



Updating Agencies, Professionals, and Individuals with Current Life Skills Information

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Interview Etiquette

In working with a prospective job applicant, it is important to teach protocol pointers about getting ready for the interview. Here are some helpful hints to itemize:

- A couple of days before an interview, call and get directions to the location of the interview.
- If the applicant will be going by car, it's best to drive by the address ahead of time to see where the site is, how long it will take to get there, and the nearest available parking.
- If using public transportation, a "scouting" trip will help locate the nearest stop and how long it will take to get to the interview site.
- Arriving 10-15 minutes ahead of time is better than tardiness. Point out the dangers of being late. It says to the interviewers that the interviewee didn't think it was important enough to show up on time.
- Allow sufficient time to get there taking into consideration possible traffic or

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What Employers are Looking For

Employers recently rated communication, motivation, and teamwork as the three most valuable qualities in people seeking a job. While employers included academic achievement, computer skills, and technical skills on their wish lists, they were rated as less important than "working together" skills. If a person is motivated and able to communicate and work well with others, s/he should be sure to mention that in job interviews. Marilyn Mackes, Executive Director for the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) says, "It's not enough for a candidate to have knowledge—the candidate has to be able to share that knowledge effectively and tactfully in order for the company to succeed." Below are the results of the Job Outlook 2000 survey of 435 employers conducted by the NACE.

Top 10 Personal Qualities Employers Seek

1. Communication skills
2. Motivation/initiative
3. Teamwork skills
4. Leadership skills
5. Academic achievement/GPA
6. Interpersonal skills
7. Flexibility/adaptability
8. Technical skills
9. Honesty/integrity
10. Work ethic and Analytical/problem-solving skills tied for 10th place

Source: <http://www.naceweb.org>. National Association of Colleges and Employers, 62 Highland Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18017-9085.

Preparing for an Interview

For many people, interviewing for a job is a very stressful experience. Being well prepared for an interview can help the job seekers feel more relaxed and confident. Careful preparation will allow them to present their qualifications and show that they are enthusiastic workers who would do a job well. Good preparation includes the following:

- Submit a well-prepared application.
 - ✓ In most cases they will have to fill out an application, which should be

neat and complete. Making a copy of the application form before filling it out (or getting two copies of the form) provides a backup copy in case mistakes are made.

- ✓ If they have some work experience, encourage them to submit a résumé. This allows them to describe past work experience in more detail than on the application.
- ✓ A cover letter serves as an intro-

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Preparing for an Interview (cont.)

duction to an employer and provides an opportunity to express their interest in the job. There are many resources to help them write a resume and cover letter. A web site that provides a fill-in-the-blank template for creating a resume is <http://www.10minuteresume.com>. Another site that has excellent information, at an easy to read level, on résumé writing, cover letters and interviewing is: <http://www.cyber-north.com/resume>.

- Learn as much as possible about the company. Important information to acquire about the field, position, and employer includes:
 - ✓ skills and personal qualities required for the position,
 - ✓ size, locations(s), and structure of the business or organization,
 - ✓ types of clients, products, or services offered, and
 - ✓ the relationship of the organization to its competitors.This information can be obtained from: web sites; company literature; public libraries; newsletters and magazines; people that work for the company; or people who are in that field of work.
- Prepare answers for questions that will

probably be asked. Doing the following will help the applicant prepare:

- ✓ Make a list of strengths and weakness, good qualities, work style, and skills.
- ✓ Think about how to answer difficult questions. Interviewers will frequently ask, “What are your weaknesses?” Try to think of weaknesses that can turn into strengths. For example, “I hate being late, so I usually arrive 15-20 minutes before I’m supposed to.” “I’m a perfectionist. If something isn’t done right, I redo it.”
- ✓ Review the job description and create a list of skills that are important to the position.
- ✓ List examples of past work, extra-curricular activities that they may have done in school, and any volunteer experiences that indicate transferable skills.
- ✓ Practice with a friend! Use the list of most often asked questions.
- Pay close attention to personal cleanliness and neatness. Last minute frustrations can be minimized by planning what to wear and making sure that the items are clean and pressed and shoes polished several days before the interview. **LS**

The Successful Interview

An interviewer is always mindful of the way an interviewee presents him or herself. Here are some pointers to use in advising hopeful interviewees to make the best impression. A prepared interviewee should practice some of these hints and have an awareness of the others:

- Greeting the interviewer(s) with a firm handshake.
- Making eye contact and smiling.
- Waiting for the interviewer to offer a chair.
- Sitting straight and not slouching or resting an elbow on the interviewer’s desk.
- Being aware of annoying habits.
- Using appropriate language and avoiding swearing or using slang.
- Looking directly at the interviewer and keeping eye contact. This lets the interviewer know the prospective employee is confident and ready.
- Answering questions directly and honestly. If a question is not understood, asking for an explanation.
- Being confident, but not boasting.
- Joking around and talking about irrelevant things often wastes time and is often

Interview Etiquette (cont.)

parking problems. If unavoidably delayed, call the interviewer and let them know the situation, if possible.

