

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

This checklist has been designed specifically to help you have the most successful interview possible. It represents years of combined experience of placement professionals and should be looked upon as a list of MUST DO'S..... – not merely suggestions to leverage your career opportunities. Go to the company's website and familiarize yourself with their products/services- look for news items and make some notes on what you see. This will be the basis for formulating questions when you interview.

Some of my favorite sites for research, in addition to the company's website:

www.yahoo.com Yahoo Finance

www.freeedgar.com

www.hoovers.com

MINDSET: *The very first area you must examine before an interview is your mindset.*

****ALWAYS INTERVIEW WITH THE INTENT OF GETTING AN OFFER**

You are selling yourself - your personality, appearance, work habits, skills, and experience. An interviewer will not automatically know your worth. He/she will form impressions based upon your presentation. By actively selling yourself, you can control the interviewer's perception of your value.

Wouldn't it be nice to **CHOOSE** whether or not you want the career opportunity?

You won't get the chance if they don't extend the offer.

Always interview with the intent of getting an offer!

Interviewing is a six-step process

- Asking questions about the position
- Making a presentation of your background relative to your questions
- Answering tough interview questions
- Qualifying
- Closing
- Sending a hand written follow-up letter /note and an electronic thank you.

PREPARATION:

Schedule a to-do-list for your interview. Make sure to allow enough time to complete pre-interview tasks

Copies Have 2 copies of your resume, references and other support documents.

Note Pad/Folder to take notes during the interview or to carry your resume, references, and questions for the interviewer

Homework - I have...

Analyzed my resume and references for strengths for the position. Look for such things as:
Career progression - each job further enhanced your skills
What you "Bring to the Table" for this position Technically/Leadership/Accomplishments/
Problem Solving

Quantified/qualified all of my answers and claims.
I have managed "x" amount of people and responsible for "xyz" projects which resulted in....

DONT DISCUSS:

Pre-Interview – Don't discuss your impending interview with your co-workers. Why? Word can get out and your current position could be jeopardized. Also, give yourself the opportunity to assess the new company without being swayed by others' opinions.

During the interview DON'T...

Don't ask salary/Benefit questions... you will be given this information if offered the position
Don't speak negatively about current/previous employers
Don't talk too much – don't talk about personal matters
Don't state specific desired salary - we will handle your salary negotiations. Keep in mind; your stated amount will probably be too high (knocks you out of consideration) or too low (you don't get fair value). If asked, merely reply, "I'm sure you'll make me a fair offer." Or I'm very interested, however there are other factors in this decision other than dollar and cents –
I'm open to your best offer.
Don't make demands such as special schedules, hours, etc.

Don't Cancel:

It is imperative to your professional image and career advancement potential that you **SHOW UP PREPARED AND ON TIME** for your interview. Even if something comes up at the last minute and sounds like a reasonable excuse, a prospective employer could partially or totally discount you for a last minute cancellation. **If you absolutely must reschedule, do the following things:**

TARDINESS is also unacceptable. Give yourself plenty of time - 30 to 45 extra minutes to reach your destination. Double-check the location and directions.

Formulated positive reasons for leaving other positions.

I left for a better opportunity – XYZ Company offered me the chance to gain broader experience in the manufacturing area.
I was offered a supervisory position at XYZ Company.

Come Prepared with 6 open ended question/Asking Quality Questions

Always come prepared with at least six open-ended questions. For example:

- My recruiter (***name the recruiter***) has walked me through the job description and the opportunity, can you tell me a little more about the culture of the organization?
- Oh, by the way, what is your background?
- How long have you been with the company?

- Why is this position open?
- What would you add to or subtract from the last person that held this job?
- What is your greatest challenge right now?
- Now that we have talked about my qualifications, do you have any concerns about me fulfilling the responsibilities of this position?
- As my direct report in this position, what are the three top priorities you would first like to see accomplished?
- What skills and experience do they feel are most important in this position?
- What are the key elements and strengths you are looking for in a successful candidate for the COMPANY NAME? (*this is one of the most important question you can ask*)

Formulate positive answers for employment gaps.

