in doubt, it's better to be overdressed than too casual. Show up for the interview 5 or 10 minutes early. Make sure you can answer basic questions, such as why you want the job or why you chose their company. If there are time gaps or other issues in your résumé be prepared to address them. Don't use foul language or bad-mouth your previous employer. Don't bring up controversial subjects such as politics or religion, and don't disclose confidential information about your company. Last, don't try to do an end run around someone during the application process. (Ouch.)

### **Don't put all your eggs in one basket.**

Some people fall in love with one job opportunity and stop all other activity. The truth is, even if the opportunity looks like a shoo-in, it could dry up for no apparent reason.

### **Look in the mirror.**

After every interview, ask yourself what you'd do differently if you had the opportunity to go through the interview again.

### **May the "luck" be with you.**

Sometimes you can do everything perfectly, but the job is offered to someone else. When this happens, don't spend time beating yourself up. Move forward. The interview process takes determination, persistence, and a touch of luck. If you follow these tips, you'll be one step ahead of the others, so luck won't be required. But good luck anyway!

This is an excerpt from *BOOKSMART: Hundreds of real-world lessons for success and happiness* by Frank Sonnenberg released November 2016.



Frank is an award-winning author. He has written six books and over 300 articles. Frank was recently named one of “America’s Top 100 Thought Leaders” and one of America’s Most Influential Small Business Experts. Frank has served on several boards and has consulted to some of the largest and most respected companies in the world. Additionally, *FrankSonnenbergOnline* was named among the “Best 21st Century Leadership Blogs,” among the “Top 100 Socially-Shared Leadership Blogs,” and one of the “Best Inspirational Blogs On the Planet.” Frank’s new book, *BookSmart: Hundreds of real-world lessons for success and happiness* was released November 2016. © 2017 Frank Sonnenberg. All rights reserved.