

Are You Bringing the Right Documents To Job Interviews?

Imagine this... you arrive to your interview confident and excited. You sit across from the hiring manager and he or she says, "Oh, I don't have a copy of your résumé. Do you have an extra one with you?" Only to realize, you didn't bring any. Yikes! Being prepared with key documents can increase your chances for a successful interview.

Here is a list of the most important items you should bring to job interviews, because you never know what will happen or if you'll be offered the job after your discussion:

Copies of your résumé. It is always recommended to bring four-five copies because you never know when things will go so well that the hiring manager will have you interview with others from the department or with the hiring manager's boss. They might also ask you to leave one or two copies for HR personnel. It's always best to have more copies than you'll need.

Copies of your reference list. Same here – bring four to five copies.

Recommendation letters. You won't need as many copies of these, but they make a great "leave behind" for the hiring manager to review after your interview. Let's say you are going to bring three recommendation letters. Then make two sets to bring (and staple each set together) and leave the originals at home.

Driver's license. Your driver's license is a picture identification document. You will most likely need this if you are offered the position and asked to fill out the HR paperwork after the interview.

Social Security card. Bring either the card or your social security number with you in case you're offered the job and asked to fill out the HR paperwork after the interview.

Passport. This is another picture identification document you might need if you're offered the position because some companies ask for two picture identification documents for verification purposes.

Fact sheet. This document is for your own use. Create it ahead of time so you have it handy for filling out HR paperwork when receive a job offer. This document should list the names, addresses, telephone numbers and work dates for each job you've held. If you're on LinkedIn, you could simply print your profile and hand write the company addresses and telephone numbers for each previous position. Many companies ask for this information as part of their new hire paperwork because it aids them in conducting background research before officially hiring a candidate.

Portfolio of work. A portfolio is helpful for providing examples of your work, such as architecture designs, clothing designs, marketing promotions, advertisements, Six Sigma projects – whatever fits best for what the job will entail. Use a portfolio to help set yourself apart from other candidates and demonstrate the quality of your work to hiring managers.

Paper and pen. Always, always, always bring a pen and notepad so you can take notes during the interview. Tip: Before writing anything down, ask the interviewer if it's okay for you to take notes while you chat.



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Thank you note cards. Before going on interviews, make sure you've already purchased appropriate thank you cards. "Appropriate" means they look professional and will work well for the industry and company for which you'll be interviewing. Don't bring them to the interview, but have them ready to use as soon as you get home (or be prepared to send an email thank you note, if that's more appropriate for the company culture).

Showing up for interviews with the appropriate documents will not only help you feel more prepared and confident, the bonus part is you'll be ready to fill out the HR paperwork when you've been offered the job. Now go out there and get that dream career! You can do it!

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