

# Colleen's Top Ten Interview Tips

Interview success is influenced by what you do *before*, *during* AND *after* the interview.

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1. **Who are they?** Research the company by reading their website and publications like annual reports. Watch their film clips. This will help you to ask informed questions and demonstrate genuine interest in the company and the position. Google the names (or positions) of the interviewers if you are able to get them in advance and read their LinkedIn profiles.
2. **Where are they?** Visit the company at the same time of day you will need to travel for your interview to get an accurate idea of how long it will take and how you will get there. This will help with your nerves and getting there on time. Introduce yourself at the reception stating your name and that you are coming for an interview at a later date. Note your first impressions of the business culture and dress code. Dress appropriately for this trial run as this will be their first impression of you, too.
3. **Be Prepared:** Know your story and how it connects to that of the company and this position. Prepare Shining Moment Stories/STARR, examples from your most relevant experience to reinforce your applicable skills and accomplishments. If relevant, bring examples of your work with you to the interview. Be prepared to [ask questions](#) of your own.
4. **Practice:** Ask two friends or mentors to practice with you. Give them prepared questions and respond with your prepared stories. Record it on video. Use the observations that make the most sense to you to prepare for the best interview possible.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

5. **First impressions**
  - Appearance:* Select your clothing in advance. Rule of thumb: One step up in formality from the dress code you saw on your visit.
  - Handshake:* Shake hands firmly and confidently but not aggressively or floppily. How: When the skin between your thumb and pointer finger meets that part of their hand you start the firm grip and shake two or three times. Practice this.
  - Make contact:* Smile, use eye contact and say thank you. Remember the person at the reception is often also asked for their impression of you.
6. **Non-verbal communication**
  - Your conduct in the interview says much more about you than the words you use to answer questions.
  - Convey *interest* and *engagement*: sit up straight and lean slightly forward in the chair.
  - Establish *non-verbal rapport*: mirror what the interviewer does; make regular eye contact.
  - *Breathe*, consider, and then answer with your stories.
7. **Be yourself and sensitive to their work culture**
  - In NL greet interviewers with eye contact, a hello, your name, a smile, and a firm handshake.
8. **Answer the questions (and ask your own):**
  - Answer questions with what you accomplished factually with enthusiasm using your story examples.
  - Adapt your prepared stories/examples to fit the specific question.
  - Look at the person who asked the question when answering. In a panel interview, also look at the others present while directly answering the person who asked it.
  - When unsure how to answer, say so and then provide the parts of the answer you do know. Then ask if the information provided fully answers their question.
  - check out the 10 best interview questions to ask at the bottom of this [article](#).

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

9. **Say thank you**

Thank the interviewers for their time and the interview. Send a follow-up email to thank them again and mention a top moment from the interview that you would like to emphasize and refresh in their memory.
10. **Ask for feedback**

If you did not get offered a position, use this as an opportunity to ask for feedback, learn what you can improve, practice these and use this learning to improve the results of your next interview. Remember interviewers are looking for a best fit with their company. If you don't get offered the job this time, it is not a personal rejection. It is also possible you may be contacted later for a future opening. Be gracious and respectful at all times.