Interviewing

Skills and Techniques,

Pt. 1

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**Interview Tips**

**Do's**

Use a firm handshake

Make eye contact

Use good posture

Dress appropriately

Be neat

Know what you want

Be prompt

Be polite

**Don'ts**

Interrupt the interviewer

Chew gum

Smoke

Drink

Sit until invited

Say too much or too little

Bad mouth

Joke around

**Answer cell phone** --   
 *Leave it in the car!!*

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

Based on the information that follows on pages 3-6, add to this list of Do’s and Don’ts in teams of 4.

**EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWING**

**Before the Interview**

*Practice, self-evaluate, and get constructive criticism.*

The better prepared you are, the less anxious you will be and the greater your chances for   
success.

Role Play. Find someone to role play the interview with you. This person should be someone   
with whom you feel comfortable and with whom you can discuss your weaknesses freely. The   
person should be objective and knowledgeable, perhaps a business associate.

Use a mirror or video camera when you role play to see what kind of image you project.

*Assess your interviewing skills.*

What are your strengths and weaknesses? Work on correcting your weaknesses, such as   
speaking rapidly, talking too loudly or softly and nervous habits such as shaking hands or inappropriate facial expressions.

Learn the questions that are commonly asked and prepare answers to them. Examples of   
commonly asked interview questions are provided. Career centers and libraries often have books   
which include interview questions. Practice giving answers which are brief but thorough.

Decide what questions you would like to ask and practice politely interjecting them at different   
points in the interview.

*Evaluate your strengths.*

Evaluate your skills, abilities and education as they relate to the type of job you are seeking.

*Research the company.*

The more you know about the company and the job you are applying for, the better you will do   
on the interview. Get as much information as you can before the interview.

*Make extra copies of your resume available and gather supporting documents.*

The interviewer may ask you for extra copies of your resume, so have them handy. It is best to bring the same version of your resume that you originally sent the company. Bring a portfolio or examples of your work, if appropriate for your field. Bring additional information about your job history (e.g., dates of employment, names of former employers and their telephone numbers, job responsibilities and accomplishments) in case you need to fill out an application form. Bring full information about the people you are using as references. If you are a recent graduate, you can list your teachers. Ask references for permission to use their names.

***ASSESS/PLAN YOUR APPEARANCE***

* Plan your wardrobe ahead of time and have garments clean and ready.
* Get a haircut (if needed) and otherwise make sure you are well groomed*.*
* Find out what clothing is appropriate for your industry. Although some industries such as fashion and advertising are more stylish, acceptable attire for most industries is conservative.
* Your clothes should be clean and pressed and your shoes polished.
* Make sure your hair is neat, your nails clean and you are generally well-groomed.

* Have several sets of appropriate clothing available if you plan on having several interviews over a few days.
* Dress on the conservative side. With that in mind, here are some well-thought-out suggestions on how to avoid fashion blunders.

*Here are some dressing faux pas to avoid when interview time comes around:*

* Wild Nail Polish -- for men or women. Extremely long or uncut nails are a real turnoff, too. Your nails should be groomed and neat.
* Jewelry That Jangles: Don't wear more than two rings per hand or one earring per ear. No face jewelry or ankle bracelets allowed at the interview. \*\*\* Also, take out nose rings and cover tattoos.
* Bare Legs: Wear stockings, even in humid, summer weather. Stockings can be in neutral colors or a fashion color to match your shoes.
* Short Skirts: Hemlines should not be more than three inches above the knee. Don't even think about wearing Capri pants or leggings to the interview.

Change your outfit's look for a second interview by wearing a different color blouse, shirt, scarf   
or tie. Everyone else should opt for a conservative look. Whatever you wear should accent the   
fact that you're a professional who's ready to get to work at a new job. Let common sense be   
your guide; and it should be easy to avoid fashion blunders that could damage your chances of   
getting to the next level in the process. In this market, it is essential that you look good and your appearance is right for the job.

