

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

✓ **Collect Information**

The types of information needed about the company: -Name, address, telephone number(s) for all contacts -Directions to site, directions to specific meeting area -Date, time -Titles, positions of person(s) interviewing Establish fact sheet or card for each interview, including the above information plus company specific facts and figures.

✓ **Understand Interviewer**

Purpose to determine how you will fit into the organization: relate to supervisors, subordinates, peers; deal with authority; make independent decisions.

✓ **Preparation**

What do you want employers to know about you? Since employers look for people with potential, areas of expertise, position interest, the ability to think on one's feet, the ability to get along with others, and the ability to communicate effectively, you know what you need to relate to. Use SOARS to highlight your personal qualities, and your professional competence. Advance preparation will enable you to be poised, confident, and knowledgeable.

SPECIFICS

- ✓ Learn whatever you can about the organization from research, informational interview, and personal contacts. Refer to the personal marketing plan book for research sources. Compare the position to others you know of in a similar industry. Examine ways you can be a

contributor; enhance your perceived value.

- ✓ Assess your strengths and knowledge as illustrated by your experiences, education, interests, and activities.
- ✓ Determine the fit. Here is where your careful consideration of defensive questions comes in handy. You want varied tasks (smaller company) or specialized tasks (larger company)? You want to find out how the job relates to company products, services, customers or clients, as well as specific job information.
- ✓ Be mentally and physically ready. Look good and feel good. Be enthusiastic. Think success.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

You may face any number of people at any number of interviews in a variety of interview formats.

Type of Interviews:

- ✓ **Sequential:** You pass from one interview to the next, with the first interview serving as an initial screening.
- ✓ **Serial:** Same as the sequential interview with no decision reached until all interviews concluded.
- ✓ **Panel:** Enable several people of varying levels of expertise and responsibility to interview you at one time.
- ✓ **Progressive:** Move from one site to another for interviews with a variety of peers, superiors, subordinates.

QUESTION FORMATS

- ✓ **Patterned: Similar** questions are posed to you with a rating used to evaluate responses. Ratings for candidates compared.
- ✓ **Unstructured:** All questions flow from the interchange between parties. Dialogue is otherwise guided by some basic questions, resume elaboration requests, and from information provided to you.
- ✓ **Problem-solving:** You are provided one or several practical problems related to the position and asked as to how you would go about finding a solution. Specific answers generate additional interviewer questions.

Of course, any combination of formats could be used.

INTERVIEWER TIPS: FROM EMPLOYEES

- ✓ Start off right. Praise the company; find something to say with substance; be sincere; don't try to be in control.
- ✓ Give winning answers. Be able to fully describe skills and accomplishments; verbally expressive, offer clear concise replies that are logical and sequential.
- ✓ Look clean, neat, and appropriate for the position.
- ✓ Create a lasting impression. Be on time, show interest in the company, the kind of work you'll be doing in the new position. Impress as being alert, able to think on feet, strong communication skills.
- ✓ Stay positive, don't get discouraged.

INTERVIEW FORMAT

- ✓ **Opening:** 3-4 minutes. Establish rapport. If possible, make genuine compliments about the company based upon your preparation. Attempt to find out specifically what the interviewer is looking for and spend the rest of the interview demonstrating you have the skills and abilities that are needed.
- ✓ **Body:** Use active listening, be positive, smoke out unspoken concerns. Isolate question (frame), organize your answer. Remember to use this time to highlight your strengths, not to dwell on your experiences.
- ✓ **Close:** Final 3-4 minutes. Restate your value, assets, and willingness to contribute. Ask questions designed to test interviewer interest, concerns. Reach some type of closure regarding the next step.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ✓ **Offensive:** Information base
- ✓ **Defensive:** Employment acceptance (WIIFM)
- ✓ **Qualifying:** Any questions designed to further clarify an interviewer questions. EX: Would you please restate the question? Remember if a question catches you off guard, not listening, or you draw a blank, your request or clarification will enable you to buy time to organize an appropriate answer.
- ✓ **Testing:** Kind of an on-going progress assessment. Is there anything you would like for me to add? Is that what you were looking for? Is there anything I've left out? Another excellent use of testing question is when an uncomfortable silence from the interviewer follows your question response. Don't ramble on as a nervous reaction to silence. Test.

