



MANAGING A MEAL INTERVIEW

WORKBOOK



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Top Takeaways

- The main purpose of a meal interview is to judge the “fit” a candidate is for the community, much more so than to judge their skillset.
- Remember, your purpose in this is to interview well, not have a great meal.
- The whole key to a meal interview is not to stand out, but to avoid mistakes.

Preparation to do Beforehand (0:01:34)

- Google the restaurant and preview the menu to decide what you will order
 - Do not order the most expensive nor the cheapest thing on the menu
 - If you have food allergies, decide ahead of time what you will order so this does not become an issue.
- Read the local newspaper so you can be aware of any local issues if they come up at dinner and you will be able to talk about them

If you arrive first, wait on your host (0:03:25)

- Try to show up 10 minutes early, but do not go to your table until your host arrives

Be Courteous to Everyone the Minute You Walk In – Most Especially the Wait Staff (0:04:43)

- Part of how you will be judged is on how you treat the wait staff.
- If your meal is messed up, roll with it, do not cause a stir.
- Say please and thank you.

Do Not Check Your Cell Phone & Ensure It Is On Silent (0:06:51)

- Turn off your phone while you are in the parking lot.
- Do not play with your phone even if others at the table are checking their phones.
- If you accidentally leave it on and it rings, do not answer it. Reach in your pocket or purse and turn it to silent.

The Art of Small Talk (0:08:41)

- Try to have at least a small conversation with everyone at the table by the time the meal is over.
- Tip: you can always talk about the weather if there is ever a quiet moment.
- Strive to get to know the people you are having the meal with, not just answer interview questions.
- Ask questions which will allow the people at your meal to tell you more about their community.

To Drink or Not To Drink (0:11:18)

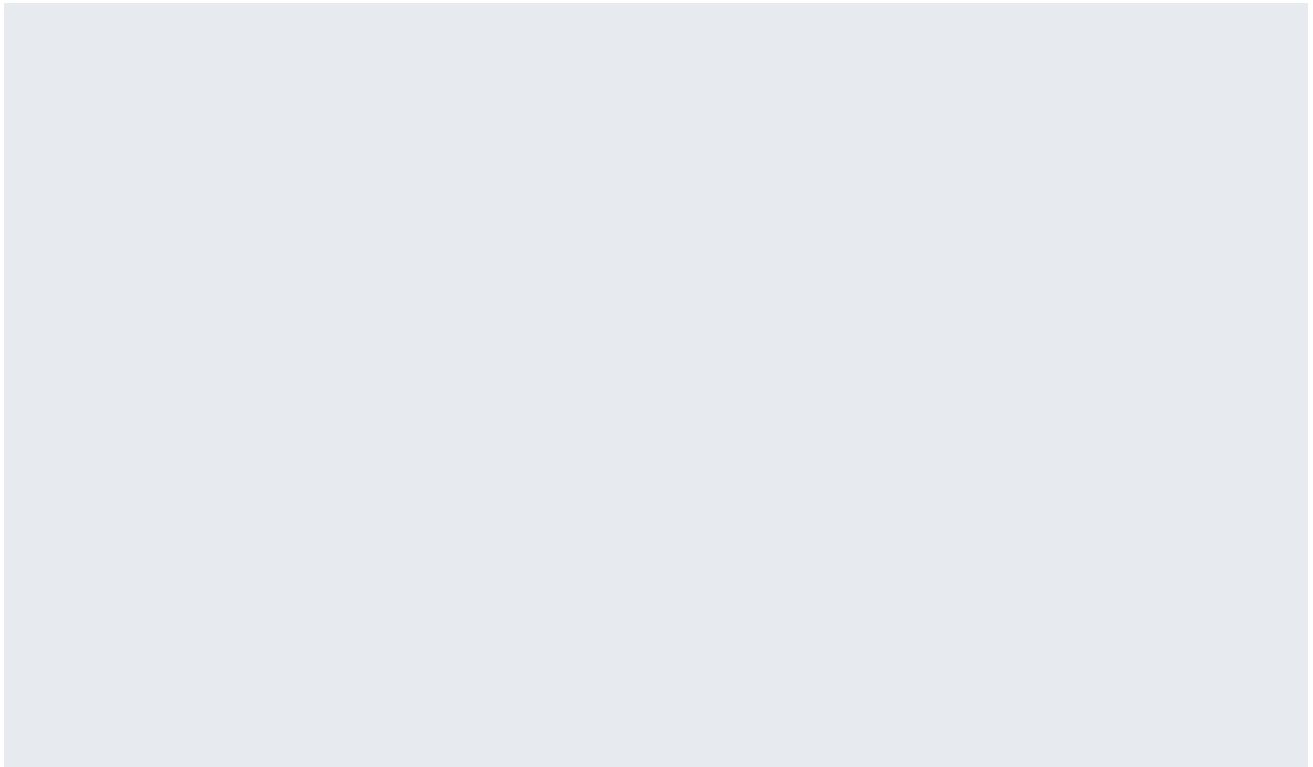
- Try to mirror the community and the others at the table, if they order a drink, go ahead and order one yourself.
- If you have to order first, order water, then if others drink when it comes back around make a joke and say “Well I am not going to let my friends drink without me” and order a drink
- Whatever you do, don’t have more than two drinks.
- If you do not drink, get to the restaurant ahead of time and tip your server and ask he or she to bring you club soda even if you say vodka
 - If you totally do not drink in some towns it could turn the committee off as they could think you will not be able to entertain business people or maybe you have a drinking problem.
- Know the drink which causes you to get drunk quickest, and avoid it at all costs, order a drink you can handle easiest.
- Some search committees want to see how you handle alcohol.
- If you are interviewing in a rural town, make sure you do not order a drink unless others at your table do.
- **TIP:** Order red or white wine, you can have a sip or two and no more, and no one but the wait staff will ever notice that you have not drank it, as they keep everyone full to the same level

What is your strategy to handle to drink or not to drink in this particular community? How will you mirror the people at the table?

Food Choices, Do not Stare at the Menu (0:18:30)

- Order food which will be easy to cut into bite sizes
- Do not order the most expensive nor least expensive dish.
- Order something you do not have to eat with your hands
- Order something that is not messy
- Do not order soup, get salad instead
- Do not get something you will have to work hard at like crab legs
- Remember, this is not about having a great meal, its an interview
- Do not order your steak well done or ask for steak sauce

What will you order, preview the day before?



Do not Eat Too Much Bread, Do not Salt Your Food Before You Taste It, Avoid “To Go Bags” (0:21:56)

- Bread can be a deal killer
 - Pick small pieces off the bread and break them into smaller pieces to eat
 - Do not eat too much bread, don't eat more than one piece
 - Do not take bread to go
- Do not get a to go bag for any food
- Do not salt or pepper your food before you taste it

Etiquette (0:23:44)

- Use your silverware from out to in
- Place napkin on seat or arm of your chair if you have to excuse yourself from the table
- Keep your elbows off the table
- When you are done eating place knife and fork at the 4 o'clock position on your plate, put your napkin on the table next to your plate

Keep Pace with the Conversation

(0:25:23)

- This is the #1 mistake we see.
- People will get uncomfortable if they look at your plate and you have eaten nothing
- Look at other people's plates and make sure you are keeping up with their pace eating.
- If you talk too much you will fall behind eating, if you talk too little you will eat too fast.

At 28 minutes, 23 second, Chad and Alex discuss what they would order in various scenarios of a meal interview for examples. Examples include what to order at:

- *Steakhouse*
- *Barbeque Restaurant*
- *Breakfast*
- *Italian Restaurant*

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