

# Developing Confidence in Job Interviews

An interview is your opportunity to provide information that the interviewer needs about you to determine if you are the best “fit” for the job in question. It also provides the opportunity for you to make intelligent decisions about the job, company and the career path the organization may afford you.

## The Job Interview

Job interviews generally are scheduled to last 30 minutes to one hour. You should anticipate that you will have approximately half of that time to get your point across and sell yourself. As the selection process proceeds from the initial interview to the final round, you will also find that the focus gradually shifts. The style in which you present yourself and the chemistry you develop with the hiring officials are the real deciding factors when the final choice is made.

## Job Interview Tips

Never go into an interview unprepared. Knowledge of the company, your interviewer, and the direction of the questions will enable you to conduct an **effective** discussion. Preparation also permits you to rehearse the content and style of the presentation. Most importantly, preparation will build your self-confidence and reduce many of the anxieties associated with interviewing.

- Bring only essential items to the interview (i.e. resume, references, portfolio, professional licenses, date book, pen and paper, etc.)
- Don't be rushed: arrive 15 minutes early so you can relax and review what you want to say.
- Be pleasant and friendly but businesslike to everyone you meet. Shake hands firmly, use natural gestures and movements.
- Emphasize your job experience and professional training related to the job opening.
- If you know of the company's products and services, you should refer to them as you answer questions. It is impressive if you have positive knowledge about the company. If the company is involved with any kind of problem (i.e. lawsuits, layoffs, etc.) do not bring it up.
- After being asked a question, it is okay to pause and think about your answer. Answer questions with more than a “yes” or “no” but do not ramble. A successful interview occurs if the interviewer talks fifty-percent of the time.
- Speak positively of past employers and avoid discussing personal, domestic or financial problems.

- Know your salary range from your research. When asked “what are your ideas on salary?” answer with a question directed to the interviewer. “What do you pay people with my skills and experience?”
  - Ask probing questions about the company plans, nature of the job, etc. Questions indicate interest and motivation.
  - Send a brief thank-you note immediately after the interview. Address the thank-you to all of the individuals who interviewed you.
  - You must rely on your voice, appearance, and responses regarding your experience to help you market what you have – YOU! Effective communication skills will give you an advantage over the rest of the competition.
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### **Questions you might be asked at a job interview**

Think about how you will answer these questions. Then practice answering them aloud.

- What do you know about our company? What do you know about this position? (Use company research and examine the job description closely)
- What qualifications do you have for this job? (Match what you know about the job and company to your previous work experience)
- What is your greatest strength? (Relate this to the job description)
- What are your greatest challenges? (Turn this into a positive: For example, “I am a perfectionist with high self-expectations. However, I have learned from this experience by...”)
- Tell me about yourself. (Refer to previous work experience, education, skills and abilities)
- Why did you leave your previous job(s)? (Turn this into a positive: For example, “I felt as if I wanted to expand my professional experiences and apply for a position with more responsibility.”)
- Cite an example of when you have resolved a difficult situation on a previous job (What steps did you take to resolve the situation?)
- How does this position fit into your future plans? (Demonstrate potential and ambition)

- Describe your best/worst boss. (Keep it positive, don't be critical.)
- Where do you see yourself in three years? (Keep it positive.)
- What would you do if...? (Imagine situations that test your knowledge of the job)

### **Questions you might want to ask at a job interview**

- What is the overall structure of the department where this position is located?
- What characteristics does a successful person within your company possess?
- Describe a typical day as a \_\_\_\_\_ (mention position title here).
- How would you describe your corporation's culture and leadership style?
- What are the company's short and long term objectives?
- Were there any questions I didn't adequately answer?