

ACT FAST

Survey Finds Employers Form Opinions of Job Interviewees Within 10 Minutes

MENLO PARK, CA -- Hiring managers often know whether they might hire someone soon after the opening handshake and small talk, a new survey suggests. Executives polled said it takes them just 10 minutes to form an opinion of job seekers, despite meeting with staff-level applicants for 55 minutes and management-level candidates for 86 minutes, on average.

The survey was developed by Robert Half Finance & Accounting, the world's first and largest specialized financial recruitment service. It was conducted by an independent research firm and includes responses from 150 senior executives with the nation's 1,000 largest companies.

Executives were asked, "How long does it typically take you to form either a positive or negative opinion of a job candidate during an initial interview?" The mean response was 10 minutes.

In addition, executives were asked, "How many minutes, on average, do you spend meeting with a staff-level candidate during a job interview?" The mean response was 55 minutes.

Respondents also were asked, "How many minutes, on average, do you spend meeting with a management-level candidate during a job interview?" The mean response was 86 minutes.

"The interview begins the moment job seekers arrive, so applicants need to project enthusiasm and confidence from the start," said Max Messmer, chairman and CEO of Robert Half

International and author of *Job Hunting For Dummies*®, 2nd Edition (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

"The opening minutes of the conversation often set the tone for the rest of the discussion, making it wise to prepare especially well for the first few interview questions."



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Following are five questions frequently asked at the beginning of an interview and tips for responding:

1. **Can you tell me a little about yourself?** Concisely discuss your professional goals and interests as they relate to the job opportunity. Your answer should provide insight into why you are the right fit for the position and the company.
2. **What do you know about our firm?** Research the business beforehand and be prepared to describe how your skill set and experience will help you contribute to its success.
3. **Why do you want to work here?** Whether it's the company's values, history of success or reputation in the industry that attracted you, respond in a way that shows you understand the organization's priorities and business objectives.
4. **Why are you looking to leave your current position?** Keep your answer focused on the opportunity -- for example, a chance to advance your career. Remain positive and avoid disparaging other employers.
5. **What is your most significant professional accomplishment?** Cite an achievement that demonstrates your abilities and shows you value results.

Founded in 1948, Robert Half Finance & Accounting, a division of Robert Half International, has more than 350 locations throughout North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region, and offers online job search services at www.roberthalf.com.

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