

Making your Job Interview Successful

The employment interview is one of the most important events in a person's experience, because the thirty minutes to one hour spent with the interviewer may determine the entire course of one's life.

Interviewers are continually amazed at the number of candidates who come to job interviews without any apparent preparation and only the vaguest idea of what they are going to say. Other candidates create an impression of indifference by acting too casually. At the other extreme, a few candidates work themselves into such a state of mind that they seem to be in the last stages of nervous fright.

These marks of inexperience can be avoided by knowing a little of what is actually expected of you and by making a few simple preparations before the interview.

This leaflet, combined with the guidance provided by your Consultant will provide you with in-depth information of how to conduct yourself during your interview.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Preparation is the first essential step toward a successful interview. Thus it is important to:

- 1 Know the exact time and place of the interview, the interviewer's full name, the correct pronunciation, and the interviewer's title.
- 2 Do some research on the company interviewing you. It will be helpful to know how old the company is, what its products or services are, where its factories, offices or stores are located, what its growth has been and what its growth potential is for the future. There are a number of publications which provide information about prospective employers. Most of them can be found in any college or public library. Companies House, in London or Cardiff may also be able to supply you with the pertinent information.
- 3 Prepare the questions you will be asking during the interview. Remember that an interview is a 'two-way street'. The employer will try to determine through questioning if you have the qualifications necessary to do the job. You must determine through questioning whether the company will give you the opportunity for the growth and development you seek.

- 4 Some probing questions you might ask:
- a A detailed description of the position
 - b Reason the position is available?
 - c Anticipated induction and training programme?
 - d Advanced training programmes available for those who demonstrate outstanding ability?
 - e Earnings of successful people in their third to fifth year?
 - f Company growth plans?
 - g The next step in the recruitment process?
- 5 Men should dress in a business suit (NO CASUAL CLOTHES), white or plain shirt, conservative tie, dark socks, clean shoes and a neat haircut. Women should dress in a tailored and conservative style.

THE INTERVIEW

You are being interviewed because the employer wants to recruit people - not because he wants to trip you or embarrass you. Through the interaction which will take place during the interview the employer will be searching out your strong and weak points, evaluating you on your qualifications, skills and intellectual qualities, and the employer will probably probe deeply to determine your attitudes, aptitudes, stability, motivation and maturity.

Some "do's" and "don'ts" concerning the interview:

- 1 **DO** plan to arrive on time or a few minutes early. Late arrival for a job interview is never excusable.
- 2 If the employer presents you with an application form to complete, **DO** fill it out neatly and completely. **DON'T** relax and rely on your application form or CV to do your selling for you. Most employers will want you to speak for yourself.
- 3 **DO** greet the employer by his surname if you are sure of the pronunciation. If you are not, ask him to repeat his name. Give the appearance of energy as you walk. Smile! Shake his hand firmly. Be genuinely glad to meet the employer and the chances are that you'll find him an interesting person too.
- 4 **DO** wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. Sit upright in your chair. Look alert and interested at all times. Be a good listener as well as a good talker. Smile!
- 5 **DON'T** smoke even if the employer smokes and offers you a cigarette. **DON'T** chew gum.
- 6 **DO** look a prospective employer in the eye while you talk to them.
- 7 **DO** follow the employer's leads, but try to get the employer to describe the position and the duties to you early in the interview so that you can relate your background, skills and accomplishments to the position.
- 8 **DON'T** answer questions with a simple 'yes' or no'. Explain wherever possible. Tell those things about yourself which relate to the situation.
- 9 **DO** make sure that your good points get across to the interviewer in a factual, logical, sincere manner. Stress achievements. For example: sales records, processes developed, savings achieved, systems installed etc.

- 10 **DON'T** lie. Answer questions truthfully, frankly and as 'to the point' as possible.
- 11 **DON'T** ever make derogatory remarks about your present or former employers or companies.
- 12 **DON'T** over answer questions. The interviewer may steer the conversation into politics or economics. Since this is a ticklish situation it is best to answer the questions honestly, trying not to say more than is necessary.
- 13 **DON'T** inquire about SALARY, HOLIDAY, BONUSES, RETIREMENT etc. on the initial interview unless you are positive the employer is interested in recruiting you. If the interviewer asks what salary you want, indicate what you've earned but that you're more interested in the opportunity than a specific salary amount at the present.
- 14 **DO** always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing. Never close the door on an opportunity when you can chose from a number of positions - rather than only one.

BE PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS LIKE.....

