



Candidate Interview Preparation

10 Points, in Brief, of a Successful Interview

1. Be prepared, be professional, and be sharp.
2. Dress for success and show up on time.
3. Be confident and warm.
4. Connect with the interviewer & develop rapport.
5. Know your resume.
6. Actively listen and take a few notes.
7. Ask ONLY a few GREAT questions.
8. Express great interest and ask for the next steps.
9. Call your Recruiter immediately with details.
10. Send a brief thank-you email, and be careful with spelling and grammar.

Telephone Interview Tips: Important Points of a Successful, Professional Telephone Interview

Do NOT conduct a telephone interview...

- ...on a cell phone.
- ...while driving or riding in a vehicle or walking.
- ...in a public place.
- ...with noise or music in the background.
- ...in your office, unless you can speak freely.

General Interviewing Tips

There are three main reasons why qualified candidates do not get hired:

1. Lack of enthusiasm and professionalism prior to, during, and following the interview.
2. Poor interview preparation.
3. Presentation by the candidate to the client why he or she left previous jobs.

Use this interview preparation to guide and assist you in preparing for the next step in your search for the ideal job and employer. Print this document for your study.

Despite the different tactics used, all employers are searching for the same answers in interviews. They seek to confirm that an applicant has the required knowledge, skill, attitude, and personality to contribute and fit into the company culture.

This interview guide will help you to help the employer realize that they have found a gem in this applicant.

The primary purpose of the first interview is to establish the conditions and chemistry for the next steps in the interview process. Below are specific points to help you, as a candidate, to achieve this goal.

1. Professionally prepare for the interview.
2. Find ways to connect with the interviewer.

3. Concentrate on the employer's needs, not yours.
4. List those needs during the interview and emphasize how you can help the company achieve its goals.
5. Describe your past responsibilities and achievements.
6. Explain how the skills you bring will benefit the company.
7. Be prepared with answers to the traditional interview questions.
8. When asked questions be specific in your answers and aim for clarity and honesty. Use real examples in your career.
9. Don't downplay your accomplishments or attribute them to luck.
10. Ask for clarification if you are not sure what information they are seeking.
11. Take responsibility on communicating your strengths. Don't rely on the interviewer to pull it out of you.
12. Use staffing industry terms and concrete examples to portray your successes, such as increase billable hours per week, improvement in gross margin, increase number of clients.
13. Once you have determined what you think the employer will be looking for, write out examples of situations that showed your skills in those areas.
14. Before leaving the interview express your strong interest in the position and ask how he/she feels about your qualifications for the position.
15. Be sure to schedule the next step appointment if appropriate before leaving.

Preparing for the Interview

Preparation is essential to remaining calm under pressure and is the first step toward a successful interview.

Prepare to do your best! A candidate should always do his/her best because the interview is the important step to land the job, and importantly, helps put the all-important power of decision in the candidate's hands.

Give yourself plenty of time to get there. Have the telephone number of the office where the interview will take place in case of emergency.

Know the exact place and time of the meeting, the interviewer's full name (including correct pronunciation) and his/her title.

Prepare to look your professional best. Wear your best business attire. Organize the night before. Your interview clothing, briefcase and portfolio should all be prepared. Get a good night's rest.

Re-read your resume before the interview. Arrive poised and confident. Take extra copies of your resume. Prepare to greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and an enthusiastic smile.

Visualize how the interview will go, your responses to important questions, be professional, relaxed, use a bit of humor and be personable. Prior to the interview think through the process to do this.

Think of the interview as a sales presentation to get acquainted with the client. Trust must be established. Find ways to connect.

Be confident, because you know you have a good product! Think about the differentiating value you bring to the position.

Interview Do's

Be friendly and respectful to everyone—receptionists are often vocal about their opinions. Deliver a firm handshake. Make eye contact throughout the interview. Dress conservatively. Be specific in your answers—avoid rambling or getting off on a tangent. Actively listen during the interview. Use active

listening techniques and take brief notes. Send thank you notes to everyone with whom you have interviewed.

Interview Don'ts

Comment on sensitive subjects. Cross your arms in front of you. Use negative body language. Wear excessive or flashy jewelry. Chew gum. Talk too much. Smell of smoke or body odor.

Behavior Interviewing

Behavioral interviewing is based on using past behavior as a strong prediction of future behavior. Many professional interviewers use the behavior interviewing technique, thus it is important to prepare for this style of questioning and understand why certain questions are being asked and how to answer the behavior-base questions.