- Go to the interview alone. Bringing friends or family along, even if needed for moral support, doesn’t look professional. A friendly manner is a must. Respectfulness and courtesy toward all those at the interview location, even the receptionist and secretaries, sets the right tone.
- Interviewees should never smoke or chew gum.
- Personal mannerisms or habits such as tapping a foot or finger, biting nails, twirling hair, biting the lip, sniffing or clearing the throat often, show nervousness and interviewees should be aware that everyone is watching the little things.
- Dress appropriately. Clothes should be clean and pressed, shoes polished, hair and nails clean and neat. Interviewees should dress conservatively in business-like clothing if possible; women should avoid really bright colors, mini-skirts, and large pieces of jewelry or dangling earrings and men should wear slacks rather than jeans, a shirt that tucks in, or a dress shirt and tie if that is what might be worn on the job.
- Interviewees should look at the interviewer when s/he is talking and when responding to questions. Facing the interviewer directly with hands placed quietly in the lap communicates that attention and interest is directed towards the interviewer. Cross legs at the ankles, not at the knee. **LS**

seen as subject avoidance.

- Talking negatively about a former employer will give the interviewer the wrong message about loyalty. It’s best to say nothing.
- Taking this opportunity to highlight strengths and achievements. Showing how experiences can benefit the company or organization. **LS**

What to Do Following the Interview

A thank you letter should be sent to the interviewer immediately following the interview. Not only is this a polite gesture, it will help remind the prospective employer that the applicant is really interested in the job. A standard business format is appropriate. The person's name, address and phone number should be at the top of the page, either centered or on the right. Care should be taken to spell the interviewer's name correctly in the inside address. The body of the letter should:

- 1) Thank the interviewer,
- 2) Highlight the applicant's qualifications

in just 2 or 3 sentences,

- 3) Express interest in the job, and
- 4) Indicate that s/he looks forward to hearing from them soon and offers to provide any additional information they might need along with a phone number.

Applicants should sign their full name (If they have a middle name it may be omitted or an initial used). Last but not least, it is wise to ask someone to proofread the letter before sending it. The letter can be sent by e-mail or through the post office. **LS**

Sample 'Thank You' Letter

John Ryan
15 Spring Road
Hamlet, LS 41112
555-555-5555

Use a standard business format

August 25, 2000

Ms. Susan Carson
Director
Hamlet Child Development Center
Hamlet, LS 41112

Spell the interviewer's name correctly

Dear Ms. Carson:

Thank the interviewer

Thank you for the opportunity to interview with you yesterday afternoon. I am very interested in the child-care position you described.

Highlight your qualifications

My child development classes, summer jobs, and recent volunteer work as a storybook reader at the community center have prepared me well for a preschool teaching position. I am especially interested in the field trip program you mentioned. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to that effort.

Express interest in the job

I enjoyed meeting you and your staff and look forward to hearing from you soon. If I can provide any additional information, please call me at (555) 555-5555. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Place your phone number near the end

Sincerely,



Sign your first and last name

John Ryan

Ask someone to proofread the letter before you send it

Source: <http://www.bls.gov/opub/ooq/ooqhome.htm>. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Summer 2000, Vol. 44, Number 2, p. 21.

Welfare to Work Curriculum

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welfare recipients
to enter the
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- "Let's Talk About Credit" booklet



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Interview Checklist

Before the Interview

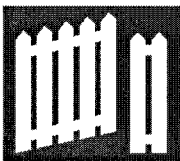
- Submit a completed application, cover letter, and resume.
- Gather information about the company and position.
- Make a list of strengths and weaknesses, good qualities, work style.
- Review the job description and make a list of my transferable skills.
- Make a list of questions I would like to ask about the position and organization.
- Know the address, location and travel time to the interview.

At the Interview

- Arrive at interview 10 - 15 minutes early.
- Use restroom and check image in mirror.
- Dispose of gum.
- Remove sunglasses.
- Be aware of body language.
- Review list of strengths and weaknesses, skills and questions for employer.
- Greet interviewer with a firm handshake and smile.
- Wait for the interviewer to invite you to sit down.
- Answer interview questions.
- Close with a statement of your strengths and contributions to the organization.
- Thank interviewer at the close of the interview.
- Shake hands.

