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## The Best Interviewing Tips: **Effective Interviewing Skills for Qualified Candidates**

### Telephone Interview

- **Due Diligence / Research** - Prior to the phone call, **research the company you will be interviewing with.** Visiting their website at length will give you plenty of information.
- **Know Why you are Interviewing for the position?** - Know the reason why you would like to work at the company.
- **Be Enthusiastic** – Enthusiasm sells **but you have to be genuine and yourself.**
- **Accomplishment List** - Have a list of accomplishments and important skills in front of you and know why are you a fit for the job. **If you can not express this you may not get to the face to face interview.**
- **Quiet Space**- Schedule the interview at a time and number where you can be alone and talk freely. **Avoid cell phones at all costs.** Land lines are better than mobile phones whenever possible.
- **Resume in hand** - Be sure to have your resume in front of you so you can follow along with your background as they ask you questions.
- **Honesty is Key** - Answer questions as directly as possible. If you do not know, say so. Be candid, friendly, cheerful and courteous. **Confident but not cocky. If you sense that the other person wants to do lots of talking – let them.** People like others who are interested in hearing them talk!
- **What is the Next Step?** - At the end of the interview, try to get a face to face interview. **Ask what is the next step before hanging up the call.**
- **Address Weaknesses** - If you can, **find out from the interviewer what they feel your strong points and weaknesses may be.** This way, in the face to face interview you can reemphasize the strong points and address any perceived weaknesses.

## Face-to-face interview

- **Preparation is KEY** - Prior to your visit, **educate yourself about the company** – go through their website and write down several questions that come to mind. Look them up on Google. **Know the reason why you'd like to work at the company.** People notice when you have knowledge of their company and/or products.
- **Know Your Directions** - Make sure the directions you received are accurate. Nothing says, "I'm not prepared" like getting lost on the way to an interview. **Arriving 20 minutes early** is a way to ensure you will not be late. **Just wait outside the office until 3 minutes before the interview**, then make your grand entrance...exactly on time.
- **PRACTICE – Practice your interview skills** - that means answering the interview questions out loud to yourself as if you were in the interview. **Running through your answers a few times builds confidence** and assures yourself you will come across as articulate, efficient and prepared.
- **5 Resume Copies** - Take at least 5 copies of your resume - you'll be prepared if they do not have copies and there are more than one person.
- **Take Notes** - You may want to bring a 'notepad or PDA' to **take notes** and write down your top 3 questions.
- **Dress Code** - Know the office dress code – look sharp and professional. Being overdressed is always better than being underdressed. For non-management jobs, you should wear a nice shirt or blouse , nice slacks or dress and nice shoes. For management positions, unless they state that you should come in wearing business casual, both men and women should always opt for the traditional business suit as their interview attire.
- **Confidence** - Firm handshake upon arrival and **positive attitude throughout.**
- **Be enthusiastic and friendly** - **Listen more than you talk (no single factor is more important in determining success in an interview).**
- **Eye Contact** - **Look people in the eye** when talking or listening to them.
- **Just Listen** - **No single thing you can do will affect the interview more than just being a good listener.** Listen to questions asked of you. Answer them fully and directly. **Do not talk too much. Never over sell your skill sets.**
- **Salary** - If present salary is asked, **furnish accurate information** – including bonuses and commissions. **They may ask for a W2 later, so you don't want to "enhance" any numbers!** If they ask you what salary you want, the only acceptable answer at this point is **"I am open to any fair and reasonable offer".**
- **Nothing Negative** - **Do not criticize or come across as negative about your present or past employers or co-workers.** Stay professional and avoid personal information unless it's "polite" conversation.
- **Ask for the job!** - **Let the interviewer know that you are interested and excited at the prospect of working for them** and ask what the next step will be.
- **Send a Thank You letter** - Ask for their card so you can follow up with a thank you letter via mail. A simple Thank You letter can often be the deal maker or breaker on getting the position. **It is well worth the extra effort!!!**

## Some Questions You May Hear in the Interview:

- **Tell me about yourself.** They're looking for a concise, descriptive, and informative summary of more current and relevant career information, **not long past, personal information.**
- **Why do you want to work at XYZ Company?** This is where your website and company history homework pays off. **Give examples of specifics that you have found on their site, OR past projects that you enjoyed that apply.**
- **What is your proudest accomplishment/ What are your greatest strengths?** This is your turn to brag a bit, but not to the point of being arrogant. At least 2 examples, **offer references that can attest to your work, etc. The more specifics you can offer, the better you look.** Bring up sales numbers, deadlines, \$\$ Savings, whatever is measurable and speaks well of your efforts.
- **What would you classify as an area of improvement, and how would you go about achieving those improvements?** Try to pick something that isn't a "DEAL KILLER" meaning something that IS NOT a job requirement, and that is not easily improved upon. Lots of folks choose something that is indirectly related to the role so that it doesn't affect your interview success. **For example: "I realize this position requires a great deal of systems reporting experience and you work with system "x". I do have considerable experience with reporting, but up to now, there has not been a requirement for me to learn "system x". I can pick it up very quick as I do with all systems. At this time, I would have to say an area of improvement would be the learning curve on your particular software system."**
- **What is the Salary you are looking for?** It is always best to leave the door open and answer with something such as, "I would be happy to see your best offer. I am fairly flexible when it comes to the compensation since I am looking at everything including the company, the position, the growth potential, the benefit package, etc. Salary is just one piece of the pie and if you think I would be a good fit for the position, I am SURE we can come up with a figure that works for both of us!"
- **Why you are leaving?** Be honest, very concise and direct, **but don't slam or talk negative of your employer or boss.** They want to hear that you are leaving on good terms (for everyone, not just you!) since it can easily be them on the other end of the equation if they hire you.
- **Why should we hire you for the position? Summarize and your qualifications, sell yourself, and ASK FOR THE JOB!** Give technical reasons why you are the best candidate over personality reasons.
- **Sales positions:** In certain sales positions, you may be asked to perform a sample sales pitch for the product, and once again, this is where your preparation and website/company/product research will shine.

## Questions you may want to ask (choose 1 or 2)

- What qualities would your ideal candidate have? **LISTEN and make sure that you identify some of the qualities that you have (which match what you've heard).**  
NOTE: You will want to highlight these qualifications in your follow-up thank you letter.
- **If you hired me and you came to me a year later and told me I've done a great job in my first year, what accomplishments or contribution would be most significant or meaningful?**  
NOTE: You will want to address these accomplishments/contributions in your follow-up thank you letter.