



### **Interview Preparation**

- Know yourself:
  - Can you honestly visualize yourself resigning from your current position?
  - What are your strengths?
  - What are your weaknesses?
  - What are your short and long term goals?
  - Evaluate yourself in terms of the position you seek. Why do you think you're the best fit for this position?
  - Formulate responses by asking the question: "Why should they hire me?"
  - Remember that you're there to sell yourself and secure a job offer.
  
- Research the company:
  - The Internet offers a wealth of company information and industry statistics. Utilize it to review annual reports, trade magazines and newspaper-per articles.
  - Know the company's products and services.
  - Be prepared to tell the interviewer why their company is attractive to you!
  
- Items to bring to the interview:
  - Clean copy of your resume
  - Samples of your work, if appropriate
  - Bring a notepad or port-folio to the interview to jot down notes.
  - Be prepared to provide references when re-quested, ideally with three former supervisors who are familiar with your work. Include their name, company name, relationship, as well as home and work phone numbers. Always consult with references for their approval prior to submitting their names.

## **The Interview**

- Arrival at the interview
  - Arrive approximately 10-15 minutes before your interview
  - Make sure you know exactly where the interview is to take place. Take a trial run if you think you may run into traffic or other delays.
  - Review your notes and go in with confidence
  - If asked to complete an application, make sure you complete it fully; do not leave anything blank. (Do not write 'see resume' as a response to any application question. Respond to 'expected salary' questions as 'negotiable'. If asked about your current salary, answer truthfully. List references if requested. Your recruiters name should be your response to any 'referred by' questions.
  - Be exacting in your responses.
- Appearance:
  - Overall appearance should be neat, clean and professional.
  - A conservative suit is appropriate for most positions. Example: A navy blue or dark grey suit, nothing loud or bright. Be sure your clothing is clean and pressed.
  - Shirts should be white for men, tailored and color coordinated for women.
  - A current tie with a subtle design is suitable for a first interview. Avoid loud colors and busy designs.
  - Shoes should be well polished, including the heels. Black is always a good choice for men, socks should always be worn over the calf. Ladies should avoid open toed shoes or sling backs. A closed toe pump that is color coordinated with your outfit is appropriate.
  - Jewelry should be kept minimal. Do not wear jewelry or pins that indicate membership in religious or service organizations.
  - Fingernails should be clean, simply manicured and avoid bright colored nail polish.
  - Hair should be neat, clean and brushed. Ladies should avoid exotic hairstyles and excessive makeup.
  - Avoid strong smelling colognes and perfumes.
  - Always turn off cell phones, or even better, leave them in your car.

## **The Interview Itself**

- Conduct yourself with confidence and determination to get the job done. You have other options, of course, and your interviewer knows this, but wants to think that you want a job with this company. Don't play coy. Sell yourself. This is your first meeting and the position, as well as future promotions, may depend on your presentation. Are you going to sell them on the idea of hiring you, or will they sell you on the idea that this job is not for you? "You must present a positive attitude to the prospective employer. Do not behave as though you are disinterested or appear to be job shopping.
- Remember to shake hands firmly and maintain good eye contact with the interviewer. Maintain a high energy level; sit up with your back straight; no

coffee and do not smoke before the interview. It is to your advantage if a subject of mutual interest arises, but do not fabricate knowledge. Be yourself. Poise, confidence and self-respect are of great importance.

- Human Resources will usually provide company information and available benefits. Thorough review and questions concerning benefits should be addresses after the interview during follow up conversations. Remember, the interviews are trying to see how you can contribute to the company.
- Ask questions of the interviewers. This shows your interest in the company and position, and enables you to gather the right information to make an intelligent decision afterwards. The questions you have prepared can be asked of the different people you see.
- Remember, the objective of the interview is to obtain an offer. During the interview, you must gather enough information concerning the positions to make a decision.
- Alliance Search Solutions has provided another document that details questions to ask and how to answer those 'hard interview questions'. Please refer back to the Job Seeker Resource Page for those details.

### **Interview Conclusion**

- If you are sincerely interested in the position, make a positive statement about the position and your level of interest before you leave the room.
- Ask the interviewer if he/she feels that you are qualified for the positions. Ask if there is anything in your background that you have discussed so far that would prevent you from attaining the position. This will give you the opportunity to review points that may need clarification.
- If this opportunity meets your expectations, make sure you emphasize that this is the type of opportunity you have been looking for and that you would like to be considered for the position.
- Illustrate confidence in your abilities and convince the interview that you are capable of handling the position successfully.

### **Thank you**

- It is always a good idea to send a short note of appreciation to thank the employer or interviewer for their time. Feel free to write a hand written note and drop it off with their receptionist. If not feasible, you can always send it through the mail. Be sure to get their business card so you have the correct name, spelling and mailing address.
- Reiterate your interest in the position as well as your ability to do the job. State the reasons you are interested.