

GRADUATES

How to ace a job interview

DO you know that more than 200,000 students graduate from higher learning institutions every year? Shockingly, one in four graduates remains unemployed six months after graduation, with the majority being degree holders (according to the eduAdvisor 2016 report).

Today, graduating from university and holding a degree no longer guarantee that you will get a job.

Why?

According to a recent JobStreet.com survey, one of the reasons is that graduates are not able to speak English fluently, as indicated by 64 per cent of employers. Subsequently, they do not have the communication skills required. Then there are graduates who are choosy. Employers say graduates usually have unrealistic expectations with regard to the starting salary. For example, graduates expect at least RM3,500, while the employer only offers RM2,500 for entry-level posts.

Here are tips to help you ace a job interview:

DO research on the company before the interview. Gather as much information as you can about the organisation. The more research you do, the more you understand and the better your chances will be;

BE prepared with the commonly asked questions. Record or videotape your responses so that you can review your answers and body lan-

guage. Effective forms of body language are smiling, eye contact, solid posture, active listening and nodding. Proper etiquette and manners show what kind of a person you are;

DRESS appropriately. Appearance is very important. That first impression is usually the one that catches the eye of the interviewer. Generally, men should wear a dark suit and tie, while women should wear a dark suit or blouse with dark pants or a skirt. You may be able to dress more casually if a place has a casual work environment. However, it is better to dress professionally or you can call the company and ask about the dress code;

ARRIVE early for the interview. Punctuality is the politeness of kings. Arriving early allows you to get settled and to observe your surroundings. Remember to bring extra copies of your resume, reference list and portfolio or samples of your work to show the interviewer;

DURING the interview, be upbeat, focused, confident, candid and concise. Your goal should always be to respond truthfully. Take a positive view and see your first job as the opportunity to acquire knowledge and gain working experience; and,

DON'T forget to say "thank you" at the end of the interview.

TAN EI JIN,
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Graduates must have realistic expectations.