After the Interview

- Write a thank you note.





Lista de control para las entrevistas

Antes de la entrevista

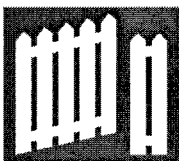
- Entregue una solicitud completa, carta de introducción y hoja de vida.
- Consiga información sobre la compañía y el trabajo.
- Haga una lista de sus puntos fuertes y débiles, cualidades y ética profesional.
- Revise el anuncio del trabajo y haga una lista de sus habilidades relacionadas.
- Haga una lista de preguntas que le gustaría hacer sobre el trabajo y compañía.
- Infórmese sobre la dirección y cuánto tiempo le tomará llegar a la entrevista.

Durante la entrevista

- Llegue al lugar de la entrevista de 10 a 15 minutos antes.
- Pase por el baño y haga cualquier retoque necesario a su apariencia.
- Deseche la goma de mascar.
- Quítese los anteojos de sol.
- Preste atención a sus gestos y lenguaje corporal.
- Repase su lista de puntos fuertes y débiles, habilidades y preguntas que quiere hacer.
- Salude al entrevistador con un fuerte apretón de manos y sonría.
- Espere a que el entrevistador le invite a sentarse.
- Responda a las preguntas que le hagan durante la entrevista.
- Concluya con un resumen de sus cualidades y cómo puede contribuir a la compañía.
- Al concluir la entrevista, dé las gracias al entrevistador.
- Despídase con un apretón de manos

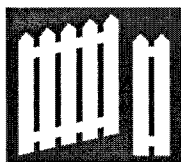
Después de la entrevista

- Envíe una carta corta de agradecimiento.



MOST OFTEN ASKED QUESTIONS

- ✓ Tell me about yourself?
- ✓ What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- ✓ What do you want to be doing in five years'?
- ✓ Why are you applying for this job?
- ✓ What experiences outside of school have you had that would be helpful for this position?
- ✓ What type of people do you enjoy working with?
- ✓ What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?
- ✓ What do you enjoy doing the most?
- ✓ What do you enjoy doing the least?
- ✓ How do you get along with others?
- ✓ Are you a team player?
- ✓ Why are you interested in this position?
- ✓ What do you think is the most important part of this position?
- ✓ Have you ever been fired? Why?
- ✓ Why have you been unemployed all this time?
- ✓ Can you tell me about a problem you solved on the job or at school?
- ✓ What skills would you like to improve?
- ✓ What can you do for my company?
- ✓ Why do you think you can do the job?
- ✓ Why should I hire you?
- ✓ Did you like school?
- ✓ Are you willing to work overtime?
- ✓ How did you hear about us?
- ✓ Give me two reasons why I should hire you?



TEMAS Y PREGUNTAS MÁS FRECUENTES

- ✓ Hábleme sobre usted.
- ✓ ¿Cuáles son sus puntos fuertes y sus puntos débiles?
- ✓ ¿Qué trabajo le gustaría estar desempeñando en cinco años?
- ✓ ¿Por qué decidió solicitar este empleo?
- ✓ Aparte de la escuela, ¿qué experiencias ha tenido que podrían ser útiles para este trabajo?
- ✓ ¿Con qué tipo de personas le gusta trabajar?
- ✓ De sus logros, ¿cuál le dió más satisfacciones?
- ✓ ¿Qué es lo que más le gusta hacer?
- ✓ ¿Qué es lo que menos le gusta hacer?
- ✓ ¿Cómo se lleva con los demás?
- ✓ ¿Trabaja bien en equipo?
- ✓ ¿Por qué le interesa este puesto?
- ✓ ¿Qué le parece lo más importante de este trabajo?
- ✓ ¿Alguna vez lo han despedido de un trabajo? ¿Por qué?
- ✓ ¿Por qué ha estado desempleado por tanto tiempo?
- ✓ ¿Me puede platicar sobre algún problema que solucionó en el trabajo o escuela?
- ✓ ¿Qué habilidades quisiera mejorar?
- ✓ ¿Qué podría hacer para contribuir al progreso de la compañía?
- ✓ ¿Por qué cree que usted es la persona indicada para este puesto?
- ✓ ¿Por qué debo contratarle?
- ✓ ¿Le gustó asistir a la escuela?
- ✓ ¿Estaría dispuesto a trabajar horas extras?
- ✓ ¿Cómo se enteró de este puesto y de nuestra compañía?
- ✓ Déme dos razones para convencerme que debo contratarlo.

