

RICHARD, WAYNE & ROBERTS PRESENTS

THE ART OF INTERVIEWING

Preparation is the key to a successful interview. Thorough preparation enhances your chances of accomplishing the two main objectives of an interview. The interviewer's objective is to decide whether or not to make you a job offer by evaluating your history, educational background, your strengths and accomplishments, as well as your level of motivation, attitude and personality. In other words, to find out if you're the right person for the job, what is your potential for promotion and whether or not you will fit into the company environment. As the candidate your objective is to satisfy the interviewer's objective, as well as learn those things you need to know about the position and the company that enable you to make an intelligent decision about the job - and keep focused on "Getting a job offer."

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APPEARANCE FOR AN INTERVIEW

Appearance: Men

- A navy blue or dark suit is appropriate for most positions.
- White or pale shirt, freshly laundered and well pressed.
- A quiet tie with a subtle design or slight pop of color.
- Shined shoes, over the calf dark socks.
- Minimal jewelry, and mild light fragrances only.

Appearance: Women

- Wear a suit or tailored dress (with or without a jacket) in basic navy or gray.
- Blouses should be tailored and color coordinated.
- A closed toe pump or business-appropriate shoe with a low heel.
- Light colognes or avoid fragrances totally.
- For good posture, if you cross legs, do so at the ankles, not at the knees.
- Minimal jewelry.

Honestly assess your employment background and develop explanations for any weak points. Prepare a list of tough questions that may be asked, then develop answers to those questions.

- Why are you considering a career change at this time?
- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- What do you like the most/least about your current job?
- Why should we hire you?

Many of these questions are aimed at finding out if you have the qualities sought. Support your answers with specific examples to open ended or complex questions.

RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Researching the company is necessary to learn as much as possible to ensure the prospective job and company are a good fit for you - and, equally important, to impress the people with whom you'll interview. The Internet offers a wealth of company information and industry statistics (annual reports, articles, etc.)

- Find their homepage.
- Follow the company's stock price if it's publicly traded.
- Know the company's products and services.
- Be prepared to tell the interviewer why their company is attractive to you.
- Talk with company employees. Talk to customers of the company.

Your Richard, Wayne and Roberts Executive Recruiter will provide an interview timetable, including names and titles of persons with whom you'll be talking if available. Solid company research will enable you to confidently say at the end of your interview "I'm interested in pursuing this opportunity, what's the next step?"

Interviewing can be a stressful situation, you want to be yourself and really show your capabilities. Here are some simple suggestions that we've developed that will make interviewing easier.

The Application:

You may be asked to fill out an application. Complete the form in full and leave no blanks.

- Do not write "see resume" as a response to any application question.
- Respond to "expected salary" questions as "open" and answer "current salary" (if legally appropriate in your state) questions truthfully.
- List references if requested (you should have this prepared on a separate sheet and should be taken to all interviews).
- Your recruiter's name and/or Richard, Wayne and Roberts (whichever is appropriate) should be your response to any "referred by" questions.

The interview should be a two-way conversation. Ask questions of the interviewers. This shows your interest in the company and the position, and enables you to gather the right information to make an intelligent decision afterwards. Human Resources will usually provide company and benefits information. The interviewers are trying to see how you can contribute to the company. Conduct yourself with confidence and determination to get the job. Sell yourself. You must present a positive attitude to the prospective employer. You must NOT seem disinterested or appear to be job shopping.

- Shake hands firmly and maintain eye contact with all interviewers.
- Be yourself. Poise, confidence and self-respect are of great importance.
- Be an ACTIVE participant. Ask questions, show interest and interact!

REMEMBER: Everyone gives feedback. So, be polite to secretaries, receptionists and all administrative staff.

Typical Interview Questions and Responses:

You should give complete but brief and relaxed answers to questions. When possible use questions as a basis for developing information that you want to make sure is presented. Continue to sell yourself in a positive way.

- Describe current/past jobs in terms of duties and give indicators of good performance such as raises, sales volume, promotions, money saving ideas/projects.
- Include short stories involving problems or challenges and how you were able to solve or overcome them.
- Describe the results you achieved.
- Remember to keep your answers brief and focused while exploring opportunities to convey all relevant qualifications.

Background Questions:

"Tell me about yourself."

- Answer these questions in terms of the qualifications required of the position.
- Keep responses concise and brief and avoid being negative about previous jobs and bosses.
- The "Tell Me" question means "tell me your qualifications." Start with your education and discuss your employment experiences.
- Gear the response to the duties and responsibilities of the position you are interviewing for.

