

PURPOSE

All interviews progress through several stages with specific objectives for both you and the employer.

The interview has been described as a conversation with a purpose. It can supply information not contained in your resume or application form and it gives the employer the opportunity to provide additional information about the position and the company.

The main purpose is to determine both you and the employer's desirability and suitability of future contact.

PREPARATION

The interview can be the most important yet traumatic experience of your career. Everyone gets nervous both before and during a job interview. Yes, you can minimize the shaking knees, perspiring and quavering voice by preparing. You might wish to consider the following points in your preparation:

Appearance

Self Knowledge - i.e., Do you know what kind of person you are?

Company Knowledge

Questions you wish to ask the Interviewer

Rehearsing answers to possible interview questions

Supporting Evidence - i.e., work samples, project reports, portfolios etc

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JOB INTERVIEW

Since the interview is, in effect, your showcase for merchandising your talents, your primary concern is to present your qualifications to the best possible advantage. Although each interview will be different and will require your personal ingenuity, the following suggestions may be helpful:

Be natural. When invited to sit down, sit comfortably without slouching, in a slightly forward position.

Be pleasant and friendly but businesslike.

Let the employer control the interview. However, you must also ensure that you are provided the opportunity for input/questions. Give frank answers. Brief but complete without rambling.

Avoid opinionated and authoritative statements.

Stress your qualifications without exaggeration. The employer's questions or statements will indicate the type of person they are seeking. Use these clues in presenting your qualifications. For example, if you are being interviewed for an engineering job and the employer mentions that his job will require some customer contact work, use the clue to emphasize any work or vocational experience or courses you have had in public contact or related work.

Present your resume, work record, references, personal data, work samples, or other materials to support your statements when the employer requests them.

Keep your personal, domestic, or financial problems out of the conversation unless specifically asked about them.

Be aware of the salary range which is appropriate for the particular job, if the employer introduces the subject.

If the employer does not indicate when a further contact will be made, ask when you may call to learn their decision.

If the employer indicates that you are to call or return for another interview, make a written note of time, date and place.

Thank the employer for the interview. If the employer indicates that he cannot use you, ask him to suggest another employer.

DO'S

DO research the company you are being interviewed by. Check out its products and services, its location, its training program. Be prepared to say why you would like to work for this particular company.

DO have a goal or career direction in mind. Know your good points and your achievements and be able to discuss them and how they relate to this particular interview.

DO dress in a professional style. DON'T wear jeans and a T-shirt. Appearance counts.

DO greet the interviewer by name as you enter the room. Wait to be invited to sit down or say "May I sit here?"

DO shake his/her hand firmly if he/she offers to do so.

DO maintain eye contact with the interviewer.

DO read up on the job being offered, and the tasks and responsibilities.

DO listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying, and answer the questions that he/she is asking. Listening to his/her preamble might give you some clue to his/her thoughts attitudes.

DO try to appear relaxed and confident even if you are not. If you are prepared you will be relaxed. Take deep breaths before entering the interview room.

DO thank the interviewer at the conclusion of the interview, and watch for his/her signal that the interview is finished.

DON'TS

DON'T smoke (even smoking before retains the smell)

DON'T chew gum - for obvious reasons.

DON'T play with articles on the interviewer's desk, or with your own rings or bracelets.

DON'T make slighting reference to former employers and/or teachers.

DON'T monopolize the conversation. If you listen carefully, you might learn something that will help you.

DON'T be late (arrive early).

DON'T take notes during the interview. It is annoying, distracting and wastes time. (If you wish, record all pertinent information immediately following the interview).

DON'T underestimate the impression made by your appearance.

DON'T be discouraged. Looking for work is one of the hardest things you will ever have to do.

DON'T give up. Try to learn something from each interview, especially the unsuccessful ones.

NOTE:

Before taking an interview, it is wise to pick up literature provided by the company. If for some reason you must cancel your interview, it is imperative that you notify the company and the Career Services Office at the earliest time possible.

