

# THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

This is a 3-part process:

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

## 1. Before the Interview

- **Know what the employer seeks in a candidate and what you have to offer.** The job description tells you what they are seeking. Education, hard and soft skills, experience, leadership.
- **Prepare yourself by thinking about questions that you may be asked.** It will help you to write down your answers and practice saying them. Telling **STAR** stories based on your experience is the best way to answer behavioral interview questions.
- **Research the company.** The interviewer will expect you to know about them. Know their products, services, and competitors. Their web site is the best place to learn about the company.
- **Prepare questions** that are based on your research, which you will ask the interviewer. Interviewers expect that you will have questions.
- **Plan what you will wear.** It is best to be overdressed vs underdressed. You can always ask before the interview what the appropriate dress is.
- **Phone interviews:** These are done by HR. They want to know if you fit, to pass you on for the next interview. Prepare for this just as if it were a face-to-face interview.
- **Online Interviewing:** Will it be with a live person, or AI? What technology or tool are they using for a remote interview? Do you have it downloaded in advance so that you are ready?
- **For face-to-face interviews be sure that you know where you are going.** Do a trial run. 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 reporting to?
- **Bring 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 write down the questions that you will ask.
- Turn your cell phone off before you go into the interview.

## 2. The Interview

- The face-to-face interview begins as soon as you arrive at the company.
- Office staff observe you 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! Continue to make good eye contact during the interview.
- Don't sit until you are invited to do so.

- The beginning of the interview is generally small talk. A good interviewer will seek to put you at ease.
- Show enthusiasm for the job and company. Lean forward or sit near the edge of the chair as you answer questions. The recruiter needs to know that you are interested and engaged in the interview.
- **Common interview questions that you need to be prepared to answer:**
- **Tell me about yourself.** You should focus on delivering a concise **elevator pitch** that highlights your strengths, education, experience and enthusiasm that fit the position. You should tailor your response to the job you're interviewing for, emphasizing the skills and experience most relevant to the position. They are not asking for a biography.
- **Why do you want to work here?** Research the company. What is their mission? What are their values? Tell them how you share the values and mission, and how you can help them accomplish them.
- **Why should I hire you?** They may not ask this directly, but it is an underlying question that you need to answer. The interviewer wants to know if you are a **fit** for the company. The interviewer will ask you a variety of questions about your skills (hard and soft), your education and experience.
- **What are your strengths and weaknesses?** You should mention strengths and skills that are relevant to the position. Give examples to demonstrate the strength. The job description has them. Weaknesses? Don't describe one that is important for the job. Tell about a weakness that you've discovered, and what you are doing to overcome it. Again, give an example. - Do a google search for examples.
- Answer questions concisely, use examples or **STAR** stories.
- Do not talk negatively about a current or past employer.
- **Ask questions too.** Interviews are a dialog not a monolog. Ask the questions that you prepared.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, don't 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.
- Let them bring up the salary but do your research before the interview so that you know what the pay range for the position is.
- 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 decide 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 2 days. Handwritten notes are more personal, but you can type them or e-mail them too.
- Complete any follow-up instructions that the interviewer gave to you.