

EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING



Types of Interviews

- ▶ ***Structured Interview***

Uses a fixed set of questions which have been written in advance

- ▶ ***Group Interview***

You may be interviewed by two or more people at once. Group interviews combined with Structured questions is often used in public sector

- ▶ ***Unstructured Interview***

Not limited to any fixed set of questions.

- ▶ ***Multiple Interviews***

Commonly used at management and/or professional level jobs. Often involves a series of interviews in which candidates are screened out at each succeeding level.

How Important is Your Interview?

- ▶ It's the make or break difference in actually being selected for the job
- ▶ A good application package may get you in the door, **but** the interview is your first in-person and best opportunity to impress the employer and actually land the job.
- ▶ In the end, the employer will hire the person who appears to have the abilities and talents that best fulfill their needs.
 - ***It is up to you to demonstrate at the interview that you are the person that person.***



Ensuring a Successful Interview

- ▶ Be Prepared
- ▶ Practice, Practice, Practice
- ▶ Know your interview logistics
- ▶ Be professional
- ▶ Dress for Success
- ▶ Be Organized
- ▶ Present Yourself Well
- ▶ Be Honest
- ▶ Be Positive
- ▶ Show Interest



Before the Interview

**Prepare in advance. The better prepared you are,
The less anxious you will be and the greater your
Chances for success.**

- Know and be prepared to answer the commonly asked questions
- Decide which questions you would like to ask
- Evaluate your skills, abilities, and educational strengths as they relate to the type of job you are seeking
- Review the job description and practice tailoring your answers to show how you meet the company's needs
- Role Play
- Know your interview strengths and weaknesses

Before the Interview (cont.)

- ▶ **Make sure you know about the organization and the specific job you are applying for before the interview**
- ▶ **Assess your over-all appearance**
 - Dress appropriately for the environment and position you are applying for.
 - Make sure your hair is neat, your nails clean and you are generally well groomed
- ▶ **Arrive early at the interview (10-15 minutes)**
 - Avoid being flustered from rushing
 - Give yourself time so your not rushing and to find a rest room so you can check your appearance .



During the Interview

- ▶ **The interview that you are most likely to face is a structured interview consisting of three phases:**
 - Introductions and an explanation of the process
 - Interview – Using Structured Interview Questions
 - Closing opportunity for you to ask questions or provide any additional information you want the interview panel to know

The Interview

- ▶ **This is the opportunity to sell yourself; to convince them of your suitability for the job.**
- ▶ **The interview committee is attempting to determine whether you are the best person for the job.**
- ▶ ***Most employers do not hire on the basis of qualifications alone -- personality, confidence, enthusiasm, a positive outlook, and excellent communication skills weigh in heavily on the selection process***
 - Pay attention to the questions they ask during the interview.
 - They are usually good indicators of the type of knowledge and characteristics they are looking for in their ideal candidate.
 - Use that information to structure your comments at the end of the interview to further market yourself as the best person for the job

Introductory Phase

- ▶ **Make a good first impression.** You only have a few seconds to create a positive first impression which can influence the rest of the interview and even determine whether you get the job.
 - Greet everyone cordially with a smile and try to look confident
 - Wait for the interviewer to signal you before you sit down.
 - Once seated, your **body language is very important** in conveying a positive impression.
 - *Show that you are open and receptive by keeping your arms and legs uncrossed*
 - *Avoid keeping your briefcase or your handbag on your lap*
 - *Try to appear relaxed and confident*

During the Interview

- ▶ Listen to the question being asked. Make sure you know what the interviewer wants to know..
- ▶ Keep your answers concise and to the point -- two to three minutes long.
- ▶ Make sure you are selling the product: **YOU**.

This is NOT the time to be overly humble

Interviewers Pet Peeves

Too Little -

- ▶ No. 1 interviewing pet peeve is an applicant who won't talk, even when asked if they have any questions or other comments, they often have none. The Interviewer(s) take, "Oh well -- next!"
 - Come prepared to answer questions and talk about yourself.

Too Much Can Be Too Much

- ▶ "Candidates who ramble. Don't spend 20 minutes rambling on and on in response to one question. Interviewers will become frustrated and may stop listening - - or even worse consider it poor judgment and lack of time management
 - Candidates should stay focused, and answer the question asked -- in less than two to three minutes.

Communication: Non-Verbal

- ▶ **Eye Contact:** Look the person asking the question in the eye. Then, during your response make occasional, brief eye contact with the other committee members, returning to the person who asked the question as you conclude.
 - If you are uncomfortable looking into someone's eyes, look at his/her third eye, just above and between the person's two eyes.
- ▶ **A Smile:** It may sound sappy, but this nonverbal clue is an immediate rapport-builder.
- ▶ **Don't Fidget:** There is nothing worse than people playing with their hair, clicking pen tops, tapping feet, etc. It distracts from your overall verbal communication.

