

1. Dress for SUCCESS, dress like a PROFESSIONAL - *NOT* like your going out bar hopping or to hang out with your friends!!! This means a dress shirt, slacks, polished shoes and a tie for males at a minimum -- adding a sport coat or wearing a suit is even better. For women we recommend business like attire -- slacks or skirt & blouse or a suit are good choices -- neither too low cut nor too short. You only have one chance to make a good first impression, make it a good one! (The only exception to this rule should be if you are coming directly from a current job where your uniform is different than the above, just make sure the recruiter knows this.)

2. If you are serious about getting a job, before interviewing with any restaurant company, DO YOUR RESEARCH! Visit (and eat at) at least one of the company's restaurants if you have not done so previously -- AND then visit their website and see what else you can learn. During your interviews, you will be asked about your dining experience at their restaurant(s) and questions WILL be expected of you, so prepare a short list of questions to bring with you.

Visiting restaurants, corporate websites and developing a set of targeted questions go a long way in demonstrating your focus on both your career and the restaurant company you are interviewing (Yes, you are interviewing them too. You don't want to work for just any restaurant company do you? You WILL be asked why you want to work for their company so be focused with your answer.)

3. Turn off your cell phone and remove the earpiece if you use one prior to walking in to any job interview (and be sure to get rid of any gum you have in your mouth). All this should happen before you even get out of your car.

4. Job interviews are your opportunity to sell your talents and skills. Don't be modest -- but don't be egotistical either.

Your goal is to show the interviewer you are knowledgeable, capable, intelligent and adaptable with the right people skills needed to fill their open management position. You'll be asked about

your past and present job responsibilities so come prepared to talk about them and your accomplishments in performing your job -- ex.'s "*Reduced labor cost by X percent*"; "*Increased sales Y percent by doing blah, blah, blah*

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Trained Z M.I.T.'s in the past 12 months, 3 of whom are now General Managers.

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Whatever you do though, don't leave them thinking you already feel you "know it all" and have nothing to learn.

5. Be personable as well as professional at all times. Be polite to EVERYONE you come in contact with, even walking through the parking lot or getting on an elevator. This includes swearing or using slang (or talking trash about someone/something), you never know who might end up providing input on you.

6. Listen more, talk less! Odds are if you find you're talking for longer than 10-15 seconds at a stretch in an interview, you're probably talking too much. Remember, the longer you talk, the greater the chance that wrong things will come out of your mouth. (And remember, NEVER INTERRUPT, cut off or get in to an argument with the interviewer!)

Generally speaking, interviewers are NOT looking for someone to tell them what's wrong with their restaurants, they're looking for managers that can maintain standards & company policies, successfully develop the people under them, create a positive experience for their staff & guests and drop as much profit as possible to the bottom line. Use these concepts as a basis for creatively selling yourself as the best possible candidate for the job.

7. Come prepared for your job interview. This means bringing at least two copies of your resume, a writing tablet/notepad and at least two pens. You should also have or know your social security number as well as previous employment information going back at least three jobs or 10 years, whichever comes first.

This employment information should include company name(s), dates worked, contact phone numbers, names of your supervisor at each job and along with a short explanation for leaving each position.

8. Dot your "i's", cross your "t's". Despite having your resume in hand, just about all restaurant companies will require you to fill out an application at some point in the job interview process (usually for legal reasons). *Fill it out COMPLETELY!*
Not doing so can be construed as laziness, lack of attention to detail, or worse -- lack of follow through or commitment.

9. Be aware of body language, "vibes" and reactions. This means both yours and the recruiter's. Though it is far from an exact science, some recruiters put a lot of stock in what body language says about a person.

On your side, paying attention to subtle changes in the recruiter's body language can help you assess how well received your responses are. Use these cues as a tool to adapt your presentation. Rethink/rephrase things when they may not be positively received; stress those job skills that they seem to like hearing about; etc.

10. Though it may not always be apparent, most [restaurant management job interview questions](#) are usually asked for specific reason(s). If you are not sure what you are being asked, feel free to ask for clarification before answering. And with all questions, take a moment to think about and formulate your answers before you speak.

