

Job Interviewing Basics



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Overview

Topics we'll cover:

- Improving your chances of getting an interview
- The purpose of the interview
- Preparing for an interview
- Interviewing skills
- Post interview follow up



Getting an Interview

Quite often the most difficult part of the job search process is getting an interview.

What challenges have you encountered with respect to getting job interviews?

Getting an Interview – Tips

- Your overall focus should be on how to help the employer solve a problem – they have a vacancy that they need to fill
- Make sure your approach is more about how you can help them vs. how they can help you

Getting an Interview – Tips

No specific job posting

- Visit in person. Apply for specific roles – avoid the “I can do anything” approach unless it really seems to appeal to them
- Take your time with application forms – neatness and accuracy count
- First impression
- Prepare for an interview on the spot – have an “elevator speech”

Getting an Interview – Tips

Specific job through a job posting

- Read the posting carefully and customize your communication to what they have said they need
- Customize your resume – avoid simply sending the “stock” resume. Focus on what they need
- Do some research on the company and on the role
- Create a job specific cover letter

Getting an Interview – Tips

Cover letters

- Opening paragraph: statement that you are well-qualified for the job. Match your skills/experience to what they want
- Middle paragraph: reference to specific experience and accomplishments in your resume that proves you can do the job
- Ending: talk about who you are (fit with company values) and ask for an interview. Promise to follow up

Getting an Interview – Tips

Impressions:

- You really care about their company, their job
- Proofread everything carefully – typos and spelling mistakes can tip the scales
- Naming of resume files; Use your name in the file name. Avoid “companyname.doc” files
- Your voicemail should be professional in case they call
- Review your social media sites (i.e. facebook) – need to be consistent with impression you want to make

Interview – Purpose

What is the purpose of an interview?

- To get the job
- The most important objective – ensure that the interviewer knows:
 - Your skills, abilities, experiences and your strengths
 - Who you are as a person how your interests/values fit with the role/company

What can happen if you answer questions by saying what you think they want to hear?

Preparing for an Interview

What can you do to prepare for an interview?

- ✓ Minimize surprises
- Research the company
 - Articles, company web-site, annual report
 - Values, mission, # of ee's, sales, etc.
- Research the role
 - Hours of work, dress code

Preparing for an Interview

- ✓ Minimize surprises
- Identify questions you'll likely get asked
 - Strengths, areas requiring improvement
 - Long term goals, why this job/this company
 - Real situations relevant to the skills they are looking for
 - Accomplishments
 - Interests, hobbies, other “passions”
 - Questions you want to ask (have at least one)

Preparing for an Interview

- Practice with someone – video tape if possible
- First impressions
 - Choice of clothes & personal grooming
 - Timing – leave extra time to arrive on-time (figure out how long it takes & add extra)
 - Get the interviewer's name right – make a positive impression with other ee's
- Take a copy of what you sent them
- Other ideas?

Interviewing Skills

- Relax – be yourself
- Focus on talking about yourself in relation to the job – avoid worrying about saying what you think they want to hear
- Be spontaneous – answers to questions you've practiced should not sound rehearsed
- If you get a question you've not anticipated – ok to pause

Interviewing Skills

- Answer the question
- Relate answers to your strengths whenever possible
- Non-verbal interaction is important
 - Eye contact
 - Posture
 - Smiling
 - Other gestures

Interviewing Skills

What do you do if you are asked a question you think they can't ask?

- Decide if you are comfortable providing an answer
- Consider pointing out that you believe that the question may not be ok to ask

Interviewing Skills

Addressing “inappropriate” questions

“I am excited about the prospect of working with you and (company).

Building good relationships has always been a strength of mine and I would feel awful if left today without letting you know that in a workshop I recently attended related to helping me with my job search, we were given a list of questions that employers are not allowed to ask and that question was on the list.

“I’d hate to see you have a problem with someone and not have told you.”

Interviewing Skills

A good interview is one where you were able to outline your skills, experience & strengths and portray yourself accurately to the interviewer.

If you don't get the job – you weren't the right fit or there was someone who was a better fit.

Follow up after the Interview

- Send a thank you to the person for taking the time to see you
- Emphasize key points that connect your skills, experience & strengths to what they are looking for
- Express enthusiasm for the role
- Offer to provide additional information or another meeting if needed

Follow up after the Interview

If you don't get the job:

- Wish them well with the successful candidate
- Thank them for seeing you
- Ask if there is any feedback they can provide
- Don't burn any bridges



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Any other questions, comments?

Thank You