

PREPARING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW

The job interview is one of the most important components of your job search. A successful interview is instrumental in securing a position. The interview is an opportunity for the employer to evaluate the match between your qualifications and goals and the employer's needs. It is also your best opportunity to evaluate the employer and the position. In order to present yourself and your qualifications effectively, careful and thorough planning is required prior to each interview.



PLANNING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Most individuals approach an interview with apprehension and nervousness and may feel overwhelmed. However, planning ahead will help you to present yourself and your qualifications clearly to the employer. Consider the following areas when preparing:

- 1. Know Yourself:** It is difficult to articulate your skills, interests and goals to an interviewer if you don't know what they are yourself. You need to be able to present to the employer confidence in yourself, your qualifications, and a sense of career direction. In order to "sell" yourself effectively, complete a thorough self-assessment, reviewing your skills/abilities, background, values, experience, education, training, and career goals.
- 2. Know Your Field Of Interest:** Employers will be interested to discover why you selected a particular career field to pursue. Research information about the field, industries, and positions. This may include future projections, major competitors, industry trends, and characteristics of individuals in the field.
- 3. Know The Employer:** Research the organization thoroughly to discover its products, services, location(s), previous and projected growth, and future prospects.
- 4. Know The Position For Which You Have Applied:** You need to have a clear description of the job and required skills so that you can articulate your understanding of the position, the demands involved, and how valuable you will be to the company.
- 5. Know The Interview Format Ahead Of Time:** One of the most important ways to prepare for your interview is to ask about the interview format. Find out who you will meet with and how long the interview will be.
- 6. Prepare For And Anticipate Questions:** Read the job description thoroughly and anticipate questions that may be asked. Prepare answers beforehand by practicing aloud, with a friend, or by completing a mock interview.
- 7. Make A List Of Questions To Ask:** Asking questions shows a level of interest in the company and your preparedness for the interview. Don't ask questions that could be easily answered through your own research.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- 1. Arrive Early:** Arrive 10 – 15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. Take into consideration traffic you might encounter and parking.
- 2. Arrive Prepared:** You should bring with you extra copies of your resume, a list of at least 3 professional references, and a pen and paper. Some employers may also require you to bring your academic transcripts. All of these items should be organized in a folio.
- 3. Make A Good First Impression:** When meeting someone for the first time, people often form opinions about others during the first 30 seconds. Your appearance, behavior, and attitude are important factors that contribute to that first impression.

Appearance

- Dress professionally. Dress in modern stylish clothes, no flashy colors or styles. Err on the side of being overdressed.
- Use make-up moderately.
- Make sure your hair, mustache and/or beard are well trimmed.
- Don't overdo use of jewelry.
- Shine your shoes, clean your fingernails, and clean your glasses.
- Avoid strong perfumes, colognes, or aftershaves.

Behavior

- Carry yourself proudly.
- Use a firm handshake.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Smile and be friendly to everybody.
- Follow the interviewer's lead.
- Do not overextend the interview.

Attitude

- Project confidence and enthusiasm.
- Show sincerity and commitment.
- Be optimistic.

- 4. Give Thoughtful And Complete Answers:** When answering questions, avoid giving one word answers. Provide examples of your qualifications whenever possible. If confused about the question, ask for clarification. Pausing to consider your answer is ok.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- 1. Write A Thank You:** Write a brief letter or note of thanks for the interview. Reiterate your interest in the position and briefly state why you are the best candidate.
- 2. Evaluate Interview And Position:** Determine how well the interview went and if you should do anything differently next time. Evaluate whether the job/organization is a good fit for you.
- 3. Follow Up:** If you don't hear from the interviewer in a week after you were told a decision would be made, call to inquire about their decision and to express your continued interest in the position.