

## **PREPARING FOR THE JOB INTERVIEW**

### **BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**

The time that you spend preparing prior to the interview will be time well spent in your job search process. Below are some tips on what you can do to prepare yourself for an interview.

#### **Interview preparation/Knowledge of employer**

- What are the requirements of the position? How do your qualifications match those requirements?
- Are you knowledgeable about the employer and the industry?
- Make sure you know what is expected from you in the interview.
- Practice answering potential interview questions, but don't have a script of answers.
- Think about how your work experience, classes and activities can relate to the job you are seeking.

#### **Self-Confidence/Verbal Communication Skills**

- Do you have the ability to listen effectively, verbalize your thoughts clearly and express yourself confidently?
- Be prepared to articulate your strengths and skills and what you can bring to the organization.

#### **Goals/Motivation**

- Do you demonstrate an interest in the employer and a desire to work hard and succeed?
- Do you have the ability to identify and work toward specific goals?

#### **Qualifications**

Can you relate your academic program, skills and/or prior work or internship experience to the needs of an employer?

#### **General Personality**

Do you exhibit the traits that are important to the position for which you are applying? Are you able to get along well with others? What would your friends, coworkers, or family members say about your personality?

#### **Work Ethic**

Are you consistent? Do you "show up" each day both physically and mentally? Do you follow through on your commitments? Are you someone who is willing to accept responsibility?

#### **Research the company or organization.**

It is important that you research an employer so you can relate your abilities to the needs of the position. Being informed about a potential employer and considering your "fit" with the organization is not only an important step in your decision-making, it illustrates to an employer that you are interested in the position, company and in making an informed decision. Refer to the section on "Researching an Employer" for more information.

## **Formulate intelligent questions to ask the interviewer.**

Do not hesitate to ask questions about the position or the company. Interviewers expect you to ask questions. In fact, candidates who do not ask questions are often eliminated from consideration. Make sure that your questions indicate that you have done your homework and know a great deal about the position and company. The following are examples of questions you may want to ask during an interview.

- Describe the typical first year assignment?
- Does the job include a formal training period?
- What are the challenging facets of the job?
- What is the future of \_\_\_\_\_ from your perspective?
- Describe the corporate values of (company)?
- What makes your firm different from the competitors?
- Describe the work environment.
- Is it the company's policy to promote from within?
- What characteristics does a successful person have at your company?
- Anticipate your answers to typical questions that an interviewer may ask you

The following are examples of questions that may be asked of you during an interview

- Tell me about yourself?
- What are your short-term and long-term career goals?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How has your college experience prepared you for a career?
- Why should I hire you? Why do you want this position?
- What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- What led you to choose your major field of study?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Describe a major problem you have encountered and how you dealt with it?

## **Dress Appropriately**

The way you dress has an effect on the interviewer's initial impression of you. Follow the guidelines below for dressing for an interview.

### Women

- Suit or tailored dress in solid or subtle color, no extreme slits
- Polished and closed toe shoes, basic dark pumps with medium or low heels.
- Nails subtle if polished, clean and not chipped.
- Make-up should be minimal.
- Clutch or small shoulder bag, choose between an attaché case and handbag (not both).
- Simple and basic jewelry.
- Always wear hosiery and keep color neutral.
- Light cologne, if any.

### Men

- Navy, charcoal gray or pinstripe suit.
- Shined shoes. Tassel loafers, wing tip or lace shoes preferred.
- Clean nails
- Conservative red or navy striped solid tie, simple and neat.
- Solid white shirt
- Avoid flashy cuff links, rings or neck chains
- Over the calf dark socks
- No strong fragrant cologne.

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## **DURING THE INTERVIEW**

Hopefully, you have spent a considerable amount of time preparing for the interview. The next step is the actual interview with the employer. This is the time when it will be clear to the interviewer whether or not you have spent time preparing for the interview. Now, it is time to sell your qualifications to the interviewer. Listed below are some do's and Don'ts in successful interviewing.

### **DO**

Be prompt!

Give the interviewer a firm handshake.

Be enthusiastic, interested and confident.

Be aware of your non-verbal behavior.

Be articulate

Ask relevant questions

Always present the best of your background or qualifications

Listen to the questions carefully and give clear, concise and thoughtful answers.

At the close of the interview, establish a date for your next communication.

Always remember to thank the interviewer for his/her time.

Promptly send a thank-you letter.

## **DO NOT**

- Don't be late for the interview.
  - Don't address the interviewer by his/her first name unless invited to do so
  - Don't talk too much or too little
  - Don't come unprepared
  - Don't criticize yourself
  - Don't speak or act in a nervous manner
  - Don't ask questions that the interviewer has already answered.
  - Don't interrupt when the interviewer is talking.
  - Don't bring up negative information about past jobs, co-workers or former employers
  - Don't be discouraged. If first you don't succeed, KEEP TRYING!
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## **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

It is a good policy to send the interviewer a hand written thank-you note as soon as possible after the interview. Be sure to reiterate your interest in the position and the organization. If you get no response from a thank-you note, or if a date has passed when an employer was to contact you, don't hesitate to phone the organization. Above all, let them know of your continuing interest in them.