Quite often the focus points of "**People - Sales - Profit**" and how your management skills can/have/will positively effect these areas of a restaurant's operation are a good basis for your answer(s).

11. Answer all questions honestly but in the best possible light. THIS IS IMPORTANT! If for any reason you think something you'll say might come out sounding negative, stop for a moment and try to find a way to make it as positive as possible.

12. NEVER speak poorly of current or past employers. As with anything said in a job interview, put the best spin possible on ALL situations (see above).

You will always come across as a true professional if a former employer has a poor reputation for how it treats its people (recruiters know their competition...) but you put your reasons for leaving in a positive light.

13. Take notes and improve your job interview skills. Immediately after an interview (when you're back in your car), take a few minutes to make notes about it while it is still fresh in your mind. These will help you remember key topics for use in selling yourself in your second and third interviews -- or even to sell yourself to other restaurant companies.

You'll find that recruiters often ask very similar questions. Learn to answer these questions in an appropriate, succinct and professional manner and you will be well on your way to getting plenty of job offers.

Use your notes to help you analyze and improve your overall interviewing skills. Think about where you did well and where you feel you may have been a bit weak and then practice your presentation in order to improve your next job interview. It will increase your confidence and help you highlight your strengths & accomplishments while downplaying your weaknesses.

14. Don't be afraid to ask. At the end of each interview, unless you are given a formal job offer, make sure you know and understand whether the interview process will continue -- don't be afraid to ask.

Often you will be told that they will notify you by a certain date as to whether there will be another interview (or a job offer extended). Ask if they will be contacting you one way or the other. Write this down and repeat it back to the recruiter, then ask if you can contact them if you do not hear from them by the date indicated. (And be sure to write down the contact info they want you to use for doing this.)

If they say yes, great! If they say no, then just wait it out. If you do not hear anything by the date indicated, then it's usually over -- end of story! We recommend that you not try to follow up with them aside from possibly sending them a note thanking them for their time and interest. ALWAYS leave them with a positive and professional view of you.

15. Don't be a STALKER! If you've already been through the interview process (in person, in a phone interview, at a job fair, etc) with a company and were not offered a job or another interview, we suggest that you not apply or try to interview with the company again for at least a year!

If a second or third interview was not scheduled or job offer was not made, it usually means they've found a candidate(s) they believe was a better fit for the position.

Unless you were overqualified for the job, the only thing that will possibly make you a better candidate for the job is the passing of time and the accumulation of additional experience.

Once you have talked with a restaurant's recruiter (in person or by phone), repeatedly submitting or trying to interview again in less than a year can leave the impression that you are "needy", "can't get a clue", "just don't get it" or worse -- none of which are in your best interest.

No matter what the reason for being passed over, if they believe you are a strong candidate for one of their future management jobs they will usually keep your resume close at hand and contact you if and when an appropriate opportunity arises.

OK, now with the above said, if you do not hear back from a company within 7-10 days of your interview it is usually permissible and appropriate to send them an email asking if you are still under consideration (see tip 14 above). Just be sure you are professional in your email/call.

16. Prior to leaving an interview, be sure to know how to spell all names of your interviewers and know their correct titles -- then send a thank you note ASAP to each interviewer. No one does this last part anymore so doing so goes a long way in demonstrating your professionalism, follow up and attention to detail.

17. Like all of us, recruiters change jobs and tend to have long memories -- especially for those that have left a negative impression

Examples: Not showing up for a scheduled job interview and did not call to cancel; Lied on an

application; Accepted a job offer but did not show on first day; etc.

Always, always, *ALWAYS* make sure you leave every restaurant recruiter with a positive and professional image of yourself. You never know when you may run in to them again. In years to come you may find yourself applying to a different restaurant company where the recruiter now works. Make sure they'll want to invite you back to interview again!

18. Never set an appointment for a job interview unless you are serious about going to it!

If you have to cancel your interview,

MAKE SURE YOU CALL AND CANCEL

-- and document when & with whom you talked with for good measure.

19. We know it's not easy job hunting and interviewing, but try to relax and not be too nervous. You will find that the more you interview the more at ease you will be and the better your interviewing skills will become (assuming you follow everything above).