

For Candidates...

The Interview:

A job interview is similar in many ways to a social conversation, but it requires more than just conversational skills. How well you do in a job interview will depend on how well you can articulate your achievements and qualifications as they relate to what the employer wants. Let's consider next what employers are looking for in a job interview and what your main objective should be...



WHAT EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR

- Qualifications – A track record of success in previous roles; academic qualifications are only one part of the equation!
- Positive Attitude – Can do, upbeat and optimistic.
- Interest In The Company And Position – Do some research on the company before you get to interview; show a genuine interest.
- Stable Work History – If you have many job changes on your CV, make sure that you can justify them. Would you employ a job hopper?
- Clear Sense Of Purpose – Do you really know: what you have achieved/what your career objectives are?
- Communication Skills – Articulate, persuasive and convincing...
- High Performance Standards – How principled are you? Do your principles match with those of the company you are applying to? Do you set high standards?

WHAT YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR IN AN EMPLOYER

A Job Offer; this is your number one goal! You are not interviewing to evaluate the company (this should have been done before you get to interview); you are interviewing to see if you are good enough to get a job offer. An undecided or tentative attitude has no place at interview; leaving an employer with the impression that you are just shopping around is a fatal mistake.

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PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Proper preparation can make the difference between receiving and not receiving a job offer.
- Do some research about the company i.e. size, products, annual sales revenue, principal business, locations, etc. Check their website, or arrange a personal visit. This will prepare you to show genuine interest in the company and make you feel more comfortable during the interview.
- Make sure that you know the exact place and time of the interview, the interviewer's full name, the correct pronunciation and his or her title. Try and find out how many people are involved in the interviewing process and who the final decision maker is if you can
- Be prepared to ask questions during the interview. Your questions allow the interviewer to evaluate your professional and personal needs. Careful questioning helps both of you determine if your relationship will be mutually rewarding. Avoid asking questions that relate to salary, benefits, vacations, and retirement until the very final stages of the recruitment process.
- Allow sufficient time for the interview. Plan to arrive at least ten minutes before your actual appointment. There is no excuse for tardiness at an interview!
- Dress appropriately. Plan how you will dress for the interview, remember that there is only one chance to make a good first impression. You should make your own judgement as to what is appropriate for the company and its culture, but in general business dress is best.
- Keep a positive frame of mind. Set other concerns aside and focus on what you are going to accomplish at the interview.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW

Interviews can be very formal and structured. Some of the questions will be formulated to uncover your past behavioural patterns and will be rather rapid in pace. Questions can also be informal and conversational, such that the pieces of your background will be uncovered in a more random way. Let the interviewer set the tone and match your style with theirs.

- First Contact - Your initial greeting should include a firm handshake, an enthusiastic hello, and lots of eye contact, followed by an introduction of yourself.
- The Ice Breaker - In most interviews, there is a short interval before getting down to business, which is filled with small talk. Respond with enthusiastic and pleasant answers to remarks and questions.

THE INTERVIEW

- Follow the interviewer's leads, but try to get the interviewer to describe the position and the duties to you early in the interview process. This way, you may be able to apply your background, skills and accomplishments to the position.

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- Establish rapport with the interviewer. People want to hire those they feel most comfortable with.
- Make sure that your good points come across to the interviewer in a factual, sincere manner. Stress your achievements i.e. sales growth, margin increase, cash flow improvements, processes developed, savings achieved, systems installed and always relate these in terms of benefits to the business.
- If you have any hesitations or concerns about the company or the position, hold them for your Xecutive Search HR consultant. We will answer them for you.
- If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, do not let your discouragement show. Sometimes an interviewer who is genuinely interested in you may seem to discourage you as a way of testing your reaction.
- Always avoid discussing salary at the first interview! Make sure you talk about a) why you are interested in this position and b) what you can offer the company.

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- The closing phase is the most important part of the interview for making a lasting impression that can place you above other competitors for the same position.
- Let the interviewer know how excited you are about the position
- Find out what the next step is.
- Make a statement that indicates that you can do the job, and that you would like to receive an offer. Always ask for the offer.
- Finally, as you are preparing to leave, tell the employer how much you would enjoy working with him or her personally.
- At this point, you should expect to be dismissed or taken to another interviewer. All interviews should be handled in the same fashion. You must convince all parties in the interview process that you are the right person for the job.
- The candidate that shows the most enthusiasm for the job, the opportunity and the company is usually the one that gets the offer!

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