

## Interview Guide

### **Purpose of an Interview**

The interview provides you and the employer an opportunity to determine how well you will fit in with the culture, direction, and requirements of the organization.

### **Types of Interviews**

1. Screening Interviews
  - On-Campus Interviews
  - Preliminary Interviews
  - Telephone Interviews
  
1. Hiring Interviews
  - Panel/Board Interview
  - Series/Sequential Interviews
  - Behavioral Interview
  - Structured Interview
  - Unstructured Interview
  -

### **TIPS for PHONE INTERVIEWS**

- Treat interview seriously
- Use a high-quality phone (NOT cell phone)
- Be in a quiet place
- Make a list of important points to highlight
- Have your resume handy

### **Interview Tips**

#### ■ **BEFORE**

- Research the company/organization
- Identify your strengths and accomplishments
- Prepare your answers to interview questions and prepare questions to ask of your interviewer
- Dress for success
- Conduct a mock interview

#### ■ **DURING**

- Arrive early
- Turn OFF cell phones
- Be aware of verbal and nonverbal communication styles

#### ■ **AFTER**

- Write Thank You Letters
- Negotiate Salary

## **Before the Interview:**

### **Research**

- How does the industry work?
- What are the skills and personal qualities that successful professionals in the industry share?
- What are the significant trends in the industry?

### **Where do I find company/organization information?**

- INTERNET
- Trade Journals
- Professional Associations
- Daily News
- Friends, Associates, previous employers, etc.

### **Prepare Answers**

- Prepare an answer to demonstrate that you will be a valuable addition to the organization
- Write out your answers and practice stating them out loud

### **Identify your strengths and accomplishments**

- Follow each skills or accomplishment with a concrete example
- Use the statement, “that reminds me of a time...” when there is information that you want to share
- Describe relevant experience and coursework that relates to the position

### **Traditional Interview Questions**

- Tell me about yourself (in two minutes)
- Why do you feel that you will be successful?
- Why did you decide to interview with our organization?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Tell me about your scholastic record.
- What courses did you like best? Least? Why?
- Tell me about your extra-curricular activities and interests.
- What has been your most satisfying and most disappointing school or work experience?
- What supervisory or leadership roles have you held?
- Why should we hire you?
- Why did you choose to become a...?
- How would your last supervisor describe you?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?
- How do you work under pressure?
- Why do you want to leave your current job?
- Describe two achievements which have given you the most satisfaction.
- In what ways would you contribute to our organization?

### **Behavioral Interview Questions: Tell me about a time when you...**

- Worked effectively under pressure.
- Handled a difficult situation with a co-worker.
- Were creative in solving a problem.
- Were unable to complete a project on time.
- Persuaded team members to do things in your way
- Wrote a paper that was received.
- Anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
- Had to make an important decision with limited facts.
- Were forced to make an unpopular decision.
- Had to adapt to a difficult situation.
- Were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.
- Were disappointed in your own behavior.
- Had to deal with an irate customer.
- Delegated a project effectively.

### **Hints for “Tough Questions”**

- “Tell me about yourself”
  - Common opener
  - Very broad
  - Your opportunity to sell yourself
  - Develop a brief summation of your background leading into your interest and desire in the position and why you are qualified
- “What are your long term goals?”
  - Popular question because it provides a lot of information about your maturity, foresight, realistic outlook, degree of preparation in career planning, and level of commitment to the organization and profession
  - Express desire and capability to grow within the organization and potential career path
- “What is your greatest weakness?”
  - Remember: do not talk about your weakness in a negative way; turn your weakness into a positive
  - For example, “Because I tend to procrastinate, I have learned to work well under pressure and to always get work done on time.”
- “Tell me about your education”
  - Keep your response positive; Speak well of your alma mater
  - Be prepared to answer questions about low grades, major changes, etc.
- Why should we hire you?”
  - Mention key job functions (learned through your research) and discuss your skills in relation to these functions

### **Sample questions to ask your interviewer:**

- Who is the direct supervisor for this position and what is that person's management style?
- How are employees evaluated and how is success measured?
- What type of people seem to do well in this company?
- What type of training is provided?
- What are some of the more difficult problems facing someone in this position? How do you think these could best be handled?
- What kind of support does this position receive in terms of people, finances, etc.?
- How would you describe the organizational culture?
- How well do the departments interact with each other?

### **Dress for Success**

#### ■ **WOMEN**

- Suit (pant or skirt) or tailored dress in solid or subtle color, no extreme slits, necklines, or hemlines
- Polished, closed toes shoes, basic dark pumps with medium or low heels (no open-toed or backless shoes)
- Clean nails and no chips if polished
- Attaché with room for resume and personal belongings
- Light make-up and jewelry
- Match stockings appropriately (no bare legs)

#### ■ **MEN**

- Dark solid or pin striped suit
- Shined, dark shoes
- Clean, well groomed nails
- Conservative tie
- Solid shirt, clean and pressed
- Avoid flashy cuff links, rings, necklace or earrings
- Over the calf socks that match appropriately
- One ring per hand

#### ■ **BOTH**

- Conservative colors (navy, black, gray)
- Light fragrance, if any
- Breath mints
- Wear a watch
- Carry several unfolded copies of your resume, cover letter, and reference list
- Make sure that clothing and accessories do not distract the employer from the interview

## **During the Interview:**

### **Verbal and Nonverbal communication**

- Shake Hands
- Active Listening
- Posture
- Be Relaxed
- Eye Contact
- Facial Expression
- Gestures
- Negative Talk
- Talking Too Much
- Tone of Voice
- Non-words
- Pace Yourself
- Be Proactive Follow-up
- Calm, Cool, and Confident

## **After the Interview:**

### **Thank You Letter**

- **Thank You Letter Tips**
  - PROOFREAD
  - Use proper business-letter format and high quality bond paper
  - Send out within 24 hours of an interview
  - If you have interviewed with more than one person, EACH ONE should receive a thank you note
  - If you have had prior email correspondence, it IS appropriate to send a thank you via email

### **Negotiating Salary**

- DO NOT discuss the issue of salary until the employer does
- When an employer asks what salary you are looking for, reply with, “What is the typical salary for this position?”
- Have average salaries prepared based on your internet research, [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com) or NACE Salary Surveys
- Don't take an offer on the spot
- Before accepting or declining an offer, look at the entire compensation package including health insurance, sick/vacation/holiday leave, 401K benefits, etc.

## **Sample Thank You Letter**

Your Street Address

City, State, ZIP

>

Date

>

>

>

>

Name of Contact

His/her Title

Company/Organization Name

Address

City, State, ZIP

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Dear Mr., Ms., or Dr. (Contact's Name):

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The thank you letter should be brief and to the point. Emphasize your sincere appreciation to this person for taking the time to meet or interview you. Remind the recipient of your strong qualifications for the position and connect the requirements of the position directly with your specific talents.

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Next, focus on your interest in the position. Describe briefly how you would be an asset to their organization. Offer your phone number in case the recipient should need any further information from you.

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Finally, request action. Each thank you letter should be concluded with an appropriate statement of your appreciation for their help and a request for action.

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Sincerely,

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Your signature