



## Interviewing: Putting Your Best YOU Forward!

### Step #1: RESEARCHING THE POSITION

1. Fully understand the job description or position advertisement.
2. Research the position offered, the company itself, and the industry as a whole. The Internet, trade journals, and networking with individuals currently in the field are the best ways to gain the desired information.

Here are some helpful websites for gathering Industry and Occupational Information:

- Wet Feet: <http://www.wetfeet.com/>
- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>
- Princeton Review: <http://www.review.com/careers>
- America's Job Bank: <http://www.ajb.dni.us/>
- Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://stats.bls.gov/>
- Wall Street Journal: <http://www.careerjournal.com/>
- Riley Guide: <http://www.rileyguide.com/>

### Step #2: PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

1. Prepare for the actual interview:
  - Have professional copies of your updated resume.
    - Certain positions may also require a portfolio displaying past work completed in relation to the field of interest.
  - Create a list of references (at least 3) on the same type of paper as your resume.
  - Bring note pad, pen and appointment calendar (for future interviews or employment dates).
  - Participate in a Mock Interview with a Career Counselor.
  - Take breath mints, tissues, and an extra pair of hose (for women) or an extra tie (for men).
  - Have the correct address and a telephone number to call just in case.
2. Dress appropriately in professional attire (err on the side of conservative).
  - Neatly groomed hair, trimmed nails, and polished shoes are highly recommended. Leave the cologne or perfume behind.
  - Men: A two-piece suit in solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics with a simple-patterned tie.
  - Women: A solid colored suit with a knee-length skirt and tailored blouse or a two-piece pants suit, coupled with basic pumps, modest jewelry, and make-up.

## Step #3: THE INTERVIEW!

### 1. Interviewing Format

- **Arrival** – Be sure to arrive early enough to park and walk to the interview site (it may be helpful to make a trial run ahead of time, so you know exactly where you will be going and the time required to get there).
- **Greeting & Introduction** – Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake and smile, while remaining poised and maintaining good eye contact.
- **Interview Overview** – At this point the employer may begin by briefly describing the position and/or the organization as well as the layout of the interview itself.
- **Question & Answer**
  1. Answering the Interviewer's Questions:

This is the “heart” of the interview and will take from 15 to 20 minutes. You should be speaking 70% of the time, while the interviewer listens. It is important to remember that this is your opportunity to elaborate on your qualifications and to bring specific attention to what you have already provided through your resume (See *Interviewing Questions* for more detail). Your answer to each question should be succinct and no more than one to two minutes in length.
  2. Asking the Interviewer Questions

In most cases, the interviewer will give you a chance to ask questions...you should ALWAYS take advantage of this opportunity. By asking three to five relevant questions, you are expressing a genuine interest in the position and organization (See *Interviewing Questions* for more detail).
- **Closing** – It will take three to five minutes to bring the interview to a close. The interviewer will most likely outline what the next step in the employment process will be. If they don't, ask. Thank the interviewer for his/her time, and end the interview with a friendly smile and another firm handshake. Make sure to pick up a business card.

### 2. Types of Interviews

- **One-on-One Interview** – This is the most frequently used style of interviewing and incorporates only you and the potential employer.
- **Telephone Interview** – This interview is used as a way for employers to initially screen candidates.
- **Panel Interview** – This form of interviewing allows several individuals to interview you at one time. As each interviewer may be taking turns asking you questions, it is important to maintain good eye contact and clear communication with each of them.
- **Meal Interview** – This interviewing format is used by business professionals to observe how you function in a social setting. It is important to brush up on dining etiquette before an interview such as this. Be sure to treat your server with respect, order a moderately priced meal, and avoid consuming alcohol.
- **Second Interview/On-Site Interview** – If an employer is still interested in hearing more from you after an initial interview, you may be invited back for a second interview. Often times this may include a facility tour, staff introductions, and Q&A sessions with several different employees. Remain alert at all times and remember the names and positions of each person you meet, so you are able to follow up with them after the interview.

### 3. Interviewing Questions

- Sample Questions an interviewer may ask you:
  1. Tell me about yourself.
  2. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
  3. Why did you choose your university or course of study?
  4. What is your greatest strength? Weakness?
  5. What motivates you most in a job?
  6. Tell me about a time you had difficulty reaching a goal.
  7. Tell me about the most frustrating person with whom you have worked.
  8. What do you do when a team member doesn't pull his/her weight?
  9. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
  10. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
  
- Sample Questions you may ask an interviewer:
  1. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
  2. Does your company encourage further education?
  3. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
  4. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) right now?
  5. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
  6. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
  7. What do you like best about your job/company?
  8. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you, or should I contact you?

### 4. The 4 P's of Interviewing

- **Ponder** – Ask yourself why the interviewer has asked this question. This will help you determine what skill, trait, or ability is being measured. Highlight this quality in your response.
- **Prove** – Prove every statement you make by using examples.
- **Practice** – Practice by writing down answers to sample interview questions or scheduling a mock interview.
- **Project** – Project a positive attitude even when the questioning gets negative.

### **Step #4: POST INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP**

- **The Thank You Letter** – Send a follow-up letter, either handwritten or typed, (email will suffice) to the interviewer no later than two days following your interview. (If you interviewed with more than one person, send each individual his or her own thank you note.)
  
- **Keep a Record** – Maintain a copy of the interviewer's name/title/company, date, and mailing address, phone/fax number, and any other relevant information discussed in the interview.