

ODs IN TRAINING

GIVE IT TO ME STRAIGHT, DOC

Common sense advice that can make or break your interview.

BY JESSIE WILSON



Graduation season is quickly approaching. Your student loan deferment will soon be ending. And your dream job still seems far too distant. Anxiety inevitably kicks in. Take a deep breath, and follow these six simple tips from Jessie Wilson, of the Brighter Bay physician placement firm, to help you ace your next interview.

—Jillian F. Meadows, OD, MS



Whether for your first job at the bowling alley or your first postgraduate position as a licensed optometrist, interviewing is intense, and it never really gets any easier. We all know the basic rules of interviewing, right? Yet, all too often, new grads and even experienced optometrists make obvious mistakes that could ultimately cost them the job they are seeking. Don't be "that guy." Follow these five basic interview guidelines to keep your career on track.



One thing that we can all agree has changed in recent years is the prevalence of social media in our lives.

Before you even consider starting your job search or interview process, use Social Sweepster (www.socialsweepster.com) or a similar online tool to search, monitor, and clean up your social media presence.

Your potential employer will search your social media pages for any undesirable behavior. Photos, posts, comments, and tweets will all be scrutinized, and these will ultimately provide the employer's first impression of you.



If you are working with a recruiter or placement firm, know that they have already done this research too, and if you did not get the interview, the reason could be a Facebook click away. A good rule of thumb is, if you wouldn't be comfortable with your grandma seeing it, get rid of it. Better yet, don't post it in the first place.



No. 2 BE ON TIME, PRESENTABLE, AND PROFESSIONAL

Sadly, this issue still needs to be stressed for many people. If your interview is at 11:30 AM, arrive by 11:15 AM. No exceptions. If you will be wearing a tie and a lab coat in your new position, do not show up for your interview looking like you are going to the club or golf course immediately afterward. Your hobbies and interests outside of work will likely come up, and it is good to have commonalities with your new boss, but leading with the details of your kickball team "Booze on First" will not be well received. Bring your CV, avoid strong fragrances and colognes, and leave your purse, backpack, and phone in the car.



No. 3 DO A LITTLE DIGGING

Don't just Google the practice the night before your interview. Chances are you will be spending a considerable amount of time at your prospective new office during your interview, especially if you have been invited for a site visit from another state. Get to know the key players, ask around, consult an industry professional, and do your due diligence. Find out what makes this practice work. (You will most certainly find out what is not working along the way.) Your potential employers are investing time and money to get to know you; putting in an effort to get to know them will be noticed and appreciated.



No. 4 BE PREPARED

"Why do you want to join our practice? What makes you think you will fit in here? What has been your best experience so far as an OD? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?" It should not come as a surprise to encounter questions like these in an interview. But, for some reason, many professionals lack quality responses when confronted with these most basic questions. Take the time to prepare yourself mentally and have good, honest answers to these types of questions. We all have strengths and weaknesses; identifying them is half the battle.

Additionally, be prepared to ask your own questions. Wrapping up an interview with, "No, I think I've heard

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everything I need to know," is not acceptable. That said, launching right into, "When will I be eligible for a raise, 3 weeks' vacation, and a 100% 401(k) match?" is also not what the employer is looking for.



No. 5 SAY "THANK YOU"

One of the most elementary things we are taught from a very early age is to say "please" and "thank you."

Why do so many candidates fail to do so? An e-mail "thank you" note within 2 days of an interview is totally appropriate and serves as more than just a common expression of gratitude. You are keeping the lines of communication open, reiterating your interest in the position, and keeping your name fresh in the prospective employer's mind. It will set you apart from candidates that failed to follow through and, at the least, demonstrate good manners. If possible, include everyone you met on your visit who is involved in the decision-making process. If you do not have all those e-mail addresses, your recruiter will gladly get them for you, or you can politely ask one of the staff members you met for help. ■

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