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The Art of Etiquette

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It's that time of year again: You've turned in your application to graduate and entered the job-hunt marathon. The hurdle of mass-mailing resumes is behind you. It is only a matter of time before you land that big dinner interview with your prospective employer. No need to fret—ethos has you covered. We sought out the Grand Pooh-Bah of Etiquette, the Master of Manners: Stewart Burger, special-event coordinator for President Gregory Geoffroy. ethos, with some help from Burger, put together a list of do's and don'ts to help you survive that nerve-racking interview.
Let's start with the basics:

When should I arrive?
While you've probably been told that early is on time, on time is late, and late is inexcusable, this is more of a scare tactic than anything else. Burger suggests you arrive exactly on time. You're not going to earn any brownie points sitting in the restaurant for 20 minutes by yourself.

Should I order an alcoholic beverage?
No! Even if your dinner partner is downing a Jack and Coke, there's no shame in having a glass of water, says Burger. You'll want to ensure you have a job before seeking out your happy-hour companions. Your prospective employer will not be amused by your ability to drink 17 Jager bombs without puking. So unless you're interviewing to be a bartender, stay away from the booze. Besides, you want to be on point during the dinner.

What should I order at the restaurant?
That is up to you. Burger warns to stay away from finger foods and entrees with a lot of sauce. If you can eat spaghetti neatly, go for it. However, since it is impossible to eat spaghetti neatly, we recommend you stay the hell away.

What topics make good dinner conversation?
Ideally, most of the conversation will focus on the job itself, but there will be times during the meal when you'll have to make conversation to avoid those unbearable awkward silences. Burger suggests thinking of the dinner as a first date. Just keep the conversation light and simple. Avoid controversial issues or delving into personal problems. The wrong discussion topic might make the difference between a job offer and a regret to inform letter.

What topics is too expensive?
If there is more next to your plate than the standard fork, knife, and spoon, don't freak out. Burger says a safe bet is to use the outermost utensils first and work your way in. If you're still unsure, don't panic and suddenly run out of the restaurant screaming. Place your napkin in your lap to buy some time and allow the host to choose a utensil first. Pay attention to what utensil you choose with each dish, then do the same.

How do I react if I get offered the job?
Under no circumstances are high fives or chest bumps acceptable. Also, celebratory napkin spikes or taunting the other guests in the restaurant is generally frowned upon. But it is OK to get a little excited. A smile, handshake, or thank you is just fine. And, of course, mailing a portion of your first paycheck to ethos is not only encouraged, but expected.

Top 10 Interview Mistakes

> Not researching the company. In the age of technology, there is no excuse.
> Weak first impression. Within the first seven seconds of an interview, the employer will know whether they want to hire you.
> Too much bing. Take out the rose ring, eyebrow ring, and tongue belt.
> Lack of physical presence. Good physical feedback, such as nodding, tells the employer you are paying attention.
> Not researching yourself. Companies are leaning toward behavior-based questions. Start thinking of examples for questions such as “Tell me about a time you had to work in a group setting.”
> Not showcasing yourself. We’re not saying you should pander around the room but don’t be afraid to really sell your skills.
> Asking about money. There will be plenty of time to discuss dollars and cents.
> Damage control. Don’t plant a seed of doubt in their mind that you might not be exactly what they are looking for.
> Wasting their time. If you’re not truly interested in the job, don’t interview.
> Not closing the deal. Ask for the job at the end of the interview. But be smooth about it.