

INTERVIEW TIPS

PREPARATION FOR THE INTERVIEW:

Preparation is the first essential step toward a successful interview.

Company interviewers are continually amazed at the number of applicants who drift into their offices without any apparent preparation and only the vaguest idea of what they are going to say. Thus it is important to:

1. Know the exact place and time for the interview, the interviewer's full name, correct pronunciation, and title.
2. Find out specific facts about the company, where its plants, divisions, etc. are located, what their products or services are, what their growth has been, and what their potential is for the future. There are a number of research publications providing this kind of information. Among them are:
 1. The Internet
 2. Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers
 3. Moody's Manuals
 4. Fitch Corporation Manuals
 5. MacRae's Blue Book
 6. Standard & Poor's Corporation Records
 7. Poor's Register of Directors and Executives
 8. Dun & Bradstreet's Reference Book
 9. Company Annual Reports
3. Prepare the questions you will ask during the interview. Remember that an interview is a "two-way-street". The Employer will try to determine through questioning if you have the qualifications necessary to do the job. You must determine through questioning whether the company will give you the opportunity for growth and development you seek.
4. Probing questions you might ask
 1. A detailed description of the position?

2. Anticipated training programs?
 3. Advanced training programs available for those who demonstrate outstanding ability?
 4. Company growth plans?
 5. Where do you fit into those plans 1 year, 3 years, 5 years from now?
 6. Ask any pertinent questions pertaining to the position (i.e. working hours, who you report to, company hierarchy, etc.)
5. Dress in a business suit (NO SPORT CLOTHES), white or soft pastel shirt, conservative tie, dark socks, shoes well shined, and a fresh haircut. Women should wear a conservative, classic dress or a skirted suit and low heels. (Your own personal taste may not be the best guide).

THE INTERVIEW:

A job interview is more than a presentation and defense of a candidate's skill. Besides assessing an applicant's qualifications, the interviewer tries to determine how that person will fit into the organization.

Personality plays a leading role in a worker's success with a company. In fact, few people are fired because they are incompetent; failure to get along with superiors or co-workers is usually the reason behind a dismissal.

The interviewer, therefore, reviews an applicant's past performance with the purpose of predicting how he or she might perform in the future. Interview questions are designed to root out more than surface information.

To be well-prepared for an interview, you should understand its purpose and know what to expect. Most interviewers follow an outline covering these areas:

- * Small talk which makes you more comfortable and allows the interviewer to get to know you.

An opening question, usually on how you found out about the position and/or the organization. Here the interviewer looks for appearance, manner, self-expression and responsiveness.

Work experience, including the responsibilities for each job. The interviewer looks for the relevance of previous work experience, skill and competence,

adaptability, productivity, motivation, interpersonal relations, leadership, growth and development.

To determine those skills, he may ask you to describe your accomplishments, how you've dealt with difficult problems and what you've learned from your work experience. To determine how motivated you are, he may ask you to outline your short- and long-range goals or to compare and contrast your previous jobs.

- * Educational experience, including favorite subjects, subjects you disliked, study habits and extracurricular activities. Relevance of your schooling, intellectual abilities, breadth and depth of knowledge, versatility, level of accomplishment, leadership, teamwork and reaction to authority are all traits the interviewer evaluates during this phase of questioning.

Look for questions focusing on how you financed your education, and why you chose the school and your major field.

- * The interviewer may also ask about your present activities and interests. He or she looks for how you manage your time, energy and money, your maturity and judgement, intellectual growth, cultural breadth, diversity of interests, social effectiveness and your basic values and goals.

Summary of your assets or strengths and your shortcomings or development needs. The interviewer evaluates the pluses and minuses of what you can do and will do in regard to your talents, skills, knowledge and energy, motivation and interest, how you would fit into the company, your personal qualities, social effectiveness and your character.

Some questions to expect include, why should we hire you, what are your chief strengths, what can you bring to the job, what qualities are seen by others ? On the other side, what areas need improvement, how can the company help you grow, how might you be a risk to an employer and what criticism do you receive from others ?

No one is perfect so make sure you have a couple of shortcomings ready if asked. Start with your assets and then throw in a shortcoming. For example: "I'm a good organizer and use my time efficiently but sometimes I may get impatient".

Always use discretion when answering questions. THINK before answering.

Some "DO'S and DON'T concerning the interview

1. DO plan to arrive on time or a few minutes early; late arrival for a job interview is never excusable.
2. If presented with an application, DO fill it out neatly and completely. If you have a personal resume, be sure the person you released it to is the person who will

actually do the hiring. DO use pen/ink, (not pencil). DON'T STATE "SEE RESUME" on application.

