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One of the most critical steps in any job search process is securing an interview with the hiring manager. Whether it’s your first ever job interview, you’re making plans to switch careers, or just trying to brush up on your interviewing skills for a dream job later down the road, preparing for the interview is crucial, regardless of where you are in your career.

Take a look at this list of interview basics to help increase your chance of landing the job.

**Research the company**
You may have applied for many positions simply based on the job description. Conduct research on the company you’d like to work for to learn more about its values and mission, as well as the workplace culture and how your skills may help the company.

Take some time to look at the LinkedIn profiles of some of the company’s executive leadership and people you may work with within your department. It’s possible that your supervisor or another team member has a similar background to yours, which could make for an interesting chat during the interview.

**Showcase your portfolio**
“Show, don’t tell” is a phrase you’ve probably heard before. In the interview process, this is crucial. A potential hiring manager wants to hear about your previous work experiences, but they also want to see your work to determine whether you’re a good match for the company. Make the most of this opportunity.
to showcase some of your best work. Bring copies of your presentations, analytic data or performance reviews to show off if you’re doing an in-person interview.

Have your tabs open if you’re doing a virtual interview so you can share your screen with your interviewer.

**Prepare your own interview questions**
Near the end of the interview, most interviewers give you the option to ask questions. Take advantage of this time. To set yourself apart from the competition, ask open-ended questions such as “What do you appreciate about your job?” “What do you dislike about your job?” and “What challenges are you trying to solve by hiring me?” to learn more about the position you applied for. Also, don’t forget to ask for the next steps in the interview process.

**Follow up after the interview**
You’ll need to create follow-up communication after you’ve finished your interview. For most interview follow-ups, email is the best option. Ask your recruiter, if you have one, to send you the emails of the people who interviewed you if you can’t find them. Reiterate something you learned about the company during the interview to add a personal touch. Remembering specifics from the conversation demonstrates your interest in the position and desire to build a relationship with the team as if you’ve already been hired.

This article first appeared in the June 23, 2022 edition of Job Journey. Visit blog/expresspros.com/movinonup to sign up for this monthly newsletter by Express Employment Professionals, which provides tips and advice for every step of your working life.
“If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself” is the mantra of many high-performing leaders, but it’s not the healthiest approach to leadership and often leads to burnout and fatigue. Whether you think it will take longer to explain a task than to just do it yourself, you don’t want to be perceived as passing the buck, or are worried about overloading your team – there are many excuses leaders give to avoid delegation.

But, the rewards of successful delegation often far outweigh the risk. According to research from Development Dimensions International, some of the biggest positive results include team members who are:

- Nine times more likely to produce innovative/creative outcomes
- Two times more likely to go above their job description
- Two times more likely to be considered high performers
- Nine times more likely to have high performance standards

So, if you’re the type of leader who has a hard time loosening your grip on projects and letting members of your team take the reins, here are a few quick tips for successful delegation.

Start small – You may not be ready to hand over full control of your hallmark initiatives just yet, but there is likely a smaller project where the consequences for missing a deadline or making a mistake aren’t as big that you can use as a test – both for the employee you’re delegating to, as well as to prove to yourself that your team can handle the responsibility.

Set clear expectations – In addition to clearly communicating the big-picture scope of the project and how it will impact the company, lay out in detail what outcomes are expected, timelines for completion, important milestones, and any other key drivers that will help guarantee success.

Set a cadence for communication – One of the biggest reasons it can be so hard to let go of a project is feeling out of the loop on progress that is being made. However, if you set a schedule of communication and priorities for what type of challenges or decisions need to be elevated for higher-level discussion or approval, it’s easier to feel confident that you’re up to date on those delegated projects.

Let go – This is the hardest part, but to truly learn to be comfortable with delegating, at some point you have to let go. Sure, things may fall apart, but if you’ve put in the work to build a productive team and set expectations for success, you’re likely overthinking the worst possible outcomes and will be pleasantly surprised when your team knocks it out of the park.

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This article first appeared in the May 24, 2022 edition of Job Journey. Visit blog/expresspros.com/movinonup to sign up for this monthly newsletter by Express Employment Professionals, which provides tips and advice for every step of your working life.
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COLA? Pour me a double!