- ✓ **Validating Conclusion:** Ensuring as much as possible that you have represented yourself fully. Is there anything else we should discuss? Are there any concerns you have regarding my candidacy that we have not discussed? Are you satisfied my skills and abilities are as closely matched to your needs as I think they are? Do I need to clarify a particular issue? May I add... Are there any questions you have regarding my candidacy that we have not discussed? “No” Great! I want to make sure that I’ve represented myself as fully as possible and have responded to any concerns you might have.
- ✓ **Close/Closure:** You must elicit some type of commitment as to what, when, how is going to occur. What is the next step? When will I be contacted? When will the decision be made? Where do we go from here?
- ✓ **Rapport Building:** Along with the types of questions above, you want to incorporate verbal and non-verbal language to enhance rapport. Such actions could include partial question phrasing feedback; prefacing responses with, “I’m glad you asked... I figured you’d ask me about... That’s a good question!” indicate you are an interested participant. How do you convey positive nonverbal language? Use small, inclusive gestures, demonstrating warmth and self-control.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ Record person(s) you interviewed with and any key ideas about the job or company that came out during the interview. Since you will generally be involved with more than one interview session before receiving a job offer, compile information from each session. You do not want to come up lacking if asked about something from a previous interview session.
- ✓ Check interest record information: Organization information
Interviewer(s) name(s), title(s) Position information: job description?

Salary, benefits information, next steps...

- ✓ Analyze the interview so you can use it as a growth experience for subsequent interviews. The interview analysis could include a listing of questions asked, responses given, things I should have added, things I should not have said, things I needed to ask, clarifications needed, success with 6 Cs (closing procedure), etc. Each interview consists of different circumstances, so don't think you can develop a standard operating procedure; if you do, you will be highly unsuccessful.
- ✓ Maintain contact by phone, letter. A brief, concise, positive letter of thanks should be sent after each job interview. Should correspondence be sent after each job interview session with each prospective employer? This would be strictly dependent upon the circumstances and content of the session. You would be safer to respond after each session than not to respond. Response contents could include a statement of your continued interest in the position, an interview highlight, a strengthening of an area of concern either addressed or implied during the interview, or any personal assessment of position potential.

Interview Quick Tips and Facts

- ✓ Personality and intelligence, in most cases, can compensate for a lack of specific job experience.
- ✓ In general, demonstrating aggressiveness and assertiveness in the job interview will enhance your chances of being hired.
- ✓ Most interviewers will take notice of whether or not you look them in the eye.

- ✓ Having been fired from your previous job will not necessarily prevent you from being hired, everything else being equal.
- ✓ Basic enthusiasm is one of the most important qualifications for most jobs.
- ✓ Showing up late for an interview will hurt your chances of being hired.
- ✓ Virtually all unsolicited letters written to top executives get read and most draw some response.

Why People Are Not Hired

People are NOT hired for a variety of reasons. People are usually hired because the employer likes and relates to one applicant better than the others who were interviewed for the job. The reasons people are not hired are listed below, in the order of importance, as indicated by the numerous employers who were questioned about their reasons for not hiring applicants.

Avoid the following NEGATIVES, especially when interviewing:

- ✓ Poor personal appearance, poorly groomed, clothes disheveled.
- ✓ Overbearing, overaggressive.
- ✓ Inability to express information clearly, poor voice, poor grammar.
- ✓ Lack of planning and focus for career: no purpose, no goals.
- ✓ Lack of interest and enthusiasm, a passive, indifferent attitude.
- ✓ Lack of confidence and poise: nervousness, ill at ease.

- ✓ Over-emphasis on money and benefits: only interested in the best dollar offer and the most fringe benefits.
- ✓ Unwilling to start at the bottom or lower position: expects too much, too soon from the company.
- ✓ Makes excuses, hedges on unfavorable factors in resume/application.
- ✓ Lack to tact and courtesy: ill mannered, rude.
- ✓ Lack of maturity and flexibility.
- ✓ Condemnation of past employers.
- ✓ No indication of interest in the company or the job.
- ✓ Fails to look interviewer in the eye, fishy, limp handshake.
- ✓ Sloppy application form.
- ✓ Little sense of humor, cynical attitude.
- ✓ Late to interview, does not even offer a valid reason.
- ✓ Failed to express appreciation for the interviewer's time.
- ✓ Asks no questions about the company or the job.
- ✓ Indefinite responses to questions posed by the interviewer.