



## **INTERVIEWING GUIDE**

In the competitive market of today, the ability to impress and excel in an interview is the best way to make the most effective impression with an interviewer when interviewing against other candidates with similar backgrounds. Interviewing takes much more than a firm handshake and a smile; we have compiled the biggest problem areas common to candidates actively interviewing and what they can do to combat them.

### **BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**

#### **INTERVIEW TIP 1: PLAN AHEAD**

The biggest mistake in interviewing is not being fully prepared. It behooves job-seekers to use every conceivable means possible to prepare for the interview and to allow ample time to fully prepare. Understand that interviewing is a skill; as with all skills, preparation and practice enhance the quality of that skill. Preparation can make the difference between getting an offer and getting rejected.

Unfortunately, there is not a singular "best" way to prepare for an interview. Rather, there are a multitude of specific and important strategies to enhance the chances for interview success. Every interview is a learning experience, so the learning that takes place during the preparation and the actual interview process itself is an opportunity to refine your skills and will become useful for future interviews.

Initial preparation requires a commitment to self assessment of accomplishments, putting together a clear, concise resume, tailoring your resume to the position for which you are applying and researching the target company/organization and the position responsibilities. Below is an expansion of these three ideas. Initially preparing for an interview also includes pre-thinking answers to common interview questions (see Common Questions section) and knowing the details of how to dress, what to expect, the route you will take to get to the interview and of course, protocols for how to follow up after the conversation.

- ***SELF-ASSESSMENT***

The first step to an updated resume is to re-examine accomplishments and achievements, particularly those that may be relevant to a prospective employer. We recommend maintaining an accomplishments file with items such as articles, congratulatory letters, kudos from the boss or clients/customers and descriptions of successful activities as they occur. Interviewing applicants can often forget to document those notable successes!

- ***RE-ASSESSING YOUR RESUME***

Even if you have sent your "best-yet" resume, which was obviously successful in making the initial cut, review it thoroughly and know everything that is on it. Be prepared to discuss supplemental experiences that might be important to this employer. Prepare a list focusing on experiences you feel are most relevant and match them to the needs of the employer you will be interviewing with.



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## **BUILDING BETTER COMPANIES**

- ***RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH***

Depending on available time, use every possible means to learn all you can about the company and position. Go online to the website of the company and review the website of any competitors as well. Use financial and business media to learn what is happening currently in the news with the company, competitors and the overall industry the company belongs to. Utilize the Public Library or local bookstore to locate and read information about the company/organization. Access books, journals, magazines, newspapers and any reference materials that could provide any insight to setting you apart from other people interviewing for the position you want!

- ***USE YOUR NETWORKING SKILLS***

If you already work in the same industry as the company that you interviewing with there is a good chance that you know at least one person at the company. Networking may play an important part in your ability to learn about the corporate environment. Ask questions and find out more about the details of the job or the person you will be speaking with!

### **INTERVIEW TIP 2: ROLE PLAY**

Once you have finished studying and brushing up on your resume, begin role playing (rehearsing). Use the general questions provided in the *QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED IN THE INTERVIEW*. Write down answers if it helps to make your presentation more concise. Try to limit your answers to the information your new employer will be expecting to learn from you.

- Why are you interested in this field?
- Why are you interested in this company?
- Why are you interested in this position?

Although there are generally common asked questions in an interview, be prepared to discuss anything! It is always beneficial to be prepared to answer questions/issues you really would prefer not to answer. For example:

- Your greatest weakness
- Your lack of related experience
- Your low GPA
- Your lack of leadership experiences
- Your record of job -hopping

Practice with friends/family, your DTS Counselor or in front of a mirror. Video or audio-tape your answers for future review. Scrutinize how you look and sound. Note inflection of your voice, mannerisms and gestures, facial expressions, poise, energy and enthusiasm in the answers you give as well as in your body language. How can you improve, enhance, develop, or revise your answers and/or delivery? Because interviewing is a skill, you can only improve your style and technical acumen with practice. Practice also helps to eliminate fears and nervousness. However, a degree of tension is beneficial toward maintaining a level of alertness that will cause you to sit up straight in your seat and lean forward, toward the interviewer. The ideal is to strike a balance between poise/calm and energy/enthusiasm.



