

Treat Coffee Chats like Pre-Interviews

Summary: Turn a cup of coffee that is like an informal interview into a job opportunity with the company you want to join.



Have you ever heard of a coffee chat or participated in one? Having a coffee chat may be a good idea for you if you want to reach out to a contact at a company you are interested in. You may be wondering how to prepare for a coffee chat. A coffee chat is another way of having a **pre-interview interview**, but you can evaluate it better than an official interview. Here are five ways to make coffee chats count:

1. Plan the location - When you are the one suggesting a place to meet, you get to take the initiative to pick a place where you can have a private conversation. Arrive early to the location to find a quiet table. Only plan for a 20-30 minute meeting and always offer to buy the coffee.
2. Research - **Read up on the company** through their website, blogs, your contact's background on LinkedIn, and other job postings at the company. This will help you be well informed and avoid wasting time asking questions that you can answer yourself.
3. Think about your goals - What are you hoping to get out of the coffee chat? Perhaps it is an introduction to the hiring manager or suggestions on other similar job postings at other companies. Prepare questions to ask ahead of time. Include details about your background.
4. Ask for advice - Asking someone for advice tends to get them invested, so ask something like, "Based on your experience with the company, how do you recommend I prepare for my interview?"
5. Thank you email - Send a thank you email the same day as the coffee chat. It sends a sign that you are truly grateful for their time and advice. The email may also prompt them to send a note to the hiring manager or HR and cause them to talk you up even more.



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