



Interviewing Professionally



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INTERVIEWING PROFESSIONALLY

Congratulations on securing an interview! This is an exciting time. The following pages will outline how to prepare, perform, handle, and follow-up an interview.

10 Steps to a Successful Interview

- Arrive on time
- Introduce yourself in a courteous manner
- Read company materials while you wait
- Have a firm handshake
- Listen
- Use body language to show interest
- Smile, nod, and give nonverbal feedback to the interviewer
- Ask about the next step in the process
- Thank the interviewer
- Write a thank-you letter to anyone you have spoken to



BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Learn about the company and its operation. You'll impress the interviewer if it is obvious you've done some research. It will also help you develop good answers to the interviewer's questions.

Information you should know about the company prior to your interview:

- Organizational structure
- Name of the interviewer
- Divisions/departments that interest you
- Areas they are eliminating
- Products/Services
- Training Programs
- Size of company
- Career paths
- How long have they been in business
- Types of clients
- Growth in the past and future potential
- Job description & job title
- New products and services they are developing
- Employee benefits
- Geographic location of home office, branches, stores

Resources for this information:

- VAULT Online Career Library (WSC Career Services)
- Company's annual report
- Literature produced by company
- Informational interview
- Inside source
- Professional journals
- Magazine articles
- Peterson's Guides
- Moody's Industrial Manual
- National Job Bank
- National Trade and Professional Associations
- Dunn's Employment Opportunities Directory
- The 100 Best Companies to Work For in America
- Walker's Manual of Western Corporations
- Ward's Directory of the 51,000 Largest U.S. Corporations

Prepare answers to typical interview questions. Study and practice your answers.

- Memorize the name of the person who will interview you. Nothing could be more embarrassing than forgetting their name or calling them by the wrong name!
- Decide what you will wear. Check out the section titled "Interview Dressing" for some pointers. Be sure your outfit is ready to go.
- Find out exactly where you are going, where to park, and how long it will take to get there. If you are traveling in an unfamiliar city, it is a wise idea to do a dry run prior to your interview time. Drive to the business, park, find the office and time how long all this takes. This will alleviate any undue stress the day of the interview.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Arrive 15 minutes early. This not only shows that you are prompt it also gives you a chance to gain your composure. Be friendly to the receptionist/secretary....they often are asked their opinion!

INTERVIEW DRESSING

DO'S

- Dress conservatively
- Check out what management wears and dress similarly without overkill
- Practice good grooming
- Do have clean, neatly styled hair
- Do have clean hands and trimmed nails
- Do carry a portfolio or briefcase with extra copies of your resume
- Do bring a clean notepad and pen that works
- Do wear basic hosiery (no textured hose)
- Do wear shoes you can walk easily in

DON'TS

- Don't wear torn, soiled, wrinkled clothing
- Don't dress casual
- Don't wear a lot of jewelry (Men should avoid earrings)
- Don't wear a lot of cologne
- Don't wear athletic shoes
- Don't eat spicy, offensive smelling foods prior to the interview
- Don't wear sexy clothing
- Don't wear "cutesy" ties (i.e. a flashing Mickey Mouse tie)
- Don't chew gum or smoke
- Don't wear a mini-skirt
- Don't wear heavy make-up
- Don't carry a purse AND a briefcase



THE INTERVIEWER'S HIDDEN AGENDA

The following are some typical concerns interviewers have, which you need to address when answering questions. Be sensitive to these concerns, answering all questions in the most positive way to build psychological leverage and position yourself for the offer.

- Does the applicant have the ability to do the job?
- Can he or she manage people?
- How does he or she relate to people?
- What kind of a person is this? A leader?
- What strengths does he or she have that we need?
- Why have there been a number of job changes?
- In what areas is he or she weak? How will this affect performance?
- What contribution has the applicant made?
- What are his or her ambitions? Are they realistic?
- Does she or he have growth potential?
- How is the chemistry between us?
- How will other interviewers react?
- Should this person get an offer?

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Start it off like a winner. Offer your hand, and give a firm handshake, a pleasant smile and a positive confident attitude. Introduce yourself.
- Be comfortable. Take a seat facing the interviewer, however, slightly off center. Be sure you are not facing into direct sunlight or some other uncomfortable situation.
- Listen attentively. Look at the interviewer directly, but don't get into a stare down! Sit up straight. Try to relax. Its okay to take a few notes if the questions are lengthy or you need to remind yourself of something you want to stress.
- Avoid nervous mannerisms. Pay attention to nervous mannerisms you might have such as clicking your pen, jingling change in your pocket, twisting your hair, biting your nails. Control these impulses! Everyone is nervous to some extent; the key is to appear calm and collected.
- Speak clearly. Use good grammar and a friendly tone. Never answer just "yes" or "no" to a question. Always clarify, expand on your answers. Be sure not to ramble on.
- Be positive and enthusiastic. You want to outshine all other candidates so "turn it on" during the interview! No matter how sterling your credentials are, you won't be hired if the interviewer isn't sold. Pump up your enthusiasm prior to the interview. Never whine, gripe or complain about past employers, jobs, classes etc.
- Ask pertinent questions. Be prepared to ask a few questions. Do not monopolize the interviewer's time, particularly if you know they have appointments scheduled following your interview. Do ask thoughtful questions. Don't ask about salary and benefits, this can be discussed when the company is definitely interested in you!



