

Interview Preparation Guide

Below is a link to four videos that will provide guidance throughout the entire process from preparing a resume to starting your new position:

1. Effective Resume Preparation
2. Interview Preparation
3. Resignation Process
4. Your First 30 Days

<http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid2377566937001?bckey=AQ~~,AAABJqkbAk~,vkI0ln154Zu7j6glvwfTdXSvCiJSL6dw&bclid=2226047694001&bctid=2151924131001>

According to a recent CareerBuilder survey, these are the errors job seekers make most often during an interview:

- Answering cell phone or texting
- Appearing disinterested
- Dressing inappropriately
- Appearing arrogant
- Talking negatively about current or previous employers
- Chewing gum

To increase your chances of being hired, follow these 11 steps before, during, and after your next job interview:

1. **Research the Company** - Try to find out as much as possible about the company that is interviewing you. An employer will be impressed when you have taken enough interest to investigate their business. Knowing a few things about an employer will help you decide if the company is right for you.

2. **Review Your Resume** - Know your resume like the back of your hand. If you answer a question based on your resume incorrectly you can lose all credibility with the employer. Make sure you know the dates of employment for your previous employers. Your resume should be as close to perfect as possible. You should read over your resume just before the interview. You need to be very confident answering any question about your resume.

3. Practice answering interview questions. Too many job seekers stumble through interviews as if the questions are coming out of left field. But many interview questions are to be expected. Study this list, plan your answers ahead of time and you'll be ready to deliver them with confidence. Here are a few typical interview questions you may be asked:

Tell me about yourself?

Tell me about your background and most significant accomplishments (personally and professionally)?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Why should we hire you?

Why do you want to work here?

What are your goals (short-term/long-term)?

Why are you searching for a new job?

When were you most satisfied in your job?

What can you do for us that other candidates can't?

What are three positive things your current boss would say about you?

What compensation are you seeking?

If you were an animal, which one would you want to be?

What do you know about our company?

Where do you see yourself in five years?

How does your background relate to this position?

How would you describe your most recent job performance?

How would you rate your attendance record at your previous job?

What are some of your hobbies?

What other jobs are you considering?

4. Prepare Questions - Be ready to ask questions. This will impress the employer. It lets them know you are interested in the job and want to learn more about the company while making you seem more aggressive. Remember that you are also interviewing the employer. After the interviewer answers each question, be sure to use this opportunity to sell yourself based on their answer (i.e. after the interviewer tell you about the challenges of this position, tell them what you bring to the table that will help the organization combat those challenges). Create a short list of questions based on your earlier research and any concerns you have. Here are a few questions you may want to ask:

- What's the biggest change your group has gone through in the last year? Does your group feel like the recession is over and things are getting better, or are things still pretty bleak?
- If I get the job, how do I earn a "gold star" on my performance review? What are the key accomplishments you'd like to see in this role over the next year?
- What's your (or my future boss') leadership style?

- About which competitor are you most worried?
- How does sales/operations/technology/marketing/finance work around here? (I.e., groups other than the one you're interviewing for.)
- What type of people are successful here? What type of people are not?
- What's one thing that's key to this company's success that somebody from outside the company wouldn't know about?
- How did you get your start in this industry? Why do you stay?
- What are your group's best and worst working relationships with other groups in the company?
- What keeps you up at night? What's your biggest worry these days?
- What's the timeline for making a decision on this position? When should I get back in touch with you?
- These are tough economic times, and every position is precious when it comes to the budget. Why did you decide to hire somebody for this position instead of the many other roles/jobs you could have hired for? What about this position made you prioritize it over others?
- What is your reward system? Is it a star system/team-oriented/equity-based/bonus-based/ "attaboy!"-based? Why is that your reward system? What do you guys hope to get out of it, and what actually happens when you put it into practice? What are the positives and the negatives of your reward system? If you could change any one thing, what would it be?
- What information is shared with the employees (revenues, costs, operating metrics)? Is this an open-book shop, or do you play it closer to the vest? How is information shared? How do I get access to the information I need to be successful in this job?
- If we are going to have a very successful 2013, what will that look like? What will we have done over the next 18 months to make it successful? How does this position help achieve those goals?
- How does the company/my future boss do performance reviews? How do I make the most of the performance review process to ensure that I'm doing the best I can for the company?
- What is the rhythm to the work around here? Is there a time of year that it's "all hands on deck" and we're pulling all-nighters, or is it pretty consistent throughout the year? How about during the week/month? Is it pretty evenly spread throughout the week/month, or are there crunch days?
- What type of industry/functional/skills-based experience and background are you looking for in the person who will fill this position? What would the "perfect" candidate look like? How do you assess my experience in comparison? What gaps do you see?
- In my career, I've primarily enjoyed working with big/small/growing/independent/private/public/family-run companies. If that's the case, how successful will I be at your firm?

