



INTERVIEW CENTER

What If Your Interview Is Tomorrow?

Adapted from the new book, [Monster Careers: Interviewing](#).

by Doug Hardy

Even if you have less than a day before your job interview, you can outshine the competition with a little preparation. The following four tasks will take you about four hours (plus five minutes) to complete, and you'll walk into the interview confident you'll be successful.

Conduct Basic Interview Research

Find out as much as you can about the interview. Call the person who scheduled your appointment and ask:

- Who will you be talking to? Will you meet the manager you'd work for, or will you just talk to HR? What are the interviewer's expectations?
- What's the [dress code](#)? Dress better than suggested. Most times, it's best for men to wear a suit and women to wear a professional business outfit. You'd be amazed how many candidates show up looking like they're going to class, not presenting a professional demeanor.
- Get directions to the office. Plan to leave early. Keep a phone number to call if you get stuck on the bus or in traffic. If you arrive late and stressed, the interview will not go well.
- If you don't have a detailed job description, ask for one.

That's a five-minute phone call.

Learn About the Company Online

Do some fast Web research <http://company.monster.com>, which will give you something to talk about in addition to the job description. Go to the employer's Web site, or search the Web for information such as:

- How big is the company in terms of annual sales or employees?
- What does the company say about its products or services?
- What recent news (such as a new product, a press release, an interview with the CEO) can you discuss?
- If the company is public, the boilerplate at the bottom of its press releases will tell you a lot.

Basic research should take you about an hour.

Think of Some Stories

Write down and memorize three achievement stories. Tell about times you've really felt proud of an achievement at work or school. These stories demonstrate all those hard-to-measure qualities like judgment, initiative, teamwork or leadership. Wherever possible, quantify what you've done, e.g., "increased sales by 20 percent," "cut customer call waiting time in half," "streamlined delivery so that most customers had their job done in two days."

By the way, nonwork achievement stories are good too; if you volunteer for the local food pantry, write down a time you overcame a big challenge or a crisis there.

Achievement stories make you memorable, which is what you want. There's an exercise in [Monster Careers: Interviewing](#) called "Mastering the Freestyle Interview," which helps you develop these stories into compelling sales points.

Take the time you need -- at least three hours on this task.

Pick Your Outfit, and Go to Bed Early

Lay out your interview outfit the night before, get a good night's rest, and always get an early start. The last thing you want is to arrive at the interview flustered and panicked because you couldn't find a parking spot.

The purpose of this article is to both provide information and facilitate general dialogue about various employment-related topics. No legal advice is being given and no attorney-client relationship created. Please see the [disclaimer](#) for further limitations and conditions.