Here's a sampling of questions you might ask

- What are the company's greatest strengths?
 - In what areas is the company trying to improve?
 - Who will I report to?
 - Could you give some examples of projects I would be working on?
 - How much travel is involved?
 - Will relocation be required?
 - What kind of assignments could I expect in the first 6 months?
 - What products (or services or stores) are in the development stage?
 - Is this a new position or will I be replacing someone?
 - What is the largest single problem facing your company now?
 - What qualities are you looking for in a candidate?
 - What characteristics do successful employees in your company share?
 - Is there a lot of team work?
 - What growth areas do you foresee?
 - Will I be encouraged to attend professional conferences?
 - Could you describe your training program?
 - How frequently are performance appraisals done?
 - How do you feel about the company?
 - Could you describe possible advancements within the company?
 - What is the next step in the interview process?
 - What is the company's management philosophy?
 - What would a typical day be like?
 - How much contact is there with management?
 - Is this job a result of increased growth or expansion?
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- Watch for cues the interview is over. Don't linger if you sense the interviewer is done interviewing you. When it is over, stand up, thank the interviewer for their time and shake hands firmly. Don't forget to express interest in being hired. Say you are impressed with the company and would like to work there.
 - Be sure to find out the next step. Ask the interviewer when the decision will be made, when you can expect to hear from them. This way you won't be left hanging.



COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



These are some of the most commonly asked questions.

Put some thought into your answers and practice them prior to your interview!

- What are the responsibilities of your current or previous position?
- What do you know about this industry?
- What do you know about our company?
- How long will it take for you to make a significant contribution?
- What is your most significant accomplishment?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why do you think you would like to work for our company?
- If it were your first day, what would you say to the associates you will be working with?
- What have you done to overcome major obstacles in your life?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- How would you describe your work style?
- Tell me about yourself?
- Why do you think we should hire you for this job?
- How do you define success?
- What was the last book you read?
- What area of this job would you find most difficult?
- What leadership/supervisory roles have you held?
- What is your weakness?
- What is your strength?
- What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- What has been your greatest crisis, how did you solve it?
- What person has had the greatest influence on you, why?
- What do you like best about your job/school? What do you like least?
- How has college prepared you for this career?
- Describe your ideal job.
- Why did you choose this particular field of work?
- What have you done that shows initiative?
- In what areas of the job would you expect to be most successful....least?
- What do you see yourself doing in 5 or 10 years?
- What are your salary requirements?
- What frustrates you?
- Describe a situation with an irate customer and how you handled it?
- What aspect of this job do you consider most crucial?
- What are your long range career objectives and how do you plan to achieve them?
- How do you think a friend would describe you?
- What motivates you?
- How many hours a week do you need to work to get the job done?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- Tell me about other jobs you've had. In hindsight, how could you have improved your performance?
- What makes a good supervisor?
- What skills do you want to improve?

HANDLING ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

Inquiry Area	Illegal Questions	Legal Questions
National Origin/ Citizenship	Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you/your parents born? What is your "native tongue"?	Are you authorized to work in the United States? What languages do you read/speak/write fluently? (This question is okay only if this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)
Age	How old are you? When did you graduate? What's your birth date?	Are you over the age of 18?
Marital/ Family Status	What's your marital status? With whom do you live? Do you plan to have a family? When? .How many kids do you have? What are your child-care arrangements?	Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? Would you be able and willing to travel as needed for the job? (This question is okay if it is asked of all applicants for the job.) Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (This question is okay assuming it is asked of all applicants for the job.)
Affiliations	What clubs or social organizations do you belong to?	List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.
Personal	How tall are you? How much do you weigh? (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential for the safe performance of the job.)	Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?
Disabilities	Do you have any disabilities? Please complete the following medical history. Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list them and give dates when these occurred. What was the date of your last physical exam? How's your family's health? When did you lose your eyesight? How? Do you need an accommodation to perform the job? (This question can be asked only after a job offer has been made.)	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? (This question is okay if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.) Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions? As part of the hiring process, after a job offer has been made, you will be required to undergo a medical exam. (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on exam results.)
Arrest Record	Have you ever been arrested?	Have you ever been convicted of _____? (The crime named should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)
Military	If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?	In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve? What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

Source: Jobweb.com

AFTER THE INTERVIEW



- Say thanks. The next day write the interviewer a brief note reiterating your interest in the job. Spell his or her name correctly!
- Follow up. If you haven't heard from the interviewer within the time frame indicated at the close of the interview, call them to relay a polite reminder that you're still interested in the job. Ask when they plan to make a hiring decision.
- If you aren't hired... If you continue to be interested in the company, it pays to keep in touch with the interviewer. Often, through persistence, you may be offered a position at a later date.
- Chin Up. Gear up for your next interview. After all the more interviews you tackle the more polished you become. You may want to contact the interviewer who rejected you and see if you can get any pointers on what to improve before your next interview.