- 1 Why did you choose this particular opportunity?
- 2 Why do you think you might like to work for our Company?
- 3 What do you know about our Company?
- 4 What qualifications do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in your field?
- 5 What do you think determines a person's progress in a good company?
- 6 Can you get recommendations from previous employers?
- 7 What contributions to profits have you made in your present or former position to justify your salary level there?
- 8 Can you take instructions without feeling upset?
- 9 What is your major weakness?
- 10 Are you willing to relocate?
- 11 How do you spend your spare time? What are your hobbies?
- 12 What job in your company do you want to work toward?
- 13 What jobs have you enjoyed most? The least? Why?
- 14 What are your own special abilities?
- 15 What types of people seem to rub you up the wrong way?
- 16 Define co-operation.
- 17 Do you like regular hours?
- 18 What have you done which shows initiative and willingness to work?

NEGATIVE FACTORS EVALUATED BY AN EMPLOYER

During the course of the interview, the employer will evaluate your negative factors as well as your positive factors. Listed below are negative factors frequently evaluated during the course of the interview and those which most often lead to the rejection of the candidate.

- 1 Poor personal appearance.
- 2 Overbearing - overaggressive - conceited 'superiority complex' - 'know it all'.
3. Inability to express thoughts clearly - poor poise, diction or grammar.
4. Lack of planning for career - no purpose or goals.

- 5 Lack of interest and enthusiasm - passive and indifferent.
- 6 Lack of confidence and poise - nervousness.
- 7 Overemphasis on money - interested only in 'big bucks'.
- 8 Evasive - makes excuses for unfavourable factors in record.
- 9 Lack of tact - maturity - courtesy.
- 10 Condemnation of last employer.
- 11 Failure to look employer in the eye.
- 12 Limp, fish handshake.
- 13 Lack of appreciation of the value of experience.
- 14 Failure to ask questions about the job.
- 15 Persistent attitude of 'What can you do for me?'
- 16 Lack of preparation for the interview - failure to get information about the company resulting in inability to ask intelligent questions.

CLOSING THE INTERVIEW FOR THE JOB OFFER

1. There's a lot of competition out there now. Anybody lucky enough to get an interview for a coveted position will have to learn how to sell themselves.

We suggest candidates look at the interview as a consultative sales call. It's far more effective than the normal techniques. Traditional advice urged candidates to be polite; to speak when spoken to. Candidates now are expected to question their interviewers, seeking clues to the kind of person the company wants.

The trick is to stand out. Developing your unique selling point. Their line 'Tell us about yourself' is your opportunity to show the interviewing panel what makes you different. Hi, I'm me, I'm unique and here's why you need me. Think of the interviewer as a customer buying what you have to offer – your academic credential, your expertise and skills. Pitch accordingly, read your interviewers and adjust your sales patter to their style. Surplus confidence may smack of arrogance so if the interviewer sends out hostile vibes, flattery may be in order.

Be prepared is the guiding motto. That does not mean a quick scan of the annual report. Do you know someone who is working there now? Use them to gain insights into the company and person who is interviewing.

We recommend maintaining the confident pitch to the end of the interview. Closing on a positive note is vital.

Request feedback. Ask when will they be really sure; have they compiled a short-list or are they still interviewing. You could say (although this line needs to be handled with care) you are looking at other opportunities and need to know soon.

The sales technique is an improvement over the hostage situation where the interviewer asks the questions and the applicant prays for the right answers. A sure-footed confident stance can help you to secure a non-existent post.

- 2 If you are interested in the position, ask for it, or ask for the next interview if the situation demands. If you feel the job is worth your efforts and you want to receive an offer, be a good sales person and say something like this: - 'Mr Employer, I'm very interested with what I have seen here today, your company, its products and the people I've met. I am confident I could do an excellent job in the position you have described to me. How soon will I be able to start?' The employer will be impressed by your enthusiasm. If the employer makes the offer then, accept it even if you're uncertain. You'll have time to think about it before the offer letter arrives.
- 3 Don't be too discouraged if no definite offer is made or specific salary discussed. The employer will probably want to communicate with his office first or interview more candidates before making a decision.
- 4 If you get the impression that the interview is not going well and that you have already been rejected, don't let your discouragement show. Once in a while an employer who is genuinely interested in your possibilities may seem to discourage you in order to test your reaction.
- 5 Thank the employer for his time and his consideration of you. If you have answered the two questions uppermost in the employer's mind:
 - a Why are you interested in this company? And
 - b What can you offer? - you have done all you can.
- 6 If you are interested enough in the position to want an offer, right after the interview write to the employer a letter expressing your thanks for the interview and expressing an interest in the company. Restate briefly why you think you can make an exceptionally strong contribution to the Company.

Last and most important, call your Consultant immediately and tell him what happened. We will want to talk with you before the employer calls him back. If you are interested in the position we will help you get it.