

THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

This is actually a 3-part process:

1. **Before the Interview**
2. **The Interview**
3. **After the Interview**

1. Before the Interview

- **Prepare yourself** by thinking about questions that you may be asked. It may help to write down your answers. Telling stories with concrete examples is a good way to answer questions.
- **Know what employers seek in a candidate and what you have to offer.** Communication skills, experience, leadership, academic credentials etc.
- **Research the company.** The interviewer will expect you to know about the company. Know their products, services and competitors. Their web site is a good place to learn about the company.
- **Prepare questions** that are based on your research, which you will ask the interviewer.
- **Plan what you will wear.** It is best to be overdressed. Men: a conservative suit and tie is best. Women: wearing a business suit is appropriate. You can always ask before the interview what the appropriate dress is.
- **Prepare extra copies of your resume and references** and put them in a nice folder that you will bring to the interview. This is also a good place to carry the questions that you will ask.
- **Be sure that you know where you are going.** Do a trial run to be sure how long it will take you to get to the interview. Arriving late for an interview is disastrous. Arriving 15 minutes early allows you to go to the restroom to check your appearance.
- **Know who is doing the interview.** Is it a human resources person or the actual person that you will be responsible to?
- **Turn your cell phone off before you go into the interview.**

2. The Interview

- The interview actually begins as soon as you arrive at the company. Office staff observes and may be asked about your behavior.
- Your handshake is important. Use a firm grip and look the interviewer confidently in the eye. Smile too!
- Do not sit until you are invited to do so.
- The beginning of the interview is usually small talk. A good interviewer will seek to put you at ease.
- The middle part of the interview is where you **sell yourself**. The interviewer wants to know if you are a fit for the company. The interviewer will ask you a variety of questions about your education and experience.
- Focus on what you can do for the company, not what the company can do for you.
- Answer questions concisely, use examples or brief stories.
- Do not talk negatively about a current or past employer.

- **Ask questions too.** Interviews are a dialog not a monolog. Be careful that you do not seek to control the interview.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, do not babble on hoping that you will eventually say something intelligent. You can ask the interviewer to rephrase or repeat the question or you can simply say that you don't have an answer and would like more time to think about your answer.
- Be aware that the interviewer may ask an unusual question or their "favorite" question.
- Let them bring up salary, but do your research before the interview.
- The interview may end with the interviewer asking you if you have any more questions or anything else you want to say. This is your chance to express your interest in the position and to reiterate why/how you want or fit the position. You need to let them know what you can do for the company.
- You may be asked to take a test or assessment: drugs, personality, skills
- They may do a background or credit check.
- If the interviewer does not give you a time frame for when the company will make a decision about hiring someone for the position this is the time that you should ask something like, "I'm very interested in this position. When can I expect to hear from you?" Do not leave this up in the air.
- You may be asked back for additional interviews.
- Do not leave the interview without getting the business card of the person(s) that interviewed you.

3. After the Interview

- Reflect on how you did and make notes about what you did well or would do differently in your next interview.
- Send a thank-you note within 48 hours. Hand written notes are more personal, but you can type it or e-mail it too.
- Complete any follow-up instructions the interviewer may have given you.