3. DO greet the interviewer by his surname if you are sure of the pronunciation. If not, ask them to repeat their name.
4. DO shake hands firmly.
5. DO wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright in your chair, look alert and interested at all times. Be a good listener as well as a good talker. SMILE !
6. DON'T smoke even if the interviewer smokes and offers you a cigarette. DON'T chew gum.
7. DO look the interviewer in the eye while you talk.
8. DO follow the interviewer's lead but try to get the interviewer to describe the position and the duties to you early in the interview so that you can relate your background and skills to the position.
9. DON'T answer questions with a simple "YES or NO", explain whenever possible. Tell those things about yourself which relate to the situation. Answer the question(s) and be quiet. Silence is OK after you've answered the question.
10. DO make sure that your good points get across to the interviewer in a factual, sincere manner. Keep in mind that you alone can sell yourself to an interviewer. Make the interviewer realize the need for you in their organization.
11. Some interviewers may ask YES-NO type or general questions. In these instances, you will subtly need to take control of the interview to give the information needed. For EXAMPLE, if an interviewer says "Tell me about yourself", tactfully take control and say "Where would you like me to start, with my education or work experience"? And then address the areas the interviewer will evaluate you on.
12. DO be prepared to answer typical questions like: What kind of position are you looking for? What are your strengths? Your weaknesses? What do you know about our company? Why did you choose your particular vocation? What are your qualifications? Define Cooperation? What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
13. DON'T LIE. Answer questions truthfully, frankly and as "to the point" as possible.

14. DON'T ever make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers or companies.
15. DON'T "over answer" questions. The interviewer may steer the conversation into politics, economics or religion. Since this can be a ticklish situation, it is best to answer the questions honestly, trying not to say more than is necessary.
16. DON'T inquire about SALARY, VACATION, BONUSES, RETIREMENT OR OTHER BENEFITS on the initial interview. This information will be covered by the recruiter with you. If the interviewer asks what salary you want, INDICATE that you're more interested in the long-term growth opportunity than a specific salary, and that you feel based on your expertise, knowledge and potential that the company will make you a fair offer.
17. DO always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the position you are discussing. Never close the door on opportunity. It is better to be in a position where you can choose from a number of jobs ---- rather than only one. Frequently you may find out information during the interview which really gets your attention and desire for the position. If you've closed the door, it is hard to re-open. If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, don't let your disappointment show. Once in a while an interviewer who is genuinely interested in your possibilities may seem to discourage you in order to TEST YOUR REACTION. If an interview is not going well, don't assume that it is related to you. The interviewer may be having a "bad day" ---- from spilling coffee to getting their car sideswiped.
18. DO answer the questions that are asked. DON'T stray from what the interviewer wants to know.

WHAT EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR IN THEIR PEOPLE:

A good personal appearance is a MUST. Assertive personality, but not overbearing or overaggressive. The ability to express thoughts clearly. Enthusiasm for a career, positive purpose or goals. Career planning. Show confidence and poise. Interested in mutual growth, not just money. Firm answers, not evasive or making excuses for unfavorable factors in record. Be tactful, mature and courteous. Show appreciation for the value of experience. Preparation for the interview shows forethought.

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW:

1. Get a business card with correct spelling and title from each person you interview. If a business card is not available, ask for the correct spelling of their name and correct title. If you are interested in the position, let the interviewer know. Ask for

the next interview if the situation demands. If he/she offers the position to you and you want it, accept on the spot. If you wish some time to think it over, be courteous and tactful in asking for that time. Set a definite date when you can provide them an answer.

2. DON'T be too discouraged if no definite offer is made or specific salary discussed. The interviewer will probably want to communicate with his office first, or interview more applicants, before making a decision.
3. Thank the interviewer for their time and consideration of you. If you have answered two questions uppermost in their mind: a) why are you interested in this company? and b) what can you offer ---- you have done all you can.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

1. If you are working through a recruiter or placement service, it is extremely important that you call your recruiter to discuss the interview. He will then know when to follow-up with the hiring company. Often, he will have worked with the company before and can give you some valuable information and feedback. Your recruiter needs to know your impression of the interview in order to act in your best interests when dealing with the company. The sooner you call, the better.
2. Always take time to call the Personnel contact the day after your interview, thanking him/her for their time. In addition, write a personal thank you note to EACH person you interviewed with, (even if you thanked them already). E-mail is an acceptable form for this communication. To both mail a short thank you note and E-mail one's thanks is the best of both worlds! This is an ideal time to reaffirm your interest in the position and to re-state that you can be an asset to the organization. It is also a matter of courtesy and can demonstrate good manners. In a situation where you are seeking employment, you cannot be too polite. If you are not interested in the position, that can be stated also, but you may meet this person again in a similar situation, and the manner in which you conduct yourself will be remembered.

ENTHUSIASM IS THE KEY ! ! ! !