

The Night Before

By Mary Waldron

It's 10:00 p.m. on a Sunday night. You're just sitting down to watch TV with your significant other when it hits you. Dang it! You forgot that you have a job interview tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. What a way to kill the night.

Don't sweat it. This moment of clarity doesn't have to be such a buzz kill for your night. If you just take an hour to prepare some key interview essentials, you'll be good to go. Read the below must-do interview prep tips, and with a little devoted time, you can sleep like a baby knowing that everything is going to be all right.

1. MapQuest it.

I don't care what you use—Yahoo Maps, Google Maps, MapQuest, whatever! Just map out where you need to go carefully. Don't be the fool who waits until an hour before the interview to start looking for the address he or she scribbled down on a napkin two weeks ago. Even if you *think* you know where you are going, it's better to be safe than sorry. When you're late for a job interview, almost no excuse can save you. Basically, if you're late, you'd better be *amazing*. And usually that doesn't even save you.

In addition to driving time, consider a few other factors. Allow lots of time to find parking and to walk

to your location. The interviewer, or whoever sets up the interview, will usually give you a heads-up as to what to expect regarding parking, etc. Especially in busy cities like Los Angeles, parking can be pretty near non-existent during business hours unless you have permission to park in a company structure or lot. It also does not help when you realize that your location is on the 12th floor and it is lunch hour. Tack on an extra 20 minutes or so to prevent an embarrassing, disoriented, out-of-breath appearance when you burst through the door of the interviewer's office.

2. Research it.

The last thing you want to do is wander into an interview with absolutely no clue what you're applying for. Any employer will assume you know about his or her company and its reputation. Do your homework. Find out what types of projects they usually work on. Take note of the most well-known ones in case the employer brings them up so at least you can offer up an opinion.

Additionally, think about the different types of questions the employer might pose. Many of them will probably be based on what his or her company is all about. The center of the conversation will be the company at hand, so wise up before you go in for your interview. This will help you to get an idea of what to expect and anticipate in the interview.

3. Rehearse it.

Finally, practice, or at least imagine, some of the conversation that you might have in the interview. Think ahead, and decide what kinds of small-talk comments you will make if there is some downtime during your interview. Of course, use discretion when developing these conversation starters—keep them general and safe; it's the effort that matters.

Also, use the research you have done to come up with some potential answers for questions like "Why do you want to work with us?" Find ways to link your experience with their background so it seems like a match made in heaven when you talk to the interviewer.