

Interviewing: Putting Your Best Foot Forward

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Interviewing is one of the most dynamic forms of business and professional communication. The interview gives you a chance to prove to a potential employer that you are capable, competent and qualified. Therefore, it is important that you learn as much as you can about interviewing in order to effectively market yourself during an interview.

Throughout this and other "career" center articles you will find notes that provide hints, reminders and suggestions related to the topic. Symbols are defined as follows:

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* o two interviewers or interviews are ever ali!e. + owever, a typical ,-.minute screening interview will follow a format similar to this:

- The first few minutes of an interview usually consist of a firm handshake, a quick and professional introduction and some small talk to develop a rapport between you and the interviewer. / a!e sure you smile and that your initial presentation of yourself is positive. It has been said that an employer spends the first minute of the interview developing an impression of you and you spend the rest of the interview confirming their impressions or changing those impressions.

computer or television and communicates with the interviewer who communicates using similar technology.

give the tour leader your undivided attention and ask interesting questions.

- The Group Interview is almost the complete opposite of the Panel Interview. In the Group Interview there is one interviewer and several interviewees. Basically, interviewees compete to see who will surface as the leader of the group. The person who answers questions professionally and diplomatically wins the competition and the right to continue in the interviewing process or to get the job. This is frequently used when an employer has many people to interview and few people to conduct the interviews.

- Frequently utilized by business professionals, the Social Interview will give the interviewer a sense of your ability to function in social settings. Brush up on your table manners and rules of professional etiquette, order non-messy foods, treat your server with respect, and order a moderately priced meal. Avoid drinking alcohol because even a few ounces can lessen your ability to maintain a professional demeanor.

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If you need to brush up on your business and professional etiquette, plan to attend the Career Center's annual Training and Professional Etiquette Dinner. This workshop is presented by the Career Center's Professional Etiquette Consultant / Coordinator. Copies of her book, Panache That Pays are available in the Career Center for CD. -- a copy.

- Employers typically use the Telephone Interview as a screening interview before deciding who to interview in person. This can be a very simple interview but the interviewee must be careful to speak clearly, listen attentively and communicate sincerely on the telephone since the interviewer does not have the ability to read body language on the telephone. Be careful to eliminate speech habits such as um, and, no, ya know, etc.

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When participating in a telephone interview, lay your reference materials on a table in front of you. These materials could include a copy of your resume with relevant information highlighted. Also, if you anticipate being asked some typical interview questions, you can prepare answers. Having responses written down can increase your interview comfort level so you can focus on your telephone communication skills.

- If an employer is interested in continuing the employment process with you after the first interview, you may be invited for a second interview or on-site visit. A tour of the facilities, staff introductions, and multiple interviews typically characterize this type of interview. During tours,

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* Note the names and positions of everyone you meet during an interview. Thank you letters typed should be mailed to every person who interviewed you within 5E hours of your interview. Consider sending handwritten thank you notes to people you met throughout the day but who did not interview you i.e. support staff members and tour guides (

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The way you respond to interview questions tells the interviewer whether or not you are qualified and can handle the position. Therefore, it is important to know what types of questions may be asked and what responses are appropriate. Before formulating an answer to an interview question, consider applying the following four P's to your response:

- Consider yourself why the employer has asked a question. This will help you determine what skill, trait, value or ability is being measured. Try to respond to the question by highlighting the criteria that is being evaluated.
- Prove every statement you make. If you say that you have developed excellent communication skills give examples of situations where you utilized these skills. If you claim that your education has provided you with an outstanding education, discuss the curriculum requirements.
- Practice interviewing. One good way to get started is to obtain a list of sample interview questions and write your responses to these questions on paper. Commit your responses until you are comfortable with them. Call

still. The premise behind the Behavioral Interview is that past performance is an indicator of future performance ' if you did it before, you should be able to do it again. To be successful in the behavioral interview, rely heavily and thoughtfully drawing upon specific examples from your education and experiences.

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You may be asked questions regarding your marital status, age, race, religious preference, children, sexual orientation or other issues that are not job related. * Not all of these questions are always illegal but all are definitely inappropriate or unethical interview questions because they are unrelated to the job qualifications. Handling these questions can pose a personal dilemma as you decide how to respond. There are no strict guidelines to follow in dealing with these questions and many times they are asked by interviewers who are unaware that the questions are inappropriate. However, if you feel uncomfortable about a question ask yourself the following questions:

3. Am I really want this job?
5. How badly do I want this job?
- .. Am I really want to work for an organization that asks inappropriate questions?
- E. Does the interviewer realize that this question is inappropriate?

Based on your responses to some of these questions you may wish to:

3. End the interview.
5. Ask the interviewer what relevance the question has to the position or why the question is being asked.
- .. Refuse to answer the question.
- E. Answer the question with or without regret.

Remember in mind, the way you handle this situation says a lot about your professionalism and maturity. Avoid being rude and argumentative while remaining positive, polite and assertive.

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While questions regarding salary and benefits are considered inappropriate in a first interview, here are some good examples of questions to ask during the

If you are invited to interview, in most cases the employer will pay for all related interviewing expenses. They may pre-pay the expenses for travel, lodging, meals, etc. (or they may ask you to submit receipts to be reimbursed. Do not take advantage of the employer paying expenses. Fly coach. Not first class. Stay in business class hotels. Avoid fancy suites in five-star hotels and don't order room service. Order menu items that are average in cost. Stay away from the most expensive item on the menu.

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To learn more about interviewing:

- Schedule an appointment to meet with a career center professional staff member to discuss interviewing.
- Schedule a 1-on-1 Interview with a professional staff member.
- Read a book on interviewing. Several are available in the Career Library.