

THE INTERVIEW

Step One - Know Your Target

Companies like candidates who know what they want. They are also impressed with someone who has done some digging before arriving at the interview. Make the effort to research your target organization, and you'll find yourself ahead of the competition. Given two equal candidates, the one who shows the most interest usually wins.

You can find out about larger organizations by using Web search engines, or, even better, by going to your target organization's Web site (search engines can help you find it). There are other Web-based resources, too. If your company is smaller or local, visit the library and ask the research librarian for help.

As you do this research, make note of the organizer's purpose, products or services, chief executive's name, and any recent news or company developments. Take notes with you to the interview, and use them ahead of time to develop questions of your own. The extra effort is sure to show...and it could win you the job.

All employers are looking for the ideal candidate for the job. Employers have a set of criteria in mind for the ideal candidate. During the interview process, the employer is evaluating the skills, abilities and personal qualities of the person being interviewed.

As you respond to interview questions, remember to present your desire to do the job, your ability to do the job, your willingness to do the job, and a realistic assessment of your value to the company. If you keep these four factors in mind, you will answer questions effectively and present yourself well, and increase your chances of being hired.

Points to remember:

- ◆ An interview is an opportunity for two people to meet and determine whether an employer-employee relationship will prove beneficial to both parties.
- ◆ Dress properly, be on time, listen intently, demonstrate your potential and enthusiasm, and provide brief, well thought-out responses to the questions.
- ◆ Concentrate on giving examples of your accomplishments.
- ◆ Leave any personal concerns at home. Showing confidence in yourself will create a favorable impression.
- ◆ Relax and enjoy your interview.

Your Interview Checklist:

- ◆ Know the time and place. Arrive early. Allow for traffic or uncontrollable events. Try a test drive prior to the interview. Call if you are going to be late or need to reschedule.
- ◆ Make a good first impression.
- ◆ Bring pen and pad to take notes.
- ◆ Fill out the application **completely**.
- ◆ Remember the interviewer's name.
- ◆ Shake hands firmly. Use the interviewer's name and establish eye contact.
- ◆ Appear relaxed and at ease. Remain enthusiastic.
- ◆ Be completely honest and sincere. Always be positive and never talk negatively about a previous employer or company.
- ◆ Provide a list of employment references including the name, title/company, address, telephone number, fax, e-mail and relationship to you.
- ◆ Leave the interview on a positive note. "Thank you for the interview. I really enjoyed our conversation. I look forward to hearing from you."
- ◆ **Promptly** send a thank you note to show your appreciation for the interview. Take this opportunity to express your continued interest in the position or to withdraw your name from consideration.
- ◆ Follow-up with a phone call.

Whatever the interview is for, make the most of it by following these steps:

- ◆ **Know what you are interviewing for** - Do the research.
- ◆ **Know yourself** - Sell your skills and yourself as a person.
- ◆ **Practice** - Rehearse. Have someone ask you questions, even the hard ones. Be aware of your body language, too.
- ◆ **Dress the part** - The way you should dress is the way you would dress for the job.
- ◆ **Arrive early** - Leave plenty of time and get there early. It gives you a psychological edge.
- ◆ **Make a good first impression** - Look interviewer in the eye. Shake hands firmly. Smile, say, "Hello, it's great to meet you."
- ◆ **Answer well** - Do not ramble. If you don't know an answer, be honest, but be curious. If you need time to gather your thoughts, take your time.
- ◆ **Ask questions** - Prepare some questions BEFORE the interview.
- ◆ **Follow up**-Write a "thank you" note. If you would like to add something you forgot do it now. Believe in your ability to learn and grow.
- ◆ **Be yourself** - sense of humor and all - and you will be well on your way to getting hired!