- Who are the heroes at your company? What characteristics do the people who are most celebrated have in common with each other? Conversely, what are the characteristics that are common to the promising people you hired, but who then flamed out and failed or left? As I'm considering whether or not I'd be successful here, how should I think about the experiences of the heroes and of the flame-outs?

5. SMILE & Dress for Success - The first impression you make with the employer will always be your appearance. Always wear proper business attire to the interview and check your appearance before you meet the interviewer. Make sure and greet the interviewer with a firm handshake. This impression of this first contact cannot be overstated enough. You only have a few seconds to make a first impression, so make it count. SMILE! SMILE! SMILE!

6. Impress Everyone - Be friendly, courteous, and professional with all company employees and anyone you meet at the interview site. Be sure to smile and greet the individual at the reception area. As you meet other staff members, be certain to smile and greet them. Be complimentary to your interviewer about exceptional details that stand out such as cleanliness, product quality, staff professionalism, or enthusiasm. The interviewer will be impressed that you noticed and in all probability, the interviewer had something to do with creating whatever detail caught your attention. You never know who is participating in your interview or providing information about your actions. Leave the cell phone and pager in the car.

7. Arrive Early - Know exactly where the interview takes place. Drive by the company a day before the interview and make a note of how long it took you to get there. Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early and never, ever show up even one minute late.

8. Its "Show Time" - Greet the interviewer by his or her last name if you are sure of the pronunciation. If not ask the interviewer to repeat it. Give the appearance of confidence as you enter. SHAKE HANDS FIRMLY! Wait to be offered a chair before sitting down. Sit upright, look alert and interested at all times. Be a good listener as well as a good communicator. Always look the interviewer in the eye while speaking. Try to get the interviewer to describe the position and the duties to you early in the interview so that you can apply your background, skills, and accomplishments to the position. Try to make your good points come across to the interviewer in a sincere, factual manner. During the interview if you are presented with an application, fill it out neatly and completely.

9. Communicate the Positive - If you are interested in the position, let the interviewer know. Say something like "I am very impressed with your company, its products, and the people I have met. I am confident I could do an excellent job in the position we have discussed." The interviewer will be impressed with your enthusiasm. Do not be discouraged if no commitment has been made. The interviewer will probably want to communicate with other people in the company or possibly interview more candidates

before making a decision. If you get the impression the interview is not going well, do not let your discouragement show. Once in awhile an interviewer will seem to discourage you as a way of testing your reaction.

10. **Be Courteous** - Always thank the interviewer for his or her time and consideration. If you want the job, be sure the hiring leader knows your level of interest.

11. **Follow-Up** - Follow-up the interview with a note, e-mail, or a phone call. A handwritten note that is mailed on the same day as the interview is a nice touch, but email is perfectly acceptable...especially if the position is going to be filled quickly. **Keep the note brief.** Let them know it was nice to meet them, thank them for their time, and once again remind the employer that you are still very interested in the opportunity with their organization. You can briefly recap a few key points that were discussed in the interview that make you a great fit for the opportunity, but DO NOT send a long note trying to continue selling yourself for the opportunity, get “cute”, etc. A follow-up note will likely not help your chances of getting an offer, but the wrong note can be a red flag to hiring leaders that might not have existed following your interview.