

INTERVIEW PREPARATION KEYS

One of the most common mistakes candidates make is failing to focus on selling their skills, work experiences, accomplishments, and applicable skills.

To obtain a job offer, one must prove the ability to bring more value to the position than other candidates. Failure to do so will result in a low offer at best or be ruled out at worst.

Preparation: Based on hundreds of interview, we've seen it is a waste of time to go on an interview unless you prepare as outlined below:

You must sell yourself to the interviewer. This requires preparation. Do not go into the interview thinking that you will just read from or refer to the resume. The following list will assist you in your preparation:

1. On a sheet of paper, prepare a list of skills required on the left side of the paper. On the right side of the page, detail your applicable experience, skills, and results.
2. Think about what the company needs done and how you can help.
3. Research the company on the internet, in the library, and/or with us.
4. Write out a succinct rationale for each job change in your career.
5. Prepare a succinct summary of why you are the right person for the position.

Other key preparation steps to win in the interview:

1. Attire: Dress for the part.
2. Body Language: Maintain eye contact. Do not fold arms. Do not kick back or slouch.
3. Establish Rapport; No one will hire someone they don't like.
4. Due Diligence; Ask questions to see if you understood them correctly and to ensure that they understood you correctly. This places you in a position to demonstrate your decision making capability. Make a list of critical questions to determine if the opportunity is right for you. A few examples:
 - a. What are your key expectations in position?
 - b. How will success be measured?
 - c. What are potential obstacles?

5. When Concluding interview:

- a. Let them know would enjoy position. Sometimes they get the wrong idea. You must explicitly tell them.
- b. You must proactively let them know that you can handle the responsibilities of the job.
- c. Ask employer for a list of their concerns they have about your experience or background. Address all of their concerns and get feedback from them that their concerns have been covered. If they still have reservations about a concern, explain how you have overcome similar shortcomings in the past.
- d. Do not assume only one concern! Ask what other potential concerns they have.
- e. Present any concerns that you have about the position to the interviewer. Discuss it until it is no longer a concern for you.
- f. Ask "What is the next step?" or "Where do we go from here?"

If you are working with an executive recruiter, It is critical that you provide detailed feedback IMMEDIATELY after the interview so that your recruiter can respond to the client. This may enable them to clarify any misunderstanding about your skills or interest in the position, thus increasing your chances of getting an offer (assuming you want one.)

Miscellaneous:

1. Most interviewers will ask you to "Tell me about yourself?" You must prepare a 90 second "elevator speech" or summary of your background which draws a direct correlation of your experience to the position!
2. A list of nevers:
 - a. Never bad mouth a prior boss even if they were awful. Your new employer will assume you will do the same with them.
 - b. Never bring up salary, but do be prepared to respond. If asked the question about what you want or what you currently earn, the best approach is: "My current salary is \$__ + \$ Cash bonus + _____ BUT I'm more concerned about (your number one & # 2 goal / and/or "I would be receptive to competitive offer")
 - c. If pressed, you can give \$\$ Range Acceptable to you! For your information, the higher your salary, the more we get paid! So we want to get largest offer without losing it due to excessive greed.
3. Other potential stumbling blocks/questions - Be prepared to answer these:
 - a. "What are your weaknesses"? Think of 'negatives' that may be perceived as positives- for example, 'Some say I'm a workaholic.' 'Some say I'm a stickler for details-but I still get the quantity done.'
 - b. "Tell me about yourself". First ask 'do you want me to cover both my relevant work experience and education?' Do NOT fall into trap of telling you life history.

- c) "What would you do if" questions. Prepare for situation by creating a list of questions and answers before hand. If job involves supervision, one question might be "What would you do if someone stole or appeared high on drugs"? etc.
- d) Review your resume in detail and think back to specifics so archived memories are not dusty. Review everything from well-qualified vendors you may have worked with, technical terms, design issues, etc.

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