Interviewing Top Ten

Interviewing Top 10 is a countdown of 10 strategies and tips for excelling during interviews. Following this advice will help you present your best self to the interviewer, thus increasing your chances of getting a job offer.

**NUMBER 10:** Toot your own horn quietly: Be confident yet humble
There's a thin line between selling yourself and sounding conceited. Recruiters want to see that you believe in yourself and your skills. However, too much of anything is not good. If you come across too strong, most recruiters will get turned off. Your goal is to exude a quiet confidence!

**NUMBER 9:** Sit up and keep your hands to yourself: Maintain good posture and use hand gestures appropriately
Actions speak louder than words. The way that you sit in your chair can say more about you than you could say during the whole interview. Additionally, the way that you use your hands can demonstrate nervousness and lack of polish. Use hand gestures to emphasize or illustrate a point. When using hand gestures, keep your hands around chest high.

**NUMBER 8:** Um...like...um, watch your "um's" and "like's!"
This is a tough one for a lot of people. Using *um* and *like* has been embedded into everyday speech so deeply that it's difficult to catch unless you're looking for it. The problem is if you're looking for it, your overall presentation will go down hill. It's difficult to be watching out for the um's and like's while delivering confident, fluent responses. Therefore, monitor your um’s and like’s during practice prior to the interview, and just be yourself and forget about them during the interview.

**NUMBER 7:** NOT TOO LOUD, n-o-t t-o-o-o-o o-s l-o-w: Maintain good voice projection and speech rate
Talking **TOO LOUDLY THROUGHOUT YOUR INTERVIEW CAN BE ANNOYING!** On the other hand, talking very softly may indicate a lack of enthusiasm and self-confidence. Talking-too-quickly-can-cause-you-to-lose-your-interviewer-and-generate-a-rambling-scatter-brained-image. Conversely, t-a-l-k-i-n-g t-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o o-s l-o-w-l-y i-s n-o-t g-o-o-d e-i-t-h-e-r r-r-r. Practice using a good voice projection and speech rate when preparing for your interviews.

**NUMBER 6:** Know WHEN to say WHEN: Provide enough detail without rambling
The length of your responses is important to consider. Since it's impossible to pinpoint the best response length for all answers, it's more beneficial to think of length in terms of detail. How much detail in a response is too much, and how much is not enough? Generally, a good rule of thumb is to answer the question, provide explanations or examples to support and clarify your answer, and then end the response. Recruiters report time and time again that college students tend to give one-word answers and not enough detail. You'll also be able to sense from the interviewer when your answers are too long or too short.
NUMBER 5: Have a method to your madness: Keep responses organized
Remember! Interviewers are judging you not only on what you say, but how you say it. You may have the best answer in your head, but if it's not articulated in a coherent way, you may lose the interviewer. When one point runs into another, it's difficult for the interviewer to make sense of it all. A simple pause between different (expressed) thoughts can help organize your responses.

NUMBER 4: Keep your eyes on the road: Maintain eye contact
The most important nonverbal communication skill by far is maintaining eye contact. Good eye contact must be there from the start. Good eye contact indicates self-confidence, honesty, poise, and maturity. You'll have more success maintaining eye contact during those questions and responses that you're more familiar with. When you know an answer well, you don't have to think so much about how you're going to phrase it. It just flows naturally off your tongue. Therefore, practice and preparation prior to the interview is the key to maintaining eye contact during the interview.

NUMBER 3: Stand out from the crowd! Use past examples and explanations to validate and personalize your responses.
One of the biggest complaints among interviewers is that college students' responses are too vague and impersonal. Short answers blend together from one candidate to the next. You must go beneath the surface with your responses. Don't ramble on forever, but it's necessary to explain your answers. Because the interviewer doesn't know you, there's so much room for misinterpretation. Providing explanations and examples can lower the chance of the interviewer misinterpreting you. Remember, most college students tend to be too short with their responses. Use examples to support and strengthen your answers!

NUMBER 2: Make sure "your glass is half-full": Always be positive!
When you wake up in the morning, do you say, "God, it's a good morning!" Or do you find yourself saying, "Good God it's morning!" On your interview day, wake up saying the former! Your responses should always be positive. Don't talk negatively about a person, organization, or anything else. If you had a bad relationship with a former boss or co-worker, you're much better off not bringing it up during the interview. Many college students get tripped up when answering, "Why did you decide to attend XYZ College?" Many students at small colleges will respond, "Well, I didn't want to be a number like you are at big universities." In this example, you should express the positive reasons for attending your small college rather than the negative reasons for not going to a large university!

NUMBER 1: Don't sweat it! Keep the interview in perspective & be yourself!
It is an exciting day, and it doesn't hurt to have some sweaty palms and butterflies. But it's important not to get too excited. When you get overly excited before a big event, it can quickly turn into nervousness. And when you're nervous or uptight, it's hard to perform at your best. Keep the interview in perspective. Don't try to be perfect. You won't be. Arrive early and relax! Finally, above all, BE YOURSELF! Smile when it's natural to smile and laugh when it's natural for you to laugh (within reason, of course). Let them see the real you!