Toastmasters' 7 Tips for Acing the Job Interview

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, Calif., Feb. 7, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Even with a strong labor market, job seekers face stressful interviews as candidates with high-level skills compete with qualified applicants for top positions. The key to success and standing out in the interview is preparation. Taking the time to research the company you'll interview with and practicing your answers for both common and difficult questions will improve your confidence and let your communication skills shine.

Toastmasters International, the global organization devoted to communication and leadership skills development, offers a safe place to practice speaking off the cuff and build your confidence. Longtime Toastmasters member and career coach Jennifer Blanck offers these tips for acing the interview:

1. **Know yourself.** It sounds simple, but the first step involves critical reflection and self-awareness. Understand your values, priorities and how to present your strengths and weaknesses. Also take the time to prepare concrete examples that demonstrate your relevant skills and experience.
2. **Be prepared.** Research the position, organization, its competitors and the interviewer. This will help you answer questions and shows you're interested in getting the job.
3. **Be yourself.** If you're not being authentic, you won't know if you're the right fit. Remember, it's just as important for you to decide whether you fit in as it is for your potential employer to decide. If the interviewer is uncomfortable with the real you, then it's a good indication that you should keep looking.
4. **Don't assume.** Don't fall into the trap of assuming your interviewer remembers what's on your resume and cover letter. You will miss opportunities to present yourself as the strongest candidate possible if you assume the interviewer knows what you have to offer.
5. **Give relevant responses.** Practice answering typical interview questions and anticipate questions related to the job description. Only mention experiences, skills and other qualifications that apply to the job or organization. Provide concrete and concise responses and share specifics about things you have done and relate those to how you can contribute to the organization.
6. **Prepare a set of questions.** Asking pertinent questions shows serious interest and initiative. You also gain critical information about the job, organization, supervisor and colleagues by asking questions, as well as demonstrate your knowledge of the organization.
7. **Make the right impression.** You want to be your most professional self at all times. Arrive at the location of the interview early, dress appropriately, turn off your cell phone, stay focused on the interview and actively listen to the interviewer. Greet everyone you encounter with a smile and a firm handshake.

For more job interview advice and tips, readJennifer Blanck's 4-Step Formula to Acing Your Job Interview in the *Toastmaster* magazine. To find a local Toastmasters club where you can practice and develop your job interview skills, go to www.toastmasters.org/findaclub.

About Toastmasters International
Toastmasters International is a worldwide nonprofit educational organization that empowers individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Headquartered in Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif., the organization's membership exceeds 352,000 in more than 16,400 clubs in 141 countries. Since 1924, Toastmasters International has helped people from diverse backgrounds become more confident speakers, communicators and leaders. For information about local Toastmasters clubs, please visit www.toastmasters.org. Follow @Toastmasters on Twitter.

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