

INTERVIEW BASICS

WHAT YOU SHOULD BRING TO THE JOB INTERVIEW

Organize and prepare all the papers you will need with you at your job interview. Your main document is your resume. If you don't have a resume, take instead your school records, Social Security card, work records, licenses, military records, dates of employment and names of your employers.

YOUR REFERENCES

It is also important to create a list of references. Be prepared to give an employer the names and addresses of three people who are familiar with you and/or your work. You should ask your references for the use of their names in advance. If you think it appropriate, ask a professional friend or former employer to write you a letter of reference, and include it with your resume. If your work is the type of work you can show, take samples of what you have done in the past.

KNOW THE COMPANY AND THE EMPLOYER

Learn all you can about the company that is interviewing you. Go to the library or your Chamber of Commerce to find out all you can about it. Try to find out exactly what they do and what they have in store for you as far as jobs are concerned. Find out whom you will be working for. The person you will be working for will be very influential in your life. Make sure you really want to work for this person. If your future boss doesn't tell you about himself at the interview, don't ask.

KNOW HOW MUCH YOU SHOULD EARN

Know how much you should earn with your talents and skills. Make your estimate a little higher so the company benefits when they bid you down. Don't go too high or you won't get the job. Know approximately what the salary scale is for the job and be ready to negotiate the salary.

KNOW YOURSELF

It is important that you know yourself. Evaluate what you can offer this company, whether it is education, training or special skills. Always tell them what you can do, not what you can't do. Know exactly what type of job you are applying for and what type of job you want.

KNOW YOUR INTERVIEWER

Prepare yourself for the questions for the questions the interviewer is going to ask you. You should rehearse answers to the most commonly asked questions. Have someone ask you these questions to practice your answers:

Why do you want to work here?

How long do you want to stay with this company?

Why did you leave your last job?

Tell me about yourself.

Why aren't you working now?

How long do you think you would stay in this present job without a promotion?

Why should we hire you?

What is your greatest strength/weakness?

What did you like/dislike about your last job?

How much did you earn?

How much do you want to earn?

Why do you think you can do this job without experience?

MAKE SURE YOU'RE ON TIME

Make sure you are at least 10 minutes early for the scheduled appointment. Don't come too early or too late. Give yourself enough time to spend with the interviewer, don't arrange another appointment 15 minutes after the first appointment. Your time with the interviewer should be uninterrupted.

YOUR APPEARANCE AND DRESS

Don't wear too casual or too formal clothing to the interview. Dress conservatively without flashy colors. Be well groomed and shave for your interview. Women should make sure they look very neat. Hair should not be in the face, it should be up or tied back. Makeup should be subtle. The way you look is very important to your interviewer. If your appearance is bad for the interview, that is the impression an employer will have of your job performance. Neat appearance is always a must.

WHAT TO DO AT THE INTERVIEW

When you shake an employer's hand, shake it firm, solid grip. Don't shake his hand passively. Be businesslike but pleasant and friendly. Smile throughout the whole interview. Make sure your smile does not look fake. Good eye contact is very important. If you can't look into his eyes, look at the bridge of his nose. This will seem as if you are looking into his eyes. Sit straight up but toward the interviewer. This will make it seem as if you are very interested in what the interviewer has to say. Don't smoke or have poor posture during the interview. If you are under stress, try to act calm.

WHAT TO SAY AT THE INTERVIEW

Let the employer take charge of the interview. Answer his questions briefly but completely. Don't ramble on about unimportant things and waste his time. Dogmatic statements should be avoided. Tell the employer exactly what you expect from your job and from him. Also tell him exactly what he can expect from you. Stress your qualifications in a positive, affirmative tone. When the employer tells you what type of person is wanted, use this information when telling the employer about your qualifications. It is very important to tell him what he wants to hear. When you tell people what they want to hear, they start to agree with you. Don't over do it and exaggerate with lies. Use your resume or records to support any claim you make about yourself. If you don't understand a question the interviewer asks you, repeat it back to him to see if you understand it. Try to see what the interviewer wants to find out about you. If you know what he wants to find out, make your answers fit his needs.

WHAT NOT TO SAY AND DO AT THE INTERVIEW

Talk about previous jobs if they are in your favor. Don't say anything bad or criticize previous employers or fellow workers. If you say anything bad about anyone, your future employer can expect trouble from you. Don't say anything negative about yourself. Try not to discuss anything personal, financial or domestic unless you are specifically asked. If the interviewer questions you at a quick pace with confusing questions, he is doing this to put you under stress. Stay in control and answer calmly. Don't be overly impatient when an employer asks you a question. Wait for him to finish the question and then answer it completely and in a relaxed manner. You don't want an employer to think you are desperate for the job. Don't take anyone with you to the interview--this makes you seem insecure.

AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW

If the employer does not offer you the job at the end of the interview, ask him when you will hear from him or when you can call to find out his decision. If you are asked to come back, write down the time and place you are to attend. After the interview thank the employer for spending his time with you. Ask him if he knows of any other company that may need a person with your qualifications. A good practice

is to also thank the employer by mail with a "thank you" letter. Many applicants don't do this, so this may give you an edge on the job.

IF YOU ARE HIRED AT THE INTERVIEW

Make sure that you understand what your duties will be. A good understanding of what your employer expects from you and what you expect from your job will prevent conflicts in the future. Make sure that you are very clear on both of them. You should also find out what advancement opportunities are open for you. Tell the employer what salary you want, but only bring up money when the employer brings up your salary.

If, at the end of the interview, you are not offered the job, tell the interviewer that you really want the job. Follow up with a thank you letter to the interviewer. Tell the interviewer again in the note that you really want the job. If you forgot to mention something in the interview that you thought was important, don't hesitate to mention it in the letter. If the company hasn't contacted you in a week or two, call. If somebody else is hired for the job ask the interviewer if he has any other openings in his company or if he can give you any leads.