

## **INTERVIEW TIPS**

Everyone gets tense when it comes to going to an interview. A small dose of nervousness is actually beneficial since it may help you to perform at your peak, but a serious case of the jitters can be a major problem. Here are some ways to help you calm down before an interview.

- Find out everything you can about the company you want to work with. There are several ways to go even further: —find out who the firm’s customers/clients and competition are. Check to see how their products are displayed in stores. Check their website. If you know someone who works there, question him or her closely. Ask to see a copy of the operations manual and anything else that might be helpful. And be sure you have a good answer for a crucial question: “Why do you want to work here?” The better you’ve prepared, the better you’ll be on the day of the interview.
- Make sure you are on time for the interview. Plan to reach the office about ten minutes (or earlier if an application is required) before the meeting. Ask the receptionist where you can hang your coat then find the restroom. Check your hair and/or make-up. Wash your hands and dry them thoroughly. Return to the reception area, have a seat and relax. If your heart starts to beat fast, take a few deep breaths.
- Remember to accompany your firm handshake with a friendly smile and direct eye contact. Be honest. Be yourself. That’s what you are there to sell. Watch out for any signs of nervousness e.g. poor eye contact, laughing, finger fidgeting, squirming, etc. Everyone is nervous during an interview, but try to control the amount of nervousness you display. Don’t be afraid to smile; it can help you.
- The safest way to go in for an interview is a conservative look. It is possible to dress too well, though; you may appear to be trying too hard. Good grooming is critical to success. Carry a briefcase and try to do without a handbag; you will have less to juggle around. The night before and the day of the interview, avoid garlic, rich foods and alcohol. Get a good night’s rest.
- Be a good listener. Don’t overwhelm the interviewer, and don’t talk loud. Try to find out what and who HE or SHE wants in an employee (“How can I help the company?”) Observe, look for clues, and be aware of the firm’s profile. Be brisk. Don’t ramble on with non-pertinent comments. Do not interrupt or argue. Listen to what he has to say. If you don’t understand a question, ask him to repeat it “please.” Take your time answering the questions, and think about what you are going to say before you speak. Ask for feedback but be sure not to be too concise or verbose. “Did I answer your question?”
- Be friendly, sociable and conversational. Be yourself—honest and sincere. They are looking for some one who is trustworthy. Evasive answers are an immediate turn off. Tell the truth, but don’t volunteer bad news or be critical of your past employers. Stay relaxed, but not too relaxed—it might come across as nonchalance or lack of interest. Be positive, optimistic and never project a negative attitude.

## **AVOID THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Poor personal appearance.
2. Lack of interest and enthusiasm. Passive or indifferent attitude.
3. Over-emphasis on money. (Interested only in best offer).
4. Failure to look at interviewer when conversing.
5. Condemnation of past employers.
6. Limp handshake.
7. Talking or rambling too much.
8. Late for interview.
9. Asks no or too general questions about the position.
10. Vague responses to questions.
11. Inability to express self clearly. Goals, accomplishments, skills.
12. Lack of planning for career. (No purpose or goals.)
13. Unwilling to start at the bottom, expects too much... too soon.
14. Lack of confidence and poise.
15. Makes excuses, evasive hedges on unfavorable factors.
16. Lack of tact.
17. Lack of courtesy, ill-mannered.
18. Lack of maturity.
19. Lack of vitality.
20. Indecision.
21. Sloppy application form.
22. Merely shopping around.
23. Wants job only for a short time.
24. No interest in company.
25. Cynical.
26. Low moral standards.
27. Lazy.
28. Intolerant.
29. Narrow interest.
30. Inability to take criticism.
31. High-pressure type.
32. Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time.
33. Over-aggressive, conceited with superiority complex.
34. Failure to participate in activities.
35. Exposing a mediocre scholastic record without a good reason.
36. Focusing too much on your confidence or creditability.

## Here are some questions you may be asked in an interview that you should be prepared to answer....

1. What are your short- range objectives? Long range?
2. What do you look for in a job?
3. What are you leaving? Why did the business fail?
4. What can you do for us that someone else cannot do?
5. How good is your health?
6. Can you work under pressure, deadlines, etc?
7. Do you prefer staff or line work? Why?
8. What is your philosophy of management?
9. What kind of salary are you worth? Why?
10. What are your five biggest accomplishments in your present or last job? Your career?
11. Why didn't you do better in college?
12. What business and character references can you give us?
13. How long would it take to make a contribution to our firm?
14. How long would you stay with us?
15. If you could start again, what would you do differently?
16. How do you rate yourself as a professional? As an executive?
17. What new goals or objectives have you established recently? Why?
18. How have you changed the nature of your job?
19. What do you think of your boss?
20. Why haven't you obtained a job so far?
21. What features of your previous jobs have you disliked?
22. Would you describe a few situations in which your work was criticized?
23. How would you evaluate your present firm?
24. Do you generally speak to people before they speak to you?
25. How would you describe the essence of success?
26. What was the last book you read? Movie you saw?
27. What interests you most about the position we have? The least?
28. Don't you feel you might be better off with a different size firm than ours?
29. Why aren't you earning more by now?
30. Will you be able to take your boss's job?
31. Are you a leader? A good manager? Analytical? Give an example we can verify?
32. How would you describe your own personality?
33. Have you helped increase sales? Profits? Reduce costs?
34. What do your subordinates think of you?
35. Have you hired people before? What do you look for? Have you fired people before?
36. Why should we hire you?

## Here are some proven good questions you can ask:

### 1. About the company

Who are your main competitors?

I saw in your web site that..."

How do you distinguish yourself from competitors?

How would you describe your company culture, philosophies?

What are some changes currently going on within the firm?

- Within the department
- Sales, marketing
- External factors

### 2. About the company

Describe the job cycles – weekly, quarterly, and annually.

In what areas of the job could I really make an impact? How?

Describe your expectations of the right person in this job technically? Personally?

How can someone exceed them?

Has anyone who worked for you really been a superstar? Why?

Has anyone who worked for you failed? Why?

If hired today, what would be my most pressing task to accomplish?

What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of the job?

What do you find to be the most mundane aspect of the job?

Expectations –first 6-9 months? 2 years?

### 3. About the interviewer/group

Do you mind if I ask your background?

How long have you been with the company?

Worked in any areas besides this one?

What do you consider your major achievements here?

What do you like the most about the company? Least?

What are your "secrets" about how to do well here?

Background of others in the group?

**\* In addition, read *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* and/or *The Atlanta Business Chronicle* for a few days prior to the interview and bring up something topical or about the company if available.**