CC JOBS | Kelly Gust

With minimum wage on the rise, inflation increasing and annual merit pay season here or closely around the corner, HR Full Circle recently ran a round-up of the 2022 compensation landscape. We thought we’d share a summary of our findings here. Sources are listed at the bottom of the article. Employers who claim to pay cost of living adjustments (COLA increases) should take note, and order up a double for the coming year.

A more modern practice is to base pay on company and individual performance, offering larger increases or incentive pay to top performers, or a combination of market adjustments plus performance-based pay components.

Base pay findings:
• Over 90% of US companies planned salary increases for 2022.
• Only 3% of US companies planned not to give raises, as opposed to 8% in 2021.
• With high inflation, companies are encouraged to provide "real wage" increases to workers that overcome inflation.
• Average base pay salary increases averaged 3% in 2022, up slightly from 2.7-2.8%. High-tech companies averaged 3.1-3.3%.
• More companies than ever (12%) gave 4-5% salary increases.
• Top performers (according to performance review ratings) earned 4.5% base pay increases.
• A surge in demand for labor and a shortage workers and specific professional and premium skills is fueling the larger than average salary increases.
• Workers can earn an average pay increase of 5.8% by changing jobs and working for another employer.

Bonus and incentive pay findings:
• Almost 90% of companies planned bonus or incentive compensation in 2021, up from 76% in 2020.
• Bonuses are generally tied to company and/or employee performance goals, averaging 16% of salary for management and professional employees. Bonuses for support staff and production and manual labor employees averaged 8% and 5.5%, respectively.

Benefits findings:
• On average, benefits account for 25-35% of total employee compensation (smaller employers on the low end, larger employers offer more benefits on the high end).
• On average, employers pay 70-83% of health insurance premiums (for single insurance coverage), with employees paying 17-20% on average.
• Health insurance typically accounts for about 8% of total employee compensation.


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A seasonal guide to fun in central Illinois

IN PRINT AND ONLINE

www.illinoistimes.com
The joy of interviewing

CC JOBS | Kelly Gust

I have always enjoyed interviewing for jobs. I know, I’m an HR person, I’m supposed to love it. However, I’ve always felt like a job interview is exciting. It’s all about potential, possibilities and an opportunity to present yourself in the very best light. Once you’re hired, you won’t get the chance to brag about your skills as much as you do in that first interview. With that in mind, here are a few tips to help you be successful, and perhaps even enjoy your next job interview.

Prepare to be successful

1. Do your research and anticipate questions you might be asked. (Hint: They’re in the job description. Be prepared to speak in detail about your experience and qualifications.
2. Research the dress code and plan accordingly. My guidance is to dress slightly nicer than those who will interview you. If they’ll be wearing jeans and T-shirts, I’ll wear khakis and a polo. If they’re in khakis, I’ll wear dress pants and a collared shirt. If they’re in business attire, I’ll wear a suit.
3. Come prepared with a few questions of your own. Asking questions shows that you’re curious and invested in finding the right fit. Some of my favorite questions include:
   • Can you walk me through a typical day?
   • What kind of training is available?
   • How would you define success in this position?
   • Who will I collaborate with on a regular basis?
   • Tell me about the culture.
   • What do you enjoy most about working here?
4. Know what the job (and your experi-
ence) is worth. There’s no need to share your current salary; employers aren’t supposed to ask. Rather, be prepared to confidently state what your salary requirements are, or ask about the budgeted pay range. Search salary.com or comparable job postings with other firms to get an idea of the typical salary. But don’t forget about the value of benefits, flexibility, work environment or other factors that are important to you.

The big day

5. Be on time. Arrive 10 minutes early so that you can settle in and relax. Rushing in late only adds to your stress level.
6. Use a firm handshake, smile and make eye contact. Learn your interviewers’ names and titles.
7. Listen carefully and be sure you answer the question that was asked. It’s OK to ask for confirmation. (Did I answer all parts of your question?) The interviewer
can’t assess whether you have the necessary skills if you aren’t talking, so be thorough in your responses.

