Interview – Top 15 Tips

1. Know yourself and your resume: be prepared to talk about your skills (including transferable skills), abilities, strengths, education, experience, personal characteristics and goals.

2. Research the company to which you are applying. Review its website to get a sense of the company structure, its mission statement and who you might be working with.

3. Anticipate the kinds of questions you might be asked during the interview and practice your interviewing skills ahead of time in order to get feedback. Look at each interview as an opportunity to hone your skills rather than focusing on whether you are offered the job or not.

4. Dress appropriately for the interview. For women, keep jewelry and makeup to a minimum. For both men and women, avoid the use of heavy scents of any kind.

5. Arrive 15 minutes early to an interview with all the materials you need—a career portfolio if applicable, extra copies of your resume, a list of your references, etc. Remember to turn your cell phone off.

6. Be polite and respectful toward anyone you meet in the building. Make a good first impression with an interviewer by making eye contact, smiling and saying something to break the ice. In the interview room, wait or ask to be shown where to sit.

7. During the interview, be friendly, courteous and professional. Use good body language such as eye contact, leaning in, and speaking passionately etc. to show your enthusiasm for the position and/or company.

8. If there is more than one interviewer, make sure you alternate eye contact with and address all of them during the interview to make sure each person feels included in the discussion.

9. Listen carefully to each question and do not hesitate to have an interviewer repeat something you did not understand or to ask that a question be posed in a different way.
10. Limit your responses to a couple minutes at most. Interviewers often ask behavioural questions, such as “Can you tell me a time when you were faced with a challenge and how you met that challenge?” Be prepared to give examples. Divide your answer into 3 parts: what happened, what action you took in response to the situation, and what you learned from that experience that you could now apply to the position for which you are interviewing. Be sure not to speak too quickly.

11. When given a particularly difficult question (e.g. “Could you talk about a time when you had a conflict with a supervisor or colleague and how you handled it?”), answer gracefully and reflect on your experience in a positive way. Make sure that you never speak disrespectfully about a previous employer or colleague.

12. Be prepared to talk about any gaps in your resume. Focus on what you were doing during that time that was positive/helping you move towards your current goals, but avoid personal information which may negatively impact your evaluation.

13. Have two or three good questions to ask the interviewer(s). You will usually be given an opportunity near the end of an interview to ask questions. Having questions to ask makes you look curious about the position and the company itself.

14. Thank the interviewer(s) at the end of the interview and make sure to reaffirm your interest in the position. If you are not told what the next stage of the interview process is or when a decision will be made, it is entirely appropriate that you ask for that information.

15. If you do not hear back from the interviewer(s) in due time, you may wish to follow up with an email, again thanking them for taking the time to meet with you and to express your continued interest in the position.