

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Objectives of an Interview

Both you and the interviewer have a need: the interviewer is in need for someone to best fit the position advertised, and you are in need of a new job. The interview is a time for employers to screen out the best potential candidates and a time for you to describe how your skills, qualifications and experiences should make you their number one choice. The more prepared you are, and the more you set yourself apart from other candidates, the stronger your strategic competitive edge will be.

Typical Set-Up of an Interview

Typically, an interview is first set up with a Human Resource (HR) recruiter followed by a meeting with the hiring manager if you are found qualified. During your time with the HR recruiter, you should:

- Discuss your skills and knowledge so that HR will know that whether or not your skills relate to the position posted
- Answer questions that relate to your past experiences
- Explain any gaps in your employment history, as HR's role is to gain explanation for these gaps as well as provide a general overview of the position

Once the HR recruiter interviews you, if you are found fit for the position, he/she will forward your information along to the hiring manager. The hiring manager's role is to:

- Determine if your skills match the specific job's requirements
- Provide you with an overview of the team
- Provide information on the job requirements, projects and goals.

Your role is to:

- Explain your skills and experiences that relate to the job requirements
- Ask questions to gain some perspective on specific job responsibilities and the goals and projects which you would be involved in if hired
- Explain how you can add value to the department/organization

Different Types of Interviews

Not all interviews are face-to-face, one-on-one interactions. Other than the traditional face-to-face interview, there are three other types of interviews you should be aware of:

- *Multiple Meeting Interviews:* You have several, consecutive interviews within the same day. Make sure that you learn the different titles of each interviewer and ask for their business cards. Be unique to each interviewer.
- *Group Interviews:* You are interviewing with two or more people at the same time. Identify the hiring manager and continuously give your primary eye contact to him/her while giving secondary eye contact to the others in the room.
- *Telephone Interviews:* You are interviewed over the phone. Remember that just because you are on the phone, the same respect/rules apply as if you were face-to-face with the interviewer. Make sure to engage the interviewer with the tone of your voice and with enthusiasm and remember to listen carefully.

Before the Interview

There are certain things that you should do/keep in mind before your actual interview with the organization/company, including:

- *Researching the organization/company and the job that you applied to.* What do you really know about the position and company? Why should they hire you over another candidate? Why exactly do you want to work for them?
- *Practice interviewing questions.* There are common questions that most interviewers ask, practice your responses in front of a mirror, to a friend, spouse/partner, significant other, or family member.
- *Remember to know the exact place and time of the interview.* Where is the interview located? Do you have the right directions? Try to be at the interview at least 10-15 minutes before your scheduled time.
- *Who are you interviewing with?* Do you know your interviewer's name and title? Do you know how to pronounce your interviewer's name?
- *What are you going to wear?* Are your clothes clean? Are they appropriate for the job you are interviewing for? Is everything ironed?

Things to Take with You to the Interview

Did you remember to:

- Take the interviewer's address and phone number (in case you get lost)?
- Bring directions to where the interview will take place?
- Bring your cell phone?
- Take extra copies of your resume and references?
- Bring a pen and notebook/portfolio that contains your interview agenda?

Once You Get to the Interview

Remember that the second you walk into the building, you are being interviewed, even if the hiring manager has not seen you yet. Stay cognizant of the fact that you should remain respectful to the receptionist and not talk on your cell phone when you get into the building. The hiring manager will most likely ask their receptionist how you behaved coming into the interview.

Be prepared to shake hands with people, but do not make the move yourself. If a hand is extended to you, shake it; if not, do not extend your own hand, but smile and nod recognizing their presence.

Sit once the interviewer has taken a seat or has given you a gesture to sit down. When the interviewer asks you questions, make sure to be as specific as possible giving relevant descriptive examples. Make sure that you ask questions at the end of the interview. Do not be afraid to say that you do not know an answer to a question; if you need further clarification, make sure to ask.

What Happens Next?

At the end of the interview, summarize your own understanding of the position to the interviewer. Communicate your interest in the position and the advantages that the company would have if you were to be chosen for the job. Make sure to ask when you expect to hear from them regarding decisions if the hiring manager did not specify. Remember to ask for a business card, and one of the most important things: commit to follow-up with a thank you letter no more than 24 hours after the interview.