**Interview Prep Checklists**

**Before my interview I need to:**

\_ get a haircut \_ clean and press clothes

\_wash hands and cut nails \_trim or shave beard/mustache

\_shower and use deodorant \_brush teeth

\_ use a minimum of perfume/after shave or not use any at all

\_ buy a new (i.e.; article of clothing, briefcase, portfolio, etc.)

**I will wear (need to lay out and/or clean)**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_suit/dress \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_tie

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_shirt/blouse \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_belt

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_pants/slacks \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ jacket/ coat

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ socks/stockings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_shoes

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ jewelry (be very conservative)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ make-up (be very conservative)

**I will bring:**

\_\_\_\_ note pad/paper \_\_\_\_\_ a pencil / pen

\_\_\_\_ extra copies of resume \_\_\_\_\_ a list of references

\_\_\_\_ portfolio/work samples \_\_\_\_\_ info on previous employment

\_\_\_\_\_ date book or daily planner \_\_\_\_\_ application (if required)

\_\_\_\_\_ list of questions to ask \_\_\_\_\_ business cards (if available)

\_\_\_\_\_ necessary licenses (i.e., safety, heavy equipment, CVO)

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Security card and other official ID

**Questions You Might Be Asked At A Job Interview –**

*Practice your responses to the questions below with a partner.*

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

1. Tell me about yourself. (Reveal something semi-personal but still be professional)

2. Why have you chosen this particular field?

3. What is your greatest strength? (Relate to job question)

4. What is your greatest weakness? (Turn into a positive i.e., perfectionist = high self-   
expectations. Admit a past problem and what you learned from it.)

5. What qualifications do you have for this job? (Match what you know about the job and   
company to your experience.)

6. Tell me about your education and preparation. (Use examples that relate to the position)

7. What have you done recently that shows your initiative and willingness to work?

8. How would you describe yourself to others? (Keep it positive and brief)

9. How would your friends/coworkers/employers describe you? (Keep it positive)

10. Describe the accomplishment of which you are most proud.

11. In a job, what interests you most/least? (Relate to position)

12. Do you prefer to work by yourself, or with others? (Explain your reasons)

13. Give me an example of how you handled a difficult situation on a previous job

14. Describe a time you were criticized in front of others. How did you respond?

15. What are some legitimate reasons to miss work?

16. Where do you see yourself in three/five years? (Demonstrate ambition and flexibility)

17. How do you define/evaluate success?

18. What famous historical figure do you admire, and why?

19. Why are you interested in working for this company? (Relate your skills to what you   
know about the company)

20. Describe the ideal boss. (or) What do you look for in a boss?

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**During the Interview**

1. *Arrive early at the interview.*

Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. Give yourself time to find a restroom so you can check your appearance.

Be pleasant and friendly but businesslike to everyone you meet. It's important to make a good   
impression from the moment you enter the reception area. Greet the receptionist cordially and try to appear confident. You never know what influence the receptionist has with your interviewer.   
With a little small talk, you may get some helpful information about the interviewer and the job   
opening.

If you are asked to fill out an application while you're waiting, be sure to fill it out completely.   
As you are filling in the job application, be aware that it in itself offers an excellent opportunity to convince an employer that you are a valuable person to hire. It is not only a chance to describe your accomplishments, but it also shows how clearly you can think and write, and how well you can present important details.

*Introduce yourself and pronounce your name clearly. Show enthusiasm and energy.*

A firm handshake and plenty of eye contact demonstrate confidence. Speak distinctly in a   
confident voice, even though you may feel shaky.

*Do not sit until invited to do so or until the interviewer sits.*

*Come prepared to engage in polite, friendly-yet-businesslike conversation and “sell yourself.”*

The job interview is usually a two-way discussion between you and a prospective employer. The interviewer is attempting to determine whether you have what the company needs, and you are attempting to determine if you would accept the job if offered. Both of you will be trying to get as much information as possible in order to make those decisions. The interview that you are most likely to face is a traditional interview with a structured format. It usually consists of three phases. The introductory phase covers the greeting, small talk and an overview of which areas will be discussed during the interview. The middle phase is a question-and-answer period. The interviewer asks most of the questions, but you are given an opportunity to ask questions as well. The closing phase gives you an opportunity to ask any final questions you might have, cover any important points that haven't been discussed and get information about the next step in the process. Failure to ask any such questions gives the impression that you are indifferent about the job, so come prepared with some basic questions in mind.

