

Deliver a Successful Interview!

Interview Formats and Points

Career Foundations: Item 4

The interview is the key that unlocks the door to the job you want. It provides the opportunity to present your qualifications and experience to an interviewer. Most important is how the interviewer assesses your personality, interpersonal and communication skills, and ability to fit into the organization. You should try to convince the recruiter not only of your technical ability to do the job, but also of your personal abilities - you're a good person, you communicate well, and you are able to fit into and be an asset to the organization.

Interview Formats

Directed Interview:

The directed interview is highly organized from start to finish. Normally having a checklist or script, the recruiter will ask a series of questions within an allotted time frame.

Unstructured Interview:

Less formal, more relaxed feel. Encourages you to show your personality and to talk. Be sure to demonstrate why you are the best person for the position.

Stress Interview:

This interview puts you under stress to observe your reactions. Difficult questions are asked to see your responses to them. Remain calm and answer all questions asked, carefully and accurately.

Group Interview:

One of the most challenging types of interview. Often all the interviewers will be asking questions, be sure to keep eye contact with who asked the question, or if your answer is lengthy then return eye contact consistently throughout your answer.

Telephone Interview:

This may be used to make initial contact with the candidate. Questions are often asked to verify qualifications or to present additional details about the job before an on-site interview is held.

When preparing for the Interview you should:

- ◆ Learn about the organization.
- ◆ Have a specific job or jobs in mind.
- ◆ Review your qualifications for the job.
- ◆ Be ready to briefly describe your experience, showing how it relates to the job.
- ◆ Practice answers to broad questions, such as "Why should I hire you?" "Why do you want this job?" "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"
- ◆ Practice an interview with a friend or relative.

Personal appearance:

Attire supports your image as a person who is a serious candidate. Stay away from the temptation to dress down.

- ◆ Be well groomed.
- ◆ Dress appropriately.
- ◆ Do not chew gum or smoke.

Standard Questions:

- ◆ Can you tell me something about yourself?
- ◆ Why should I hire you?
- ◆ What are your strengths?
- ◆ What are your weaknesses?
- ◆ Why are you applying for this position?
- ◆ How are you qualified for this position?
- ◆ Why are you interested in working for our company?
- ◆ What can you contribute to this company?
- ◆ What are your short-term goals?
- ◆ What are your long-term goals?

Questions to ask interviewers:

Asking the interviewer questions shows your interest in the company and position.

- ◆ If I'm hired, will there be a formal training program or on-the-job training?
- ◆ What are the expectations of new employees?
- ◆ Is there a probationary period? How long is it?
- ◆ How is an employee evaluated and promoted?
- ◆ If I am hired, who will be my immediate supervisor?
- ◆ Can you tell me about his or her management style?
- ◆ What are the opportunities for personal growth in your company?
- ◆ Describe a typical assignment I might receive.
- ◆ How much travel is normally expected with this position?

The interview:

Here are a few guidelines to follow on the day of your interview.

- ◆ Be early.
- ◆ Learn the name of your interviewer and greet him or her with a firm handshake.
- ◆ Use good manners with everyone you meet.
- ◆ Relax and answer each question concisely.
- ◆ Use proper English—avoid slang.
- ◆ Be cooperative and enthusiastic.
- ◆ Use body language to show interest—use eye contact and don't slouch, sit at the edge of your seat.
- ◆ Ask questions about the position and the organization, but avoid questions whose answers can easily be found on the company Web site.
- ◆ Also avoid asking questions about salary and benefits unless a job offer is made.
- ◆ Thank the interviewer when you leave and shake hands.
- ◆ Send a short thank you note.

Information to bring to an interview:

- ◆ Government-issued identification (driver's license).
- ◆ Resume or application. Although not all employers require a resume, you should be able to furnish the interviewer information about your education, training, and previous employment.
- ◆ Letters of reference. Employers typically require three references. Get permission before using anyone as a reference. Make sure that they will give you a good reference. Try to avoid using relatives as references.
- ◆ Transcripts. Employers may require an official copy of transcripts to verify grades, coursework, dates of attendance, and highest grade completed or degree awarded

A Few Do's and Don'ts

- ◆ Do plan to arrive about 10 minutes early. Late arrival for a job interview is never excusable. If you are running late, do phone the company.
- ◆ Do greet the receptionist or assistant with courtesy and respect. This is where you make your first impression.
- ◆ Do bring extra resumes to the interview. (Even better, if you have a job skills portfolio, Do bring that with you to the interview.)
- ◆ Do greet the interviewer(s) by title (Ms., Mr., Dr.) and last name if you are sure of the pronunciation. (If your not sure, Do ask the receptionist about the pronunciation before going into the interview.)

- ◆ Do shake hands firmly. Don't have a limp or clammy handshake!
- ◆ Do wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. And Do remember body language and posture. Sit upright and look alert and interested at all times.
- ◆ Don't fidget or slouch.
- ◆ Do avoid using poor language, slang, and pause words such as: "like", "uh", and "um".
- ◆ Don't be soft-spoken. Use a forceful voice, project confidence.
- ◆ Don't act as though you would take any job or are desperate for employment.
- ◆ Do avoid controversial topics.
- ◆ Don't say anything negative about former colleagues, supervisors, or employers.
- ◆ Do make sure that your good points come across to the interviewer in a factual, sincere manner.
- ◆ Do remember that the interview is also an important time for you to evaluate the interviewers and the company they represent.

Interview Follow-up

- ◆ Almost immediately after an interview, you should write a thank-you letter to the interviewer(s). You can use email to do this, but sending a letter or card is more thoughtful.
- ◆ If you do not hear from the interviewer by the time he or she indicated, or within a reasonable amount of time from your interview, two weeks or so, you should call or email the interviewer to inquire about the status of their selection process.
- ◆ If a decision has not yet been made, ask the interviewer when he or she believes it will be made. If you have another offer, but would like to know about this interview outcome before making a decision, tell the interviewer. It may speed up the process.



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