



Interview Preparation

Interviews can be tough – even for seasoned veterans. The interview is, however, your best opportunity to gain insight into the position and company, and to determine how your experience and talent can contribute to the company’s growth and profitability.

Below you will find a list of things you can do to make your interview as successful as it can be. No trick or gimmicks here – just good, solid information to help you prepare and win that job.

- **Do your homework – on the company.** Find out as much about the company, its history, its current situation and its future as you can. Utilize your Search Consultant and the Internet to find periodicals and trade journals, articles, annual reports and 10K reports. Be prepared to ask good questions about the company and its direction.
- **Do your homework – on the position.** Have a thorough understanding of the position, its key duties and primary responsibilities, and what is expected. Be prepared to ask good questions: Who has been successful and why? Who has failed and why? What needs to be done in the first six months? 1st year? Your Search Consultant may be able to provide insight in these areas prior to the interview.
- **Do your homework – on yourself.** Review your career history thoroughly. Review dates, positions, duties and responsibilities and accomplishments. Know your strengths and weaknesses. Be prepared to cite specific examples of accomplishments and how your specific experience can help the company solve some of its problems. Concentrate on your most recent positions, but don’t neglect your early career. Reflect on your successes, so you can adequately impart your strengths when given the chance!

Phone Interview Preparation

Phone interviews are frequently a first step in the interviewing process. In these times, companies often opt for an initial phone interview for the screening of potential candidates. These phone conversations are normally your first contact with a company, therefore your first impression. Make your impact!

Here are a few useful hints to help you through the process:

- Work with your Search Consultant to set up a specific time for the call. This will allow you to be fully prepared to conduct an effective interview.
- Treat the phone interview just as you would a personal, face-to-face interview. Just because it is over the phone does not mean that you should take it lightly or take it less seriously.
- Make sure the phone you plan on using for the call is of high quality. Avoid portable and/or cellular phones.
- If you have an answering machine/voice mail, please make sure your recording is both courteous and professional.
- Make sure family members know how to answer the phone and take messages in your absence. Keep a note pad by the phone for messages and reinforce how important their cooperation is to your search success.
- Be aware of any potential distractions, i.e. radio, television, background conversations, etc. Plan to sit in a quiet room/area where you can speak and think in a productive manner.
- If you have the “call-waiting” feature on your phone, it is best not to interrupt your conversation to answer a call.
- If you have a bad connection and/or have difficulty hearing the other person, offer to call them back.
- Be fully prepared with your notes in regard to 1) the company, 2) the position, 3) yourself (resume). You will then be able to come across as an organized and articulate interviewee.

Again, do not take this step in the interview process lightly. This is a great opportunity to sell yourself and to find out more about the position. Last, but certainly not least, the phone interview is the opportune time to set up your face-to-face meeting. Do not be afraid to ask for the appointment! Have your calendar at hand so you may suggest dates that would be convenient to interview.

Interviewing to “Secure your Success”

Preparation will allow you to enter the interview relaxed and confident which will help you determine if you can fulfill the needs of the company and if they have an opportunity that can enhance your career.

- Arrive fifteen minutes early to the interview, but no earlier. If you arrive any earlier, do not enter the company until 15 minutes prior to be respectful of your interviewer’s time.
- Fill out all applications neatly and completely. Write “negotiable” in the salary section.
- When meeting the interviewer, mirror their demeanor.
- Do not answer questions with a simple “yes or “no”. Sell yourself by using examples and paint a clear picture of where, when, how, what and why you did it.
- Stress your achievements, records and accomplishments.
- Answer all questions to the point; do not ramble on. Role-play some responses before the interview. “Practice makes perfect!”
- Do not make derogatory remarks about previous or present employers.
- Avoid asking questions regarding salary, commission, bonuses or vacation.
- Tell your possible employer what you are going to do for them, NOT what they can do for you.
- Always represent yourself honestly.

Talk to your Search Consultant about specific issues that may be addressed in the interview. Learn about the interview style of those you will be meeting with during the interview.

During the interview you may be asked difficult questions. These questions are designed to see how you will react under pressure and unfamiliar territory. There are no “pat” answers to these questions. Interviewers ask different questions and look for different responses.