



Interviewing Skills

*An interview is a chance for a potential employer to review your skills, abilities and accomplishments and find out if you are qualified to do the available job. You should be your very best in a job interview. This is the opportunity to sell yourself. First of all, know your strengths and then sell yourself in those strengths. During the job search process, you should take some time to get to know yourself. Once you are comfortable with this process, you will be better prepared for interviews. The key to a successful interview is to **be prepared**.*

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

There are different types of interviews. For discussion purposes, we will address the following types of interviews:

• **One-On-One.** This is the most common type of interview. The interviewer will take either a direct or non-direct approach.

- The direct approach is a dialogue of questions about your experience, goals, education, training, skills and community involvement. Some of the questions that might be asked are:
 - What experience have you had with manufacturing companies?
 - What are your career goals?
 - How do you plan on keeping current with the industry trends?
 - What skills do you have that will enable you to perform this job?
 - Are you involved in the community? How?
 - What are your hobbies?
- The indirect approach will not give you much direction. You should take the ball and run with it. Use the time to sell your skills and abilities. You will have more control in this type of interview. You may get asked questions such as:
 - Tell me something about yourself.
 - Can you tell me more about that?

• **Team Interview.** The team interview may consist of two or more interviewers with different perspectives in what they are looking for in a job candidate. One of the members may be the hiring manager. Another member may be the human resources representative and another may be a potential coworker. After the interview, each candidate rated and ranked accordingly. The highest ranked candidate will be offered the position. This type of interview can be intimidating because questions will be coming from different individuals. In order to prepare yourself, ask who will be interviewing with prior to the interview.

• **The Telephone Interview.** Due to the push on cost containment, telephone interviews have become more popular as an initial screening process. If you are involved in a telephone interview, you may want to follow these tips:

- Return messages from prospective employers immediately, so you do not appear to be uninterested.
- If you have a choice in scheduling the interview choose an “up” time. Monday mornings and Friday afternoons are not good times.

- Practice with someone to get the feel for a one-sided conversation.
- When introduced to the members of the interview team, write their names down, so you can personally refer to them later in the conversation.
- Be in comfortable surroundings.

INTERVIEW PREPERATION TIPS

As previously stated, preparation is the key to a successful interview. Following are some tips that will help you prepare for interviews:

- Know who your interviewer is and what they are all about.
- Contact references and request permission to use them.
- Get directions to the location.
- Project the image of the position you are seeking.
- Thoroughly research the organization prior to the interview.
- Familiarize yourself with potential interview questions.
- Decide what skills, abilities and accomplishments you want to present.
- Practice answering questions using a tape recorder.
- Prepare a closing statement that indicates your interest in the position.
- Be on time.

TYPES OF QUESTION TO EXPECT DURING AN INTERVIEW

Following is a list of typical questions that you may be asked during an interview:

- What are your strengths
- What are your weaknesses? (Try to turn this into a positive situation)
- Where do you expect to be in five years? Ten years?
- How is your previous experience applicable to work we do here?
- Why are you the best candidate for the job?
- Why do you want to work here?
- Can you describe for me a typical day in your job?
- What do you know about our organization?
- What did you do in your last job to make you more effective? What was the single most noteworthy accomplishment in your last job? Why are you leaving your present position?
- How long would it take you to make a contribution to our organization?
- How long would you stay with us?
- What do you want in your next job that you are not getting now?
- How would you evaluate your present organization?
- Why should I hire you?
- What did you like most about your last job? Least?
- To date, what have been your two most important career accomplishments?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

A successful interview requires participation from you as well as from the interviewer(s). The more you participate, the more favorable the interview. Always be prepared to ask questions. If you do not ask questions, you may appear to be uninterested. Some of the appropriate questions that you may ask are as follows:

- Specific questions about the organization and products or services that you have formulated from your research.
- Questions about the competition which will show an understanding of the marketplace.
- What positions can this lead to? This shows a desire for growth and advancement and helps you identify whether opportunities here fit in your plans.

- What qualities are you seeking for this position? This gives you the opportunity to relate your experiences, skills and accomplishments to the job requirements.
- If you need to know exactly what the hours are ask, “ What kind of work schedule is expect?”
- Are there periodic performance and salary reviews?
- What are the organization’s plans for expansion?
- How long has the position been open?
- What do you expect the employee you hire to accomplish?
- If salary has not come up during the conversation, it is appropriate to ask about the salary range.

QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

There is some information that you need to know prior to making an employment decision. Usually, however, you should wait until you have a job offer to ask these types of questions.

- How much vacation, holiday and sick pay will I get?
- How long is the lunch period?
- Where will my office be?

You should never ask the interviewer personal questions that may put them on the spot.

BODY LANGUAGE

When communicating during an interview, your body language counts as much as what you are saying. Following are some keys to confident body language:

- Enter the room with a straight back and your head held high. Use good posture throughout the interview
- Give a firm handshake.
- Choose a seat close to the interviewer if they do not tell you where to sit. Position your body toward the interviewer. Avoid fidgeting. Keep your hands relaxed in your lap.
- Make eye contact throughout the interview. Speak clearly. Avoid clearing your throat prior to speaking.

FOLLOW -UP LETTERS

Within a day or two after an interview, you should send a follow-up letter to the interviewer(s). Typically, the letter thanks them for taking time to interview with you and lets them know you are interested in the position. Doing this could give you an advantage over the other candidates.

PHONE CALLS

If you have not heard from the interviewer in the amount of time that they designated to get back to you, it is appropriate for you to call them. The call should be brief. The purpose of the call is to let them know that you are still interested in the position and that you would like to know the status of the position.