8. Show off your positive attitude. Unless you’re interviewing for a job as a sailor, cursing in an interview is not recommended; keep the language clean and professional. Don’t ever badmouth a former employer, even if things didn’t end well. If you were laid off or terminated, be prepared to talk through these transitions in a succinct and positive manner. For example:

“My last company went through a difficult time where they lost a key client and had to cut staff. Unfortunately, I was impacted. However, the experience really forced me to think about what I truly want in my next opportunity, and I’m confident my experience is a good fit for your company.”

Or, “The truth is, the manager and I had trouble communicating about expectations. The job wasn’t a great fit, despite how hard the manager and I both tried to make it work. Ultimately, I was let go. But I learned a lot and am ready to take on the next challenge.” Practice these transitions so you can deliver them confidently.

9. Ask about next steps and when you can expect to hear back. End on an optimistic note by reiterating how excited and confident you are about the opportunity.

Follow-up

10. A thank-you note or email is a nice way to reiterate your enthusiasm and confidence about the position. Address the interviewer(s) by name and thank them for their time. If you don’t hear back within the expected timeframe, it is OK to ask for an update.

11. Don’t get discouraged if the opportunity doesn’t pan out. Keep your confidence and continue searching (and interviewing) until you find success.

12. Practice. Ask a friend to listen to your answers, or reach out to local career centers or libraries for assistance. Read up on sample questions and answers to perfect your approach.

Even if you don’t love job interviews as much as I do, I’m certain that with these tips you can project yourself with more confidence and land your dream job. And who doesn’t love that? Good luck to you in your search.

Kelly Gust is the CEO of HR Full Circle, a Springfield-based consulting firm that provides talent management and human resources consulting to organizations of all sizes and stages.
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If you are interested, email me at
Bennie Strumpher
contact@decaturcoinandjewelry.com
Decatur Coin and Jewelry
104 North Main Decatur, IL 62523

#2 We are Looking for an E-commerce website shipping manager…

Duties will be to navigate via computer our various retail sites and ship the products that sell on those sites on a daily basis.

You must have a working knowledge of computers and be adept at learning and navigating various software programs that manage retail E-commerce platforms. An individual with a working knowledge or experience on Facebooks market-place and or other face book (group) retail selling venues or Ebay and Etsy would be preferred. Experience in managing an inventory which would include shipping every day.

Salary is negotiable depending on experience.

Must be able to pass a security and financial background check.

If you are interested, email me at
Bennie Strumpher
contact@decaturcoinandjewelry.com
Decatur Coin and Jewelry
104 North Main Decatur, IL 62523
Job applicants spend most of their time researching questions their interviewer might ask and coming up with suitable answers. Which makes sense, given that most of the interview is spent answering questions. However, it’s just as important to come up with a few questions of your own to ask after the interview is over.

Clever questions can both help you learn if the position is right for you and show your interviewer you’re the right person for the job. Here are a few questions that are always great to ask.

What are your (or the company’s) goals for this year?
Ideally, you want your interviewer’s goals to line up with your own. If they’re going to be your manager or co-worker, your goals should be on the same track. You can also follow up this question by mentioning how you can help them fulfill those goals, proving yourself a valuable hire before you even step foot in the workplace. You can also ask this question as it applies to the company as a whole.

What is the most difficult part of the job?
For your own knowledge, you should know the toughest parts of the job up front. In addition, asking this question shows that you aren’t afraid to step up to a challenge. You can follow your interviewer’s answer up with detailing how you’ll be able to handle those types of difficulties.

What will the first 30 days on the job look like?
This question helps prepare you for what might happen if you get a job offer. Employers like to see forward-thinking questions, and it’s better for you to have some idea of what the early days of the job might look like. That way you won’t be lost your first day on the job.

How do you measure success?
Different companies and managers have varying ways of evaluating employee success. Some have yearly evaluations, whereas others check in more frequently to track employee goals. One company might value customer surveys, while another could be more interested in looking at hourly productivity. You want to make sure that the company’s evaluation style goes well with how you work.

Hopefully you feel a bit more prepared to ask questions at the end of your interview.

This article first appeared in the Feb. 8 edition of Job Journey. Read more at blog.expresspros.com.
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