



PERSPECTIVE ON INTERVIEWS – PDF DOWNLOAD

THE SECRET TO INTERVIEW SUCCESS:

The outcome of your employment interview will be dependent on your ability to discover needs of the employer, your ability to demonstrate that you are qualified for the position and can satisfy those needs, and your ability to empathize and build rapport with the interviewers.

You can accomplish this by answering the interviewer's questions clearly and concisely followed by asking them thought provoking questions that verify your understanding of the position while giving you more insight on the company and opportunity. As you exchange information back and forth with the interviewer, the interview evolves from a question and answer session to a true dialogue or conversation. This enables you to further your rapport with your interviewer while giving you additional opportunities to reinforce your relevance to their needs.

Four other intangible fundamentals contribute to a successful interview. They will influence the way you are perceived and will affect the degree of personal chemistry that you will develop with the interviewer:

Enthusiasm: Leave no doubt as to your level of interest in the company and the opportunity.

Passion: Employers look for individuals who are passionate about their industry or specialty, and who are passionate about getting the job done and providing value to their employer.

Confidence: While there is a fine line from confidence to arrogance, the candidate who is sure of his or her abilities will almost certainly be more favorably received than the alternative.

Intensity: The last thing you want to do is come across as 'flat' in your interview. There is nothing inherently wrong with being laid-back, but the interview is truly your opportunity to step up and 'sell' your capabilities.

More considerations:

Since interviewing involves the exchange of tangible information, always make sure to present your background in a thorough and accurate manner. Link your abilities with the company needs in the mind of the employer so you can build a strong case for why the company should hire you. Also, use the interview as an opportunity to gather additional information on the company. Learn as much as you can about the company culture and the specific opportunity so you can make an informed decision upon receiving a hopeful offer of employment. Finally, if



you are ever asked, “do you have any questions”, *always* be prepared to ask another relevant question.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONING AND PREPARATION:

By design, many interviewers will utilize open-ended questioning to learn more about a potential candidate: how they think and how they communicate. Experienced professionals understand this and prepare accordingly. Some of the more common questions:

Why do you want this position?

Why do you want to leave your current company?

What are your personal and professional goals?

What do you like most about your current position and company?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

What are your strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

What do you like least about your current position?

Often, interview questioning will have a specific purpose or focus. Some examples include:

Resume Questions: Interviewers will ask questions that relate to your experience, skills, responsibilities, accomplishments, education, upbringing, personal interests, and so forth. Resume questions require accurate, objective answers, since your resume consists of quantifiable facts.

Self-Appraisal Questions: Interviewers will often inquire about your past performance. They may ask questions like, “What do you think is your greatest asset?” or, “Can you tell me your greatest professional accomplishment?”

Situational Questions: Interviewers will also question your reaction to past events or hypothetical situations such as: “How would you stay profitable during a recession?” or, “How would you go about laying off 20 employees?” or “How would you handle a serious quality



defect found in a product that has entered the market but poses no threat to the health of the consumer?”

Stress Questions: Interviewers often will evaluate a candidate’s emotional responses, creativity, or attitudes while under pressure. They may question how you handled a previous situation or they may confront you to get a reaction. The best way to handle such questions is to stay calm and give carefully considered answers.

It is not possible to anticipate every interview question or the interviewer’s strategy. The best way to prepare is to research the potential employer and review your background, your priorities, and your reasons for considering a new position. Always answer interview questions honestly and sincerely. If you do not know the answer to a question, just say so, or ask for a moment to think about your response. Remember, your sense of humor will come in handy during the entire interviewing process, just so long as you do not go over the edge.

WHAT SHOULD YOU ASK THE INTERVIEWER?

An interview has the potential of turning into a lackluster question – answer session if you do not turn the interview into more of a conversation by asking high value and thought provoking questions. Candidate questions can contribute to a successful interview, because they create dialogue, build rapport and help clarify your understanding of the company and the position responsibilities.

In addition, the questions you ask serve to indicate your grasp of fundamental issues, reveal your ability to probe beyond the superficial and challenge the employer to reveal his or her own depth of knowledge and commitment to the open position.

Your questions should be geared to show empathy, interest, or understanding of the employer’s needs. Here are some questions that have proven to be very effective:

What is the most important issue facing the company (or department)?

Given the opportunity, how can I help you accomplish this objective?

How long has it been since you first identified this need?

How long have you been trying to correct it?

Is there any particular skill or attitude you feel is critical to the success of the role?



