

Landing the Job You Want – Interviewing



Your resume and cover letter have sold your skills on paper. Now you must pass the face-to-face test—the interview with the potential employer. How do you prepare yourself? What can you say to persuade this interviewer that you are the right person for the job?

These are some of the questions you must answer as you continue on your road to re-employment. From learning about the company to marketing your skills, this information sheet will outline some general tips for making a great first impression!

Learning About the Company

Once you have landed the interview, your first priority should be to find out more about the company. One convenient way of obtaining valuable information is to simply call the business and request it. Ask for an annual report or other promotional materials that can give you information on the services or goods produced, target population, annual budget and other vital statistics. By learning something about the corporate culture, you will gain insight into the skills and experience the employer needs most.

Making a Great First Impression

In addition to obtaining this information, here are some general do's and don'ts for the day of the interview. Follow these to speed by the competition!

- Go alone and arrive at least five minutes early.
- Smile and be polite to everyone you encounter.
- Do not smoke or chew gum.
- Take any occupation-specific licenses or certificates.
- Take extra copies of your resume, references and letters of recommendation to leave with the interviewer if requested.
- Be sure to explain your qualifications fully and to relate your skills to the job description.
- Be positive and confident, but not arrogant.
- Answer questions completely and concisely—do not ramble.
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- Do not discuss personal issues.
- Be careful not to display nervous mannerisms such as nail biting or giggling.
- State your desire for work and your interest in the company.
- Ask questions about the company to reinforce your interest to the interviewer.
- Ask for permission to call back for the results of the interview.
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time.

Always follow up your interview with a formal thank you letter. This letter can be pivotal to getting the job, so make it effective. Refer to the position discussed and reiterate your qualifications— stressing your



enthusiasm for the company. Close by thanking the interviewer again for his/her time and consideration. (See sample letter below.)

Practicing Your Interview Answers

In addition to following the general tips listed above, the success of your job interview will depend on your answers to a wide variety of questions. These questions

Company Name

Address

Date

Dear Ms. Smith

It was a pleasure to meet with you last Tuesday. Our discussion about the qualifications for the Customer Service Representative position only served to convince me further that I am right for this job. The people and the environment at your company were so welcoming and friendly, I could imagine myself as part of your team. I hope you can too.

Once again, thanks for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, feel free to call me at any time.

Sincerely,

John Richards

can range from your early background and education to your personal effectiveness and managerial skills. Whatever the questions, you must fine tune your answers to include information that will beat out the competition.

Here are some commonly asked questions for which to prepare effective answers.

Tell me something about yourself.

What is your weakest point?

What do you know about our company?

Why do you want to work for us?

What are your salary requirements?

Why should I hire you?

Do you have questions for me?

Gauging Your Effectiveness

Once the interview is complete, measure your impact on the employer by reviewing the following checklist:

- Did you arrive on time?
- Did you introduce yourself to the interviewer?
- Did you go through the resume with the interviewer?
- Did he/she discuss anything from your personal background? If so, what?
- Did the employer comment on any of your skills? If so, what was said?
- What was the interviewer's general impression of your resume?
- Did the interviewer discuss any special problems you may have? If yes, what was discussed?
- Did you look at the interviewer when you spoke to him/her?
- Did you mention how you were referred to this company?
- Did you state your desire for work and interest in the company?
- If you were feeling sure that you were not getting the job you were being interviewed for, did you inquire about other positions? What were they?
- Was part-time or temporary employment an option?
- Was there anything the employer seemed to dislike? If so, what?
- What was discussed most?
- In what did he/she seem particularly interested?
- When did you say you would call back?

Making the Commitment

Presenting yourself effectively in an interview is crucial to landing the job. However, remaining positive is critical as well. Depending on a number of circumstances, you may not get many of the jobs for which you interview. But, don't get discouraged. Look on your unsuccessful interviews as learning experiences, and keep trying. DCS's Job Search Journal, and other publications are on hand in this One-Stop Career Center. Ask about available workshops to help you practice your interviewing skills.