Verbal Communication

▶ Answer the Question Asked

- Listen to the question - answer the question asked concisely.
Avoid going off on tangents

▶ Give Specific Examples

- Anticipate the type of questions likely to be asked
- Think of recent strong examples of work you've done, and when asked a related question, answer with specifics, not in generalities.
 - For example when asked about something you have specific experience in, you can say 'Yes, I've done that before. Here's an example of a time I did that...,'.
 - Give examples that highlight your knowledge and successes to help them see what they can also expect in your future performance

Middle Phase

- ▶ **You will be asked many questions about your work experience, skills, education, activities, and interests. You are being assessed on how you will perform the job in relation to the company objectives.**
 - All your responses should be concise.
 - Use specific examples to illustrate your point whenever possible.
 - Be prepared but be sure they do not sound rehearsed.
 - Remember that your responses must always be adapted to the present interview.
 - ***Incorporate any information you obtained earlier in the interview*** with the responses you had prepared in advance and then answer in a way that is appropriate to the question.

Closing Phase – Don't Waste it!

- ▶ **During the closing phase of an interview, you will be asked whether you have any other questions.**
- ▶ **Prepare your questions beforehand**
 - Not having well-considered questions to ask the interviewer, is a missed opportunity to learn about the job challenges and what is expected from you.
 - And **most importantly**, it is another great chance to demonstrate, indirectly, your skills and professional experience and the important factors that make you the right person for the job
- ▶ **When asked “Do you have any questions or additional comments? Always say “Yes””**

When Asking Your Closing Questions

- ▶ Ask open-ended questions.
- ▶ Keep the questions short.
- ▶ Ask questions that the interviewer can answer comfortably.
- ▶ Avoid questions that have obvious answers.
- ▶ Don't ask questions that are irrelevant to the job or the organization.
- ▶ **Relax and smile.**

Sample Applicant Questions

- ▶ What are the most important qualities that a successful person in this position should possess?”
- ▶ •“What are the first projects I will be involved with if hired?”
- ▶ What do you think will be the greatest challenge for someone new hired into this position?
- ▶ •“What are the most important qualities that a successful person in this position should possess?”
- ▶ "What are the three top priority tasks you would first like to see me accomplish?" *The question establishes your commitment to action. Remember, "accomplish" is a term very dear to every hiring manager*

Frequently Asked Interview Questions

- ▶ **"Tell me about yourself."**
 - Briefly describe your experience and background. Focus on the specific roles and responsibilities most relevant to the position you are applying for.

- ▶ **"What do you hope to be doing five years from now?"**
 - "I hope I will still be working here and have increased my level of responsibility based on my performance and abilities."

Frequently Asked Questions – cont.

- ▶ **What do you know about our organization?**
- ▶ **Why do you want to work here?‘‘**
- ▶ **‘‘What is your strongest point?’’**
 - "I work well under pressure."
 - "I am organized and manage my time well."
 - If you have just graduated from college you might say,
 - "I am eager to learn, and I don't have to unlearn old techniques."
 - *Give a specific example to illustrate your point.*

Frequently Asked Questions – cont.

- ▶ **"What is your weakest point?"** (A stress question)
Mention something that is actually a strength. Some examples are:
 - "I'm something of a perfectionist."
 - "I'm a stickler for punctuality."
 - "I'm tenacious."
 - *Give a specific situation from your previous job to illustrate your point.*

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

- ▶ **"What is your greatest accomplishment?"** Give a specific illustration from your previous or current job where you saved the company money or helped increase their profits.
- ▶ **"Why should we hire you?"** (A stress question) Highlight your background based on the company's current needs. Recap your qualifications keeping the interviewer's job description in mind.
- ▶ **"Tell me about a problem you had in your last job and how you resolved it."** The employer wants to assess your analytical skills and see if you are a team player. Select a problem from your last job and explain how you solved it.

One Other Very Important Reminder

- ▶ **Know someone on the interviewing panel --- Maybe even your current boss or Supervisor?**
 - **Don't make the mistake of being too casual**
 - You need to Interview as if **no one knows anything about you**
 - Be professional but yourself. You want to show that you take applying for the position serious
 - Again, don't assume you don't have to let the hiring committee know exactly what you do
 - Leave nothing out. This is your opportunity to make sure that every member of the hiring committee understands the full breadth of your knowledge and capabilities.