

Interview Tips

The anticipation of a job interview can make you feel both excited and uneasy. You're taking an important step toward achieving your goals, but you don't know exactly what to expect. Will the company like you? Will you like them? Will the position allow you to apply your skills and abilities?

Preparation for a job interview can make the whole process a lot easier. Not that you need to "rehearse" for weeks before the interview. However, assessing your career goals can help you to determine if this is the job for you. And anticipating what questions the interviewer may ask can help you to polish your answers before the interview.

Self-assessment and an evaluation of the company are important steps in matching your needs to what the company can offer. The following guidelines can help you prepare for your interview.

Self-assessment

First, evaluate your needs, values and career goals. Then evaluate your skills and be prepared to highlight them with examples of past experiences in order to sell yourself to the company. Remember, an interviewer is trying to ascertain your future potential based on your past performance.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- ♦ What are my decision-making and problem-solving abilities?
- ♦ How well do I relate to others (i.e. peers and supervisors)?
- ♦ Am I a leader?
- ♦ Am I self-motivated and do I initiate action?
- ♦ How well can I defend my ideas? Strategize? Negotiate?
- ♦ What goals have I set for myself and accomplished?
- ♦ Does my resume accurately reflect my skills, abilities and accomplishments?

After you've answered these questions and recognized the attributes you can bring to the company, consider examples of your accomplishments that will demonstrate to the interviewer what makes you the best candidate for the position.

Assessment of the company and the position

Once you've assessed your goals, you should determine if the company and the particular position(s) for which you are interviewing can match those needs, values and goals. Research the company and the position(s) in the following ways:

- ♦ Read the recruitment literature.
- ♦ Attend company-sponsored information sessions.
- ♦ Talk with friends in the industry.
- ♦ Utilize the library and other resources of your career placement office.
- ♦ Call people you know who work at the company and ask them informational questions about various positions, career paths and company philosophy.

You certainly will have questions about the job, the company and the industry. Ask them. It shows that you've researched and considered the position with enough thought to have some knowledgeable questions.

Bring your energy, enthusiasm and a neat business-like appearance to the interview and you will likely impress the interviewer with your personality and professionalism. However, keep in mind that the interviewer may talk to several people who are *all* qualified to fill one opening. So if the interview doesn't turn out the way you wanted, use it as a learning experience. Through self-assessment and exploration, you will find the niche that's right for you.

GOOD LUCK!