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## **BUILDING BETTER COMPANIES**

Prepare questions to ask the Interviewee. Use the general questions provided in the *QUESTIONS TO ASK IN AN INTERVIEW*. Utilizing these questions should reflect your research on the company and position and should never include questions whose answers are readily available in company literature or Web site. **DO NOT ASK ABOUT SALARY OR BENEFITS!!!!**

### **INTERVIEW TIP 3: DRESS FOR SUCCESS AND KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING**

Select appropriate attire long before the interview day. Know the culture of the organization for which you are interviewing and dress accordingly -- perhaps a notch above that -- especially if the company has espoused corporate casual. A business suit is always acceptable. Be certain that your clothing is clean and well pressed. Try on your interviewing clothes the day before, to determine comfort level. Too short or too tight may cause you -- or others -- to be distracted or uncomfortable. Minimize accessories; Remember, less is more. You want to be memorable for the right reasons!

Know the location of your interview. If possible, travel to your interview destination ahead of time, so you are familiar with the route and traffic patterns. Plan to arrive at the designated office 10 - 15 minutes in advance. Allow ample time for traffic, the possibility of getting lost, and parking difficulties. Bring extra copies of your resume in a folder or portfolio. Bring a small notebook for notes but keep note-taking to a minimum and collect business cards from every individual with whom you interview.

## **THE INTERVIEW**

Contact your DTS Representative the morning of the interview to let them know that you are prepared for the interview and will be on time.

**NEVER CANCEL AN INTERVIEW**, unless absolutely necessary. Reasons to cancel would be a death in the family. Lack of transportation is not an excuse.

### **INTERVIEW TIP 4: EYE CONTACT**

Maintain eye contact with your interviewer. Show you want the job with your interest and attentiveness.

### **INTERVIEW TIP 5: BE POSITIVE**

Avoid negative comments about past employers and the practices of your last employer. Ask for the job because you are confident and positive that you are qualified for it.

### **INTERVIEW TIP 6: ADAPT**

Listen and adapt. Be sensitive to the style of the interviewer. Pay attention to those details of dress, office furniture, and general decor which will afford helpful clues to assist you in tailoring your presentation.

### **INTERVIEW TIP 7: RELATE**

Try to relate your answers to the interviewer and his or her company. Focus on achievements relevant to the position especially if they match up well to past job duties and accomplishments achieved thus far in your career.



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### **INTERVIEW TIP 8: ENCOURAGE**

Encourage the interviewer to share information about his or her company. Demonstrate your interest. Some suggested questions to ask the interviewer are provided in *QUESTIONS YOU COULD CONSIDER ASKING THE EMPLOYER*.

### **ASK FOR THE JOB!!!!!!**

### **INTERVIEW TIP 9: EXITING THE INTERVIEW**

Ask about timeframes for filling the position, how and when you will be notified, and if they would like additional information or materials from you. **DO NOT ASK ABOUT SALARY OR BENEFITS!**

### **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

Contact your DTS representative immediately following the interview!!!

### **INTERVIEW TIP 10: FOLLOW-UP**

Send a thank-you note within 24-48 hours of your interview. Send one to every person who interviewed you. Email is OK, but follow protocols for formal business correspondence, which is always more formal than typical email. Use the thank you note to reiterate your interest and to emphasize your specific qualifications for the position. What do you want them to remember about you that will likely to "sell" them on you as a viable candidate? See the *THANK YOU LETTER* link for additional information.

Everything about the job search should be focused on what **YOU** can do for the company, what **YOU** bring to the position, and why the employer should hire **YOU!** The interview may be your one shot -- so make it a good one!