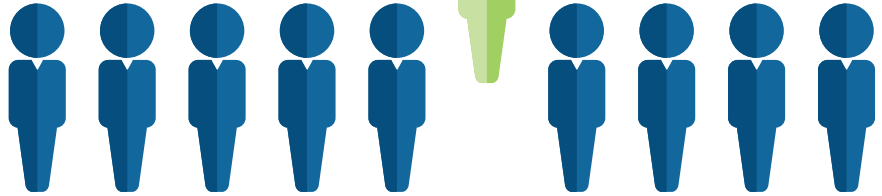


5 Tips for Acing Your Job Interview

By Kristy Jordan – Director, Talent Acquisition, CarMax



You submitted your resume. A recruiter or manager called you and conducted a phone screen, and now, you have an in-person interview. Congratulations! But what next?

The person who will be interviewing you will be prepared. They will have reviewed your resume, prepared questions to ask you and thought through the key skills that they need for the position. Here's what should you do to get ready.

Know exactly where you're going — Be sure that you have the exact details of the interview correct and that you have a plan to be at the location early. If you have never been to the facility before, do a test drive to make sure you know the route, where to park and where to enter the facility. Also know what to expect. Are you simply meeting with one person or will you have a series of meetings and possibly some type of testing?

Practice, practice, practice — Have a friend or family member role-play with you to practice answering potential questions. Practicing out loud gives you the chance to hear your answers and better anticipate how you may respond to questions. The types of questions to practice include questions based upon the information that is on your resume, skill-based questions, as well as behavioral questions. With behavioral interview questions, an interviewer is looking for specific examples of how you have dealt with a situation. Employers want to know how you have handled situations in prior roles or situations. Make sure you include an overview of the situation, your specific actions and the outcome of the example.

Examples of behavioral interview questions:

- Share an example of when you had to respond to a challenging question from a customer?
- Tell me about a situation where you worked as part of a team to solve a problem?
- Tell me about a time where you had to address a problem for the first time?


Have questions to ask prepared — At some point

during your interview, you will likely be asked if you have questions about the role or company. Think about what is important to you in a future employer, and prepare questions ahead of time to make sure you get the insights to help you evaluate whether the organization is the right place for you. In addition, coming prepared with good questions will demonstrate you've done your homework and are excited about the opportunity.

Build a relationship — During your interview, you will want to build a relationship with the person who is interviewing you. Follow their lead — you do not want to be too casual, but it is important to be yourself. Your interviewer will likely have a series of questions to assess whether your past behaviors align with the role, company and environment.

Display active listening skills — Throughout the interview, practice active listening and make eye contact with the person you are speaking with. Waiting for your interview to begin is a great time to observe the workplace. Is it a place that you could see yourself working? What are the interactions like between the current employees?

What should you do after the interview?

- **Ask for next steps** — At the end of the interview, ask when you should expect to hear an update.
- **Send a follow-up thank you note** — You should send a follow-up note or email thanking the interviewer(s) for their time. Make sure to personalize the note and be specific about what you learned or appreciated during your conversation(s). 

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Are you an ethical tech? Star of Tech Garage John Gardner shares the skills you need beyond the bay in our new skills series.



PROFESSIONALISM 101

By John Gardner,
Contributing Writer

When the word professional comes to mind, most of us think doctors and lawyers, not technicians. Professionals have gone to school and they must continue to educate themselves on a regular basis to keep up with changes in their respective field. Consequently, they can demand good money for their services. Professionalism in the automotive field refers to a person doing their job with sincerity, maintaining professional etiquette and professional ethics.

The automotive industry, along with the automotive technician, has evolved into a highly technical professional field. We have evolved from mechanics to technicians in order to possess the qualities needed to work on today's technologically sophisticated vehicles. So many additional demands have been put on technicians that now include but are not limited to:

- Attitude
- Ethics
- Handling diversity
- Etiquette
- Customer service/quality
- Drive in workmanship
- Communication
- Writing ability
- Conflict management
- Honesty

All these topics will be covered in this series, which will define you, an automotive technician, as a professional.

Today a service director expects a professional to walk in his door to interview for a technician's job. The automotive professional who possesses the above-mentioned qualities will be hired over the mechanic with good wrench skills.

Why professionalism is important

■ Professionalism will ensure good performance by all. Technicians must work together professionally to do the best at their job.

■ Professionalism will keep all employees in the shop motivated. A happy technician is a great ambassador of the dealer products.

■ Professional shops ensure a technician's quality of work, not just quantity of work, is taken into appreciation.

■ Professionalism in the shop helps maintain communication. This ensures all are heard.

How to be a true professional

Ensure you will be a true professional and in turn instill professionalism into your workplace. Here are some things to help you achieve professional status:

- Treat your customers and co-workers with respect and dignity.
- Come to work on time.
- Honestly earn your pay.
- Do jobs to the best of your ability.
- Take pride in every car you repair.
- Start your day off clean and neat.

- Take care of your tools and supplies.
- Respect your work and yourself.
- Make a difference.

Remember that customers expect that their vehicle is in professional hands and that it will be treated and repaired as if their life depends on it because in many cases it does.

What not to do

These characteristics put you at risk of making a negative impression:

■ Negative attitude is one of the most unprofessional things that can happen to any business, especially the automotive industry.

■ Feeling like you have no ownership in your repairs or the quality of them.

■ Unethical acts and making unnecessary repairs will damage your and the dealer's reputation.

■ Lack of motivation not only hits your paycheck when working on a flat rate, but makes your shop's atmosphere unprofessional.

■ Dressing poorly and unkempt work areas gives an unprofessional impression.

Don't overlook the importance of your professional presence in the automotive workplace. Our industry has become more fast-paced and vehicles have become very complex, which means professionalism is the key in your career being successful. **TT**