In behavioral-style interviewing the interviewer asks specific questions seeking information about candidate's skills, character, and performance based on examples of past behavior. By using these answers, the interviewer can rate the candidate based on past actions, not "gut feelings" or "intuition". The key in behavioral interviewing is to "paint a picture" of the reasons and thinking about the decision or behavior without bringing in unessential details.

Examples of Behavioral Interviewing Questions

1. Describe a time when you have improved procedures in your company. Be specific.
2. Tell me about a high stress situation when you needed to keep a positive attitude. What happened?
3. Give me examples of how you turned an unprofitable branch and/or area into a profitable one.

Responding to Some of the Most Frequently Asked Questions

It is worth your time to review these questions now and consider how you would respond.

1. What are your long-range and short-range career goals?
2. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
3. What would you like to accomplish in your career?
4. What do you enjoy most about your career?
5. What do you like least about your career?
6. What do you expect to be earning in five years?
7. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
8. What do you consider to be your weaknesses?
9. How would a friend who knows you well, describe you?
10. How would your last manager describe you as an employee?
11. How would your co-workers describe you?
12. How would your subordinates describe you?
13. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
14. Why do you think you would be an asset to our company?
15. Why do you want to work for this company?
16. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
17. Why are you seeking a change from your current position?
18. How do you measure success for yourself?
19. How well do you work under pressure?
20. How do you manage your stress?
21. What do you consider to be your greatest achievements?
22. What would the ideal job be for you?
23. What three things are most important to you in your job?

24. What major work problems have you encountered in your career and how did you deal with it?
25. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?

Asking the Questions You Need Answered

Have 5 to 10 well thought out questions that would help further your understanding of the company. Asking good questions is important to gather information, show interest and portray how well you ask questions, however questions should not overbear. Too many questions can be disruptive to the interview. Unimportant, trivial or unclear questions may not portray your true depth and expertise as a candidate.

A successful interview is critical to landing the position you want. If you have questions that are not answered, know that all your questions will be answered at a later date. During your interview some of your questions may be answered in general discussion, thus listen intently during the interview to ensure you do not ask questions that have already been answered.

Following are a number of questions for you to consider asking at an interview in order to determine your continuing interest in the company and the extent to which the position might fulfill your needs. For each interview you go on, you may want to add questions to this list based on the particular job, the company, or the interviewer. Your in-depth research will also guide you in developing new questions.

Following are several questions to consider.

1. Why is this position available?
2. Why did the person who held this position most recently leave?
3. What do you think are the most important overall goals for this position?
4. What are the priority objectives in this position for the next six months?
5. How will success be measured?
6. What kind of support does this position (or department) receive from top management?
7. What do you find to be special and unique about your company?
8. What are some of the challenges this position will face in the future?
9. What growth opportunities and possibilities will there be in the future?
10. What important changes do you predict for the company in the near future?
11. As a manager (supervisor), what characteristics are most important in your successful employees?
12. How would you describe yourself as a manager?
13. What are some of the challenges this company will face in the next year or two?
14. How do you feel about my skills and experience in relation to your job requirement?
15. What is the next step in the interview process?
16. Can we set up the next appointment today?

Research the Company

You may choose to research certain things in preparation for the interview. Following are example of points that may be of interest to you.

Size of the company, both number of employees and revenue/sales volume. Public or privately held. History, including how long they have been in business, sister and/or parent company names. Major competitors. Staffing industry trends in general, and in their particular niche. Job descriptions; understand the skills and experience required for the position. Understand the organizational chart of the company. Understand the current status of branch and/or area. Personal history of interviewers.

Sources of Information: Company's Web Site. Company's Brochure/Literature and Annual Report. Business Library. Periodical Files. Dunn and Bradstreet Report. American Staffing Association web site www.staffingtoday.net.

Closing

Closing is important. If you want the position, let the person know your interest and ask for the job. Let the person know why you think this is the right position for you and how you can help the company and the manager achieve their goals. An excellent way to close is to connect with interviewer throughout the interview...let your warmth, personality and humor show and focus on the company's and manager's needs. Ask about next steps and try to schedule the next appointment, if appropriate.

Professional Follow Up

Send the interviewer, or each interviewer, an email as soon as possible after the interview. Express your appreciation and interest in the position. When working with a recruiter, call immediately to debrief. Provide details about the interview, the types of questions asked, give both positives and concerns, and outline what the interviewer told you about the next step in the process.