Is there a certain aspect of my background that you believe is relevant to accomplishing your objectives?

Questions like these will not only give you a sense of the company's goals and priorities, they will indicate to the interviewer your concern for satisfying the company's objectives. As important, the answers to your questions will give you more insight on the demands of the

position, the company culture and will aid in your evaluation of the opportunity should you be presented with an offer of employment.

HOW TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT OF COMPENSATION?

During the employment interview, there is a good chance you will be asked about your current and expected level of compensation. Here is an effective way to handle compensation questions:

Question: What are you currently earning?

Answer: "My current compensation includes a base salary and bonus, plus benefits, and XX weeks of vacation. My base is \$XXX and my bonus potential is up to XX%. For example, my total compensation last year was \$XXX. This year it will be higher because of an upcoming performance review in XXX months."

Question: What are your salary expectations relative to accepting a potential offer?

Answer: "I feel that the opportunity and company are the more important considerations, however, I would expect a fair increase from my current compensation and benefit package, taking into account the increased responsibility level and potential increase in cost of living. If we decide to go forward, I am confident that you'll make me a fair offer."

The goal is to relay where you are and what it may take to attract you without making specific demands. Ultimately, if the employer is interested in you, your answers to the above questions will serve to influence their offer to you.

If you initiate a discussion about salary and benefits, you run the risk of giving the employer the impression that money is the most important reason for your job search. From a tactical standpoint, it makes the most sense to build your value and exercise restraint before the subject ever comes up. The greater your asset value is in the eyes of the employer, the stronger your potential offer will be.



The principal objective during interviews is to explore the opportunity and your potential contribution relative to the goals of the department or organization. Focusing on the money only sidetracks the greater issue of whether you and the employer can be productive and happy working together.

Once you know the opportunity fits—and the employer sees your value—you will usually be able to agree on a fair offer.

COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES

Through the years, we have identified several oft-missed opportunities by candidates during the interview process. In the spirit of maximizing your interview potential, we suggest you consider the following:

Lack of significant preparation prior to phone or personal interviews:

The fact is that preparation generates offers of employment because it gives the interviewed candidate an edge over their competition. Most people do nothing or just a quick review of their resume and a quick look on the client's web site prior to an interview. Most will not devote two or so hours to prepare for a phone interview or a personal interview. Give yourself an edge by setting yourself apart from the competition and be prepared.

We strongly suggest this for the phone interview as much as we do the face-to-face interview. Specifically, interview preparation should encompass the following:

- Revisit your resume and be prepared to review your accomplishments and strengths. Be prepared to discuss specific examples of accomplishments and pay attention to those most relevant to your target audience.
- Study the company's job description thoroughly. Ask your recruiter what the primary challenges and objectives are with the role. Be prepared to demonstrate that your qualifications can solve their 'problem'. One should understand the role as clearly as they do their resume.
- Study the company's website. Learn about the company's culture and its history. Read the executive profiles and look at their online openings. Use one of the many company finance websites to learn about the company's financial performance.

Effective preparation gives the one an advantage over most of their competition because the initiative they took in preparing for the interview will be noticed and appreciated.

Using the interview to 'sell' your relevance and 'sell' your interest:



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If the company has concluded that your experience 'may' be relevant to their needs, subsequent interview questioning will be designed to confirm or dismiss those impressions. This is your opportunity to sell both your relevance and interest in the available position and company.

Salesmanship by definition is a transfer of enthusiasm about the subject being discussed. In this case, the subject matter is you, so interviewing is your opportunity to generate enthusiasm about your candidacy and potential employment. The candidate, who is more able to enthusiastically 'connect' with the interviewers, is the candidate more likely to be invited back for another interview. Be prepared to share your passion for your industry, your enthusiasm about their company and their opportunity, your overall ambition and your determination to succeed.

During the interview, take care to clearly answer all questions and ask if they would like additional examples, specifics, or clarification. Let your interviewer know that you appreciated the time they spent with you. Let them know that the interview confirmed your interest in the company and opportunity. Let them know you want the job. Specifically, ask them what they would recommend to ensure you might get an offer?

Do you have any more questions?

Often we will hear disappointment from our clients when a candidate's answer to the question, "Do you have any more questions?" was no. Their interpretation of that answer is that the candidate must not be interested or is not engaged in the process. Our clear recommendation, whether you interview with one person or ten, is to always be prepared to ask another question about the company, its culture and the opportunity.

For more information, we can be reached at 866-898-9911 or cv@hensonpartners.com.

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