



Get That **Gig!**

When job seeking, making a good impression is important. Here, 6 tips for a polished interview.

You've been quietly sending out your resume and you finally got a call for an interview with a top salon. Congratulations! Now comes the hard part—getting hired. From what to wear, bring and say to the best way to leave a good impression (hint: write a thank you note!), here, six tips for nailing your next job interview.

1 Sleuth the salon in advance. Check out its website, peek in the window and call in advance to learn about the services offered, the brands carried and what else sets the salon apart. Your research will also help inform how you dress for the interview. Your hair should be tidy, makeup subtle, cuticles groomed and nails polished. And no matter what, “don’t show up in a tank top, cut-offs and flip-flops or scuffed shoes,” says Maryam Naderi, owner of Paloma nail salon in Houston. “If someone looks and acts like they belong at Paloma, that’s huge.”

2 Bring more than your knowledge of nails. It’s important to have on hand copies of your professional license, certifications and awards, plus a current—and typo-free!—resume focused on beauty industry positions, says Mark Epp, a senior consultant with Talent Plus, a global human resources consulting firm in Lincoln, Nebraska. You may also need references, so come prepared with a list of people who have agreed in advance to recommend you, such as a beauty school instructor, former salon manager, coworker or loyal client. For each, cite full names, role in your career, phone numbers and

email addresses. It’s also important to bring an iPad or handheld tablet to flaunt your portfolio, says Devon Kirk, a nail professional and former day spa owner in Lewisville, Texas. “It lets people know right away if your skills are entry-level or advanced.”

3 Arrive early and be prepared to show off your skills. Being on time shows that you understand the value of others’ time—an essential attribute for someone in the service industry. Plus, arriving early means that you won’t feel rushed before you’re asked to perform a service. “Doing a manicure is a non-negotiable part of the interview process,” says Naderi. “We look at polish application, cuticle care and filing.” The cleanliness and caliber of your implements count, too. Employers are also looking for personality, says Meg Schmitz, a hiring consultant and former owner of 17 Great Clips salons in the Chicago area. “Beauty services are one-on-one, so you may be judged on gentleness, appropriate eye contact and the volume of your voice,” she says. “You have to be able to build trust and relationships because the salon wants returning customers.”

“While it’s also important to ask about hours, compensation, commission and vacation, wait until a successful interview draws to a close.”



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/THOMAS BARWICK/CONICA

4 Know your talking points. At the interview, be ready to discuss your strengths and weaknesses as a nail tech, why you entered the profession and your goals for the future. Before the big day, rehearse your answers in front of a mirror or a friend so you’re calm and confident. Remember, you have the right to decline to reveal your age, health, religion or political leanings, says Schmitz, noting, “None of that matters. Your education, experience and strengths do.”

5 Don’t just answer questions, ask them. Learn about the salon’s culture, protocols, values and services

beyond nails. Find out what your typical day’s tasks would be and opportunities for advancement and continuing education. While it’s also important to ask about hours, compensation, commission and vacation, wait until a successful interview draws to a close. “If you start off focusing on those issues, it shows that all you care about is yourself,” Naderi says. With that being said, it’s essential to ask if you will be hired as a booth renter/independent contractor or an employee; the distinction will determine how you will be paid and how you file your taxes, as well as if you will be responsible for buying your own products and supplies.

6 Say thank you. Follow up with an email or hand-written thank you note. “If the business owner is trying to decide between two people she really likes and one of them writes a thank you note, who will probably get the job? You guessed it: the one who wrote the thank you note,” Kirk says. Plus, while beauty is a big business, it’s also a small industry. You never know when you might cross paths with the same salon owner again, so professionalism is paramount. ↓

Michele Meyer is a polish- and marketing-obsessed freelance beauty writer and strategist in Houston, TX.