"What are your greatest strengths?"

- Keep this as job related as possible by relating to a job task/skill that you know to be an asset of yours.
- "I like people" is not a good answer.

Salary Questions:

Do not state a starting figure. A suitable reply: "I am looking for the right opportunity and I am confident that if you find me to be the best candidate for this position, I am sure you have considered where this position fits within the organization and will make a competitive offer."

If legally appropriate in your state, provide your current salary truthfully. If you are due for a raise in the next three months, state the approximate percentage you expect. Be sure to explain that you have included bonuses, commissions, and overtime pay if applicable.

Motive Questions:

- What can you contribute to this company?
- Where do you hope to be in five years?
- What interests you most about this position?

This type of question should be answered enthusiastically. Show the interviewer you are interested in the position and relate the answers to the duties and responsibilities of the job.

Personality Questions:

- What do you do in your spare time?
- Present yourself as a well-rounded person. Your answer gives you dimension.
- Name some hobbies.

Job Satisfaction Questions:

- Why are you looking for another job?
- What do you like most/least about your previous job/jobs?
- Why did you leave your previous employer/employers?

Never speak poorly about former employers. Be positive. You are providing clues about the environment you seek. Don't discuss what you were trying to "get away from" when you made a prior job change, but what you were trying to achieve by making that transition. The same is true about why you would leave your current role for this opportunity.

Other Questions To Prepare For:

- Are you willing to relocate?
- May we check your references?
- May we verify your income?

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYER

Interest Questions:

- Why do you want someone for this job?
- How many people have held this job in the past five years?
- Were they promoted or did they leave the company?
- Why isn't this position being filled from within the company?
- What are examples of the best results produced by people in this job?

Qualification Questions:

- What would my responsibilities and duties be?
- Describe a typical day on the job.
- What are the most difficult aspects of this position?
- Describe the department's/company's growth in the next two years?
- What is the philosophy on training and development in the company?
- How do you think I'd fit into this job/on your team/into your organization?
- What projects would I be involved in now? Within the first year?

ASK FOR THE JOB!

If you like what you see make a positive statement about the position. If you are sincerely interested in the position and are satisfied with the answers given, you should ask the interviewer if he/she feels that you are qualified for the position.

A typical conclusion might be "I'm interested in being a part of your team, what's the next step?" Often, the difference in "GETTING AN OFFER" and "NOT GETTING AN OFFER" is your failure to ASK for the job.

BEHAVIORAL-BASED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Behavior based interviewing focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities that are job related. It is based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. In behavioral based interviews, you are asked to give specific examples of when you demonstrated particular behaviors or skills. You may use work experience, activities, hobbies, volunteer work, or school projects as examples of your past behavior.

How to best answer Behavioral-Based Questions:

Interviewers will be looking for three parts in your responses to the behavioral based questions.

- First, explain the specifics about the circumstance that you were involved in.
- Next, describe the actions you took in that circumstance.
- Finally, tell what results followed due to your actions?

Keys to responding well to these types of questions are:

- Use one specific example, not a general or vague example.
- Don't describe how you *would* behave. Describe how you *did* behave. If you later decided that you should have behaved differently, explain this. It will show that you have learned from the experience.

1. Stand up; you will be less nervous and will project better.
2. Enthusiasm and passion are all you have to sell.
3. Have a copy of your resume in front of you - so you can see what the hiring authority is seeing.
4. Know your background. Review your past job history, including dates and earnings, where legally permissible.
5. Think about the key functions of this job... where have you had experience and SUCCESS in similar responsibilities in your past?
6. Make sure you have good cell phone reception. Do not risk being mobile and dropping the call.
7. Focus! Distractions are a killer. i.e.; emails popping up, barking dog, screaming kids, etc.
8. Use notes rather than a script, a highlight film.
9. Active listening - watch the flow of the conversation, is there a balance of who is talking and who is listening?
10. Be sure to avoid cutting the other person off (count to 3 when they pause).
11. Have a series of questions ready. Choose questions that show you've done some homework - maybe refer to a recent press release from the website!
12. You must try to find out if there are any questions about your credentials. Flush out objections with, "Is there anything about our conversation today that would keep you from setting up a second interview?"
13. If you are interested in pursuing- let them know, try to close on the next step... "I've enjoyed our conversation. There is only so much we can cover on the phone, when can I meet you (or have another phone call)?"