Some companies may hold a briefing session beforehand for all interested candidates, and if this is the case, they will notify you in advance.

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You can never be sure of what sort of questions will be tossed at you. If you are prepared you will be able to handle them. The following is a list of fifty questions frequently asked during the employment interview - but remember these are not necessarily all the questions you will encounter in your interview.

1. What are your long range and short range goals and objectives. When and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
2. What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation have you established for yourself ?
3. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
4. What do you really want to do in life?
5. What are your long range career objectives?
6. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
7. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
8. What do you expect to be earning in five years?
9. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
10. Which is more important to you, the money or the type of work?
11. What do you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses?
12. How would you describe yourself?
13. How do you think a friend or instructor who knows you well would describe you?
14. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
15. How has your college experience prepared you for a business career?
16. Why should I hire you?
17. What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in business?
18. How do you determine or evaluate success?

19. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
20. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
21. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
22. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him?
23. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
24. Describe your most rewarding college experience?
25. If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for?
26. Why did you select your college or university?
27. What led you to choose your field of major study?
28. What college subjects did you like the most? Why?
29. What college subjects did you like the least? Why?
30. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
31. What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
32. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
33. Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
34. What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?
35. In what kind of a work environment are you most comfortable?
36. How do you work under pressure? Give examples.
37. In what part-time or summer jobs have you been the most interested?
38. How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
39. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
40. What do you know about our company?

41. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
42. Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
43. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
44. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
45. Will you relocate? Does relocation concern you?
46. Are you willing to travel?
47. Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
48. Why do you think you might like to live in a community in which our company is located?
49. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
50. What have you learned from your mistakes?

NEGATIVE FACTORS EVALUATED BY AN EMPLOYER

During the course of the interview, a prospective employer will be determining your negative qualities as well as your positive ones. Listed below are the negative factors which most frequently lead to rejection of an applicant. Examine yourself to see whether you could possibly be faulted on any of the following:

Poor personal appearance, manners or behaviour.

Limp handshake.

Failure to look interviewer in the eye.

Overly aggressive, conceited attitude or lack of willingness to start at the bottom and learn.

Inability to express thoughts clearly, poor diction or grammar.

Immaturity or lack of tolerance.

Lack of career goals or purpose, giving the impression of shopping around.

Lack of interest and enthusiasm or appearance of laziness.

Lack of confidence and poise or nervousness.

Overemphasis on money, interested in the best dollar offer only.

Evasiveness, hedging questions, making excuses for unfavourable factors in past, lack of honesty.

Lack of tact or courtesy.

Criticism of past employers.

Lack of appreciation of the value of experience.

Lack of preparation for the interview--failure to have information about the company and therefore unable to ask intelligent questions.

Failure to ask questions about the job itself.

Persistent attitude of "What can the company do for me"?

PREPARE QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

The questions you ask during the interview make an important statement about you. They can, in some cases, help you to market yourself by demonstrating to the interviewer your career aspirations, enthusiasm and knowledge of the organization. As well, the information gained by asking well thought-out questions will assist you in making a decision about the desirability of the position.

Your queries should be tailored to both the company and the job. They may relate to job duties, training, supervision, career progression, trends in the company's growth or any other matters of interest to you.

Use your discretion in formulating questions and try to avoid the obvious. Some sample questions follow:

1. Can you tell me more about your training programs?
2. What are the potential career paths for someone starting in this position?
3. How much responsibility will I be given in this job?
4. What special projects might I be involved should I be hired for this position?
5. How does this position fit into the organization's structure?
6. Your annual report indicates that your marketing department is twice the size it was five years ago. Is this trend likely to continue in the next five years?
7. Could you tell me why this position became available?
8. What would you describe as the most notable strengths of your company?
9. What do you anticipate will be the major challenges faced by your organization in the near future?
10. I have read that your company has sponsored various fund-raising initiatives for charitable organizations. I would be interested in knowing more about this aspect of your community involvement.

NOTE: It is a good idea to write your questions on a notepad or index card.