

Preparing For Your Interview

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“You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.”

Your Resume is Your Brochure

What is the goal of the resume?

The goal of a resume is to secure an interview. Most hiring managers receive 30 to 50 resumes when conducting a search. In a first glance, most managers will separate resumes into three piles: the yes's, the no's, and the maybes. Upon completion, the hiring manager restacks the resumes with yes's on top, maybes in the middle, and the no's at the bottom. Which pile do you want to be in? Obviously, you want your resume in the yes category. For this reason, your resume, like a brochure, must be potent and be written in headlines. Make sure to highlight accomplishments and accolades. When mentioning numbers, use numerals to make a greater impact. Numerals jump out at the reader. For example, if I asked you to find the number “30” and the number “three” in the first few lines of this section, look up and which one do you see first? Numerals make a much greater impact on a resume!

Do Your Research!

How much research should you conduct?

The more research you conduct, the better your performance will be in the interview. Know and understand the company's products, customer base, competition, etc. Your research should expand beyond the company website. Survey people who know the company or their products and find out how the company is perceived in the field. Be prepared to talk about what you have learned about the company and the business they are in. The Internet is an invaluable tool for obtaining information; use it to your advantage!

What questions should I try to have answered prior to the meeting?

1. Why is this position available?
2. What are the toughest challenges the company is facing in the future?
3. What percentage of the market share does the company have?
4. What separates this company from the competition?
5. What plans does the company have to increase market share?
6. What is the make-up of the customer base?
7. What is the career path like for top performers?
8. What is the training program like?
9. What is the present condition of the territory? How did it get that way?
10. What qualities do successful candidates/employees have?

The questions you could not get answered by research should be asked at the interview.

“An interview is nothing more than a meeting to decide if a make sense relationship is possible. Fate plays a small role in every interview you experience. You are interviewing the company just as much as they are interviewing you!”

The Power Suit

What is a power suit?

A power suit is the suit that makes you feel, “40 Feet Tall and Bazooka Proof” whenever you put it on (like Superman). It could be the suit you wore to close a big sale or that symbolizes a proud moment or promotion. Power suits are dark in color (usually navy blue, black or gray) and are appropriate for either men or women. Shoes should be shined, suit and white shirt freshly pressed, use little cologne or perfume (if any), for men a “power tie” (a power tie is usually red), and good grooming habits are always a big help. Women should be conservative with make-up and lip-gloss. Make sure to have your interview attire prepared the day before the interview.

Interview Tools

What do I bring to the interview?

The most important thing you can bring to an interview is a positive and confident attitude! Prior to the interview, go to the gym, get a haircut, a massage, or do a tanning session. Whatever it takes to help give you a boost of self-esteem for the interview! Attitude is #1! Also bring a leather portfolio with notepad to make notes, a file of research conducted on the company, a respectable writing instrument, fresh copies of your resume, a list of prepared questions, and a brag book for the hiring manager to review.

The Meeting

Arrival

What is a safe time to arrive at the interview?

Always arrive at the meeting place 15 to 20 minutes early. This time allows you to catch your breath and make final preparations. Turn off cell phones and other devices. Find a restroom where you can freshen up. Organize your paperwork, gather your thoughts, make some final notes, and now you are ready to meet the hiring manager.

Introduction

What is the best way to introduce myself?

Greet the manager with excitement! Offer your name with a firm handshake and a smile. Smiling is a very disarming gesture. It helps to create instant rapport with whom you are meeting. Eye contact is extremely important. Imagine you are looking through the person’s eyeballs and staring at the back of their brain. You should ask the first question and it should have nothing to do with business or the interview. This question is designed to initiate the relationship in a casual, savvy manner. It will also allow you to probe and establish common ground. Let the hiring manager transition into the business part of the meeting.

Presenting Your Story

What is the first question most hiring managers ask during an interview?

The first question asked most is: Can you tell me about yourself? OR Can you tell me about your work history? The best way to answer this question is to start with college, highlighting collegiate activities. Transition the interviewer into work history after college; end with your current position and

why you are interested in this particular opportunity. This presentation must be mastered in order to interview effectively. It should consist of a logical sequence of events that have occurred in your background and should be presented in a story-like format.

“Questions are the answer!”

Your story should end with a statement that describes exactly why you are in front of the manager at that very moment! The background presentation is no more than 3 to 5 minutes in length, and should be scripted and role-played until it is anchored between your ears. Like a sales presentation, “repetition is the mother of skill”!

Interview Questions

Question you need to be prepared to answer:

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. What are your greatest strengths and/or weaknesses both personally and professionally?
3. What are your career goals?
4. What are your specific reasons for leaving present and previous employers?
5. What did you enjoy most and/or least about previous positions, managers and employers?
6. Why should our company hire you over your competition?
7. Do you have documentation to back up your accomplishments?
8. Do you have any questions for me at this time?
9. Describe a significant accomplishment in your professional career?
10. What was the most difficult obstacle you have encountered at work? How did you overcome it?

Probing, Needs, and Assessment Questions

These questions will allow you to identify critical information about the company and hiring manager. This will help you to evaluate and assess whether this position will be the right career decision for you. This is your career! You decide which company is best to work with and nobody else.

1. What do you like most about this company?
2. How would you describe your management style?
3. What are the 3 biggest challenges that this department is faced with?
4. How would you describe the ideal candidate for this position?
5. Why is this position open?
6. What are the three main responsibilities for the position?
7. Which common traits are found in your most successful employees?
8. If I proved myself in this position, is there opportunity for advancement? What is the timeline?
9. How long have you been employed by this company? How long before your next promotion?
10. What would you consider a major addition to your team for this position?

“Remember Your A, B, C’s: Always Be Closing!!”

Trial Closing

What is a trial close? The trial close is the most important part of the interview process for the candidate. It is designed to identify and overcome any potential concerns the hiring manager may have. Once all questions have been answered, the candidate should respond along the lines of, “Mr. or Mrs. Manager, I am excited about this opportunity and have made my decision. I’m ready to take the next step. Do you have any hesitations in moving forward in the process?”

This is a **“Must Ask Question”** which will give the candidate an opportunity to overcome any potential concerns before leaving the interview. Once all concerns have been overcome, proceed to close for a second interview.

Closing Questions

1. What additional information do you need regarding my candidacy?
2. Can you please explain the rest of the interview process? Where do I go from here?
3. Do you have any reservations regarding my candidacy for this position?
4. Is there anything preventing us from proceeding in the interview process?
5. I want to go to work for your company; can you see any reason why that won't happen?
6. When is a good time for us to meet again?
7. Do you think I would make a major addition to your team?
8. How do I compare to the other candidates you have met with today?

Follow-Up

How should I follow-up with the hiring manager after an interview?

The greatest employees in history will tell you that follow-up is key to their success. Always ask for a business card before you leave the interview. Send an email thank you note to the hiring manager as soon as you can (the sooner the better). If in a hotel or corporate office, another way to follow up is to bring a thank you card with you to the interview and hand write a note **after** the interview. Ask the front desk to hand deliver it to the person you interviewed with.