1. *Listen attentively and maintain eye contact.*

One of the most neglected interviewing skills is listening! A common mistake is to be so concentrated on what you want to say next that you are not really listening to what the interviewer is saying. Make sure you are not only listening, but also reading between the lines. Sometimes what is not said is just as important as what is said.

*Answer the question that was asked!*

Candidates often don't think about whether or not they actually are answering the questions   
asked by their interviewers. Make sure you understand what is being asked, and get further   
clarification if you are unsure. After being asked a question, it is okay to pause and think about   
your answer. Speak positively of past employers and avoid discussing personal, domestic or   
financial problems.

*Give Specific Examples.*

One specific example of your background is worth 50 vague stories. Prepare your stories   
before the interview. Give examples that highlight your successes and uniqueness. Your past   
behavior can indicate your future performance. Be prepared for questions about what you would do in difficult on-the-job situations—use your past experience with difficulties (what you did well, could have done better, etc.).

*Ask Questions.*

Ask probing questions about the company. Many interviewees don't ask questions and miss the   
opportunity to find out valuable information: Your questions indicate your interest in the   
company or job. Be prepared if the interviewer says, "You're perfect for this job. When can you   
start?"

**Sample Questions You Might Ask at an Interview**

1. What are the advantages to working at this corporation/business?

2. When will a decision be made about this position?

3. What are the opportunities for advancement/personal growth?

4. For what accomplishments is the company most proud?

5. Does the position require travel?

6. Can you tell me about the benefit package offered?

7. Who would be my immediate superior?

**After the Interview**

***3)*** You are not finished yet! It is important to *assess the interview* shortly after it is concluded.   
Following your interview you should:

\* Write down the name and title (be sure the spelling is correct) of the interviewer.

\* Review what the job entails and record what the next step will be.

\* Note your reactions to the interview; include what went well and what went poorly.

\* Assess what you learned from the experience and how you can improve your performance in   
 future interviews.

**SEND A THANK-YOU LETTER!!**

Everyone knows that a thank-you letter should be sent after an interview, but very few people actually send one. Make sure you are one of those few. It could give you the edge.

Make sure you send a thank-you note within 24 hours. Your thank-you note should:

* Be typed in proper business letter format
* Be simple and brief
* Express your appreciation for the interviewer’s time
* Show enthusiasm for the job
* Get across that you want the job and can do it

***Phone Follow-Up***

If you were not told during the interview when a hiring decision will be made, call after one week. At that time, if you learn that the decision has not been made, find out whether you are still under consideration for the job. Reiterate that you are very interested in the job.

If you learn that you did not get the job, try to find out why.

If you are offered the job, you have to decide whether you want it. If you are not sure, thank the employer and ask for several days to think about it. Ask any other questions you might need answered to help you with the decision. If you know you want the job and have all the information you need, accept the job with thanks and get the details on when you start.

***Who Gets Hired?***

1. In the final analysis, the employer will hire someone who has the abilities and talents which fulfill their needs. It is up to you to demonstrate at the interview that you are the person they want. Do not be offended if the employer doesn’t think you are a good fit. Learn what you can from the experience and move on.

**Tips for Moving Up**

* Dress and groom for a promotion
* Be early and stay late
* Be enthusiastic
* Ask for more responsibility
* Ask how you can earn more money
* Stay current in your field
* Ask for training
* Take on difficult projects
* Get measurable results
* Don't just quit

**Why People Get Fired**

* Dishonesty
* Worked too slowly
* Would not follow orders
* Unreliable
* Unable to get along with other workers
* Poor dress or grooming
* Making too many mistakes
* Too many accidents
* Couldn't do the work
* Abuse of alcohol or drug