Common Sense Side of Interviewing

An interview is an opportunity to communicate your suitability for a particular position as well as an opportunity for an employer to recruit a new employee for the organization. To achieve both goals efficiently and effectively approach interviews with common sense. Your role is to present your qualifications thoroughly and in the most positive light possible. Maintain your integrity by neither understating nor overstating your experience. Go into and interview knowing that both parties are gathering information to help with a future decision.

1. Be on time; plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early.
2. Know the interviewer's name and how to pronounce it. If you don't know, ask the receptionist.
3. Bring extra copies of your resume. Also bring a copy of your transcripts, a list of references, and pen and paper for jotting down information after the interview.
4. Pay attention to your posture, eye contact, and other non-verbal communication elements. Think “inward” not “outward”. As you think “inward” you concentrate on your qualifications, what you can offer the company, and what makes you qualified. If you think “outward” you are concentrating more on how you look, how nervous you are, or how your hair looks.
5. Dress appropriately and professionally; a business suit is appropriate for most interviews. Make sure your hair and nails are neat and clean. Polish your shoes and wear little or no perfume/cologne. Jewelry should be conservative.
6. Be prepared for some personal questions and be able to talk about the experiences and knowledge you have. Look over typical interviewing questions and think about how you will answer them. Think about doing a mock interview in the Pomerantz Career Center.
7. Carefully to listen to everything that is said without interrupting.
8. Be sure you understand the question before answering. If you don’t, ask for clarification.
9. Emphasize the positive and use examples to back up your statements.
10. Research the company ahead of time. Know what their product or service is, who they serve, and who their competitors are.
11. Let the interviewer bring up the subject of salary. This may not occur until after an offer is made. However, be prepared for the question, “What salary are you expecting?” Do research and be prepared to give a general range at a geographical level.
12. Emphasize how you will be able to contribute to the success of the organization.
13. Never slight a former employer, teacher, or institution. If there were problems with previous experiences, try to frame this positively and emphasize what you learned from the experience.
14. If you realize that you have stated something inaccurately, do not hesitate to go back to the topic and correct and clarify what you meant to say. Don't try to cover up.
15. Don't expect an offer on the spot. Job searching takes time. Finding a job has multiple steps.