

MANAGE YOUR OWN CAREER!

10 tools to help active job searchers and engaged employees become creative, innovative and passionate workers

TOOL 7 of 10

▶ VISIT THE WORKFORCE WINDSOR/ESSEX WEBSITE

▶ GIVE THIS TOOL TO A FRIEND PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Show what you know

Tool Overview

An interview is the time when a job searcher is able to communicate with a potential employer for the first time in a face-to-face manner. This is essentially the best opportunity to show a prospective employer everything you know.

As an **active job searcher** you will make sure you are prepared and able to deliver a top-notch interview performance where you depict yourself as the most desirable candidate out there. You will be engaged in the process from start to finish and will work to continuously improve your interviewing skills.

Self-Assessment Quiz

Use this quiz to identify your strengths and pinpoint areas for improvement.

YES NO SOMEWHAT N/A

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I participate in "mock" interviews in order to practice my interview skills. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I have prepared answers to commonly asked interview questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I go into every interview prepared with a list of my professional references. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I send a personalized thank-you letter or email following every interview. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. When I am not successful, I ask for feedback in order to improve my interview skills for the future. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Have All the Answers!

Before you even set foot in an interviewer's office you should be completely prepared to answer their questions and communicate the value that you have to offer!

- Talk about your contributions in terms of stories and accomplishments rather than responsibilities, job duties and tasks!
- Have a good understanding of the company you are interviewing with!
- Show that you know about the specific position you are interviewing for!
- Be enthusiastic about becoming a member of the team!

BE A "KNOW IT ALL"!

Give this a try...

Before an interview read all the company information you can find. Check out the annual report, the website and customer reviews. Learn as much as you can about the company so you can show them how much you want to be part of the team!



"So many people out there have no idea what they want to do for a living, but they think that by going on job interviews they'll magically figure it out. If you're not sure, that message comes out loud and clear in the interview." - Todd Bermont

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THINK ABOUT IT!

Be sure to **ask some questions of your own** at each and every interview you attend! Take some time to think about your goals and consider questions that will help you to determine your fit within the company and the position. This shows the interviewer that you are serious and have put in a real effort in order to prepare.

ASK THE EMPLOYER . . .

- What are the most challenging aspects of this position?
- What makes this organization unique?
- Can you describe the best results ever produced by someone in this position?
- How would you describe the organization's management style?
- What qualities are you looking for in a candidate?
- How does this organization encourage promotion from within?
- How does this organization assist employees to keep their skills up-to-date?
- How will my performance be measured?
- What is the number one priority of the person who accepts this position?
- Can you describe the rest of the interview process?
- If I were the successful candidate, what is the first thing you want me to work on?

Practice Makes Perfect!

Being unprepared shows.

Know Where to Go

The Perfect Interview

www.perfectinterview.com

Mock interviewing is a great way to practice for the real job interview. It can help you to improve the way you present yourself and assist you to perfect your message.

Consider This . . .

Find out how the company interviews, whether it be **behavioral based** or in a **panel setting**. Doing some research on the interview process being used will help you feel more prepared and able to shine!

AN ACTIVE JOB SEARCHER IS ALWAYS PREPARED!



Google this: *interview preparation tips*

Want more? Check out this great read!

Top Notch Interviews: *Tips, Tricks, and Techniques from the First Call to Getting the Job You Want* by Brian Davis

View it online @ <http://www.amazon.com/Top-Notch-Interviews-Techniques-Getting/dp/1601631146>

Interview Question Comparison

Instructions: Use this tool to help you answer interview questions in a way that shows the value you add.

Interview Question:

"What was the biggest challenge you faced in your last position? How did you handle it?"

Typical Job Searcher Response:

"My department had just installed new computer software that was not very user-friendly so I coordinated a workshop for everyone in the department to learn how to use it properly."

Active Job Searcher Response:

"My department had just installed new computer software that was not very user-friendly and ended up causing daily customer issues. Realizing that all of my co-workers were struggling as well, I decided to coordinate a workshop with Tech Support for the entire department. After the workshop was completed there was a much higher level of comfort with the computer system and customer complaints associated with errors were eliminated."

What's the difference?

An **active job searcher** describes the issue in detail, including how they added value and the outcome that resulted.

Interview Question:

"What have you done to improve your knowledge and skills over the last year?"

Typical Job Searcher Response:

"I participate in a on-the-job training program offered through my employer."

Active Job Searcher Response:

"I have been an active participant in an on-the-job training program offered through my employer. In addition to this formal training program, I also belong to a peer group that meets monthly to discuss career advancement opportunities. I am also a big believer in mentorship and have been regularly meeting with more senior colleagues to learn about their work."

What's the difference?

An **active job searcher** describes both the formal and informal learning they have participated in.

Say "Thank You"

While the typical job searcher will leave the interview and cross their fingers hoping to hear back an **active job searcher** will take matters into their own hands and follow up with a personalized thank you letter.

A thank you letter can be as simple as a short email addressed to everyone involved in the interview process. Be sure to acknowledge your appreciation for the interviewer's time and discuss what you learned when you spoke. Restate your interest in working for the company and provide the best way contact you for further conversation.

Sending a thank you letter is a great way to stand out in an employer's mind and can definitely give you an edge over applicants who fail to extend their appreciation for the experience.

Sample "Thank You" Letter

Ms. Hiring,

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with you for the Call Centre Supervisor Position at ABC Calls. I am very excited about this opening and want to restate my strong interest in this position.

I really appreciate the time you took to explain the commitments and responsibilities of this role. I found our conversation about the many levels of customer service to be particularly interesting.

Thank you again for the opportunity to meet with you. Please feel free to contact me anytime at 555-555-5555. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anita Job

Get Your References Ready!

Step 1: Make the connection!

Reach out to all of your references, let them know what type of job you're applying for and get their permission to be contacted.

Step 2: Make the master list!

Create a list of at least 5 key contacts that would do a great job of portraying your skills.

Step 3: Narrow it down!

Decide on 3 references that suit the type of job for which you are interviewing. Have their names and contact information ready to present to an employer at the interview.

Google this: *common interview mistakes*



Just Ask

There is no question that there will be times when you will be unsuccessful during the interview process. Don't be discouraged! Consider this a good opportunity to gain feedback regarding your interview skills.

An **active job searcher** will contact the interviewer and ask them to provide some insight into the areas you could improve. Take those suggestions to heart and work to become stronger in that area for the next time.

It's a fact!

Top employers are looking for **professional references** from those you have worked with in a paid or unpaid capacity, someone who has seen you in action! So, unless specifically asked, avoid using **character references** like friends, family members or neighbours.

Key Terms

Character Reference: someone who can speak to your personal qualities and characteristics such as friends, family and neighbours

Professional Reference: someone who can speak to your workplace skills and abilities as they have worked with you in a paid or unpaid capacity