I relocated

I did temporary work as an accountant while seeking a full time, permanent position

I had a child and was able to stay at home for several months

Define 2-3 Positive weaknesses

I am somewhat of a perfectionist

I sometime lose track of time. I get involved in a project and want to see it through to completion

Interview schedule.

Make sure that you have no appointments or job related activities that will impede keeping the appointment. Write down basic interview information- position, location, company, contact, counselor's phone number. Immediately make arrangements for needed time off. Make travel arrangements if necessary (plane reservations, hotel, car rental). Complete your interview "To Do" list/schedule

DOUBLE CHECK DIRECTIONS TO THE INTERVIEW - YOU DON'T WANT TO GET LOST OR BE LATE!

Arrive 10-15 minutes early for your interview

After the interview, send a hand written thank you note as well as electronic email.

INTERVIEW TIPS

Know why you're interested in the job.

Assess your strengths and weaknesses.

Assess your major accomplishments.

Be prepared to discuss your job responsibilities.

Evaluate your skills and experience as they relate to the position requirements.

Prepare your questions about the position.

Research the company – know what you are walking into. Do you wish to work there?

Make sure you are ready to make a professional presentation - both in appearance and verbiage.

Write a good resume that accurately reflects your education and work experience.

It should be neat and should not have typing and spelling mistakes.

Compose a thank-you letter that you can send immediately after your interviews.

Thank the interviewer for the opportunity to interview and ask for the job.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Make sure you understand the questions.

Respond concisely – don't ramble.

Avoid "yes" or "no" answers.

Do not bring up salary or benefits unless the interviewer brings them up. Know what an appropriate salary range should be.

As you answer questions, avoid use of negative terms.

Take advantage of the opportunity to sell yourself.

Answer questions with specific examples - avoid generalities.

Evaluate the position for which you are interviewing. If the company is hiring for a light level position, don't market management level intentions.

If you want the job, ask for it!

Final Questions

- Where do I stand relative to the rest of the (the candidates) you have seen? (this question is a must).
- What is the next step in the process?
- When are you going to make a final hiring decision?

Reservations and Stalls

Be prepared to handle some tough reservations (things that are correct about your background). All interviewers put reservations in front of candidates either consciously or subconsciously to see how they answer tough questions under pressure. Minimize the reservations and start talking about other things that you will bring to the table. For example: "My ideal candidate would have five years of.... and you don't. Why should I hire you?"

- Although I am short on experience, I am long on enthusiasm. I am the kind of individual that will put 250% of my time and effort into learning your products and 250% of my time and effort into selling your products. This is what sets me apart from the rest of the candidates you will be seeing. That's why you should hire me.

Qualify

Remember to qualify; this leads to a natural close. Qualifying also demonstrates your sales/marketing and communications skills. In addition, it allows the interviewer to get out any reservations they might have with regard to your candidacy. It also allows you the opportunity to overcome any reservations with regard to your background. First, tell them that you like the opportunity then qualify the opportunity by putting yourself in the third person, using your first and last name. Interviewers always have less trouble talking about candidates in third person. Never say, "what do you think of me?" For example:

- I am very impressed with everything I have seen here today. What's your impression of Joe Brown (your full name)?
- If you had 48 hours to make a decision and it was solely your decision, would you hire me?

Close for the Job

Always remember to close and ask for the job. If you don't ask for the job, you most likely won't get it. First, tell them that you like the opportunity, then close for the position. For example:

- Let me reiterate my strong interest in the position we have been discussing. I am very impressed with everything I have seen here today and I want to work here and add my value to this team. What's the next step?
- Having recently evaluated several other opportunities, this ranks as my #1 choice. I want to work here and be a part of the future growth, What's the next step?

In summary, to maximize your chances of landing the best job, be ENTHUSIASTIC (this is

absolutely the most important aspect of an interview), ask good questions, answer questions completely, and finally, ask for the job.