

Interviewing Techniques

Contributed by Jeff Naret
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PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW What's the most critical part of the interview? While some job seekers might think it's the question session or a company tour, job search coaches know the truth: The most critical stage of the interview is the time spent preparing for it. The information provided here was compiled from years of management experience in the restaurant / retail industry and will provide you with information which will make you a better interviewee both in the initial telephone interview and face-to-face interview. It is not a guarantee of a job offer, but simply advice to increase the probability of a job offer.

Most face to face interviews are preceded by an initial phone interview. The techniques described here apply to both interviews, but the objectives differ. In the telephone interview, the objective should be TO OBTAIN A FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW. With the face to face interview, the objective should be TO GET AN OFFER. Going for the offer differs from going for the job. The candidate who goes for the offer, sells himself to the company. **DO NOT FORGET TO REMEMBER: DO BE ON TIME** It is very important for you to arrive at the interview 5-10 minutes early. Being late sends a negative message about you to the interviewer. **DO DRESS**

PROFESSIONALLY Women: A skirt, dress or pant suit is the most appropriate for the female candidate. Make sure that your clothes are neat, clean and well pressed. Avoid flashy colors, jeans, T-shirts or tennis shoes. Have your hair neat, clean and well groomed. Avoid wearing bright or flashy nail polish or excessive jewelry. Men: A shirt and tie is the most appropriate clothing for the male candidate. Make sure that your clothes are neat, clean and well pressed. Avoid flashy colors, jeans, T-shirts or tennis shoes. Wear your hair neat, clean and well groomed. **DO PREPARE** Have a pen, notepad and extra copy of your resume with you. Place these items in a place that will be easy for you to get to. If you currently use a daily/weekly planner, bring this with you. You should try to arrive at your interview well rested, with a clear mind. **DO GREET YOUR INTERVIEWER ENTHUSIASTICALLY** Stand up and extend your hand for the handshake. "Good morning, I'm glad to meet you and thank you for the opportunity to be a candidate for this position". You should smile and show your enthusiasm about the opportunity to work for their company. Remember, they are interviewing you for a job that requires a lot of energy and enthusiasm, if you don't have this for the interview, they will not be convinced that you have the stamina required for the job. Remember, first impressions are lasting impressions. Are you the person the interviewer wants greeting their guests? **DO NOT DISPLAY PERSONAL HABITS** An interviewer wants your undivided attention. Personal habits distract. These include: smoking, chewing gum, twiddling thumbs, tapping a pencil or a fork, humming, whistling, stretching, cleaning finger nails, clearing your throat or excessive ums and ahs in conversation. Don't make disparaging remarks about your present employer. Negative remarks will not help your cause, and will seem as though you are blaming others for your short comings. **DO RESEARCH THE COMPANY THOROUGHLY** Learn as much as you can about the company, salary and benefits. Family and friends are excellent sources of information about the type of company you are interviewing with. If you have heard positive things about the company, make sure you mention that to the interviewer. Be prepared to positively answer questions about why you want to work for their company. **DO NOT ASK TOO MANY QUESTIONS** Don't barrage the interviewer with questions. Remember, they are interviewing you. **LOOK THEM IN THE EYE**, and nod encouragingly. Give your interviewer a chance to volunteer answers before you ask them. Don't get into a lengthy discussions about salary or benefits package. They are aware of how much you are currently making. If they ask your salary requirements, a good response would be: "You know what I am currently earning. I feel I am the person for the job. If you feel the same, I am sure you will make an offer that is both fair and attractive. **DO HAVE A GOOD ATTITUDE** Reflect confidence in yourself and knowledge of your job. However, do not seem over confident in your abilities. Stay relaxed and answer questions sincerely. Be **ENTHUSIASTIC!!!!** Lighten up and have a sense of humor! Let your interviewer feel at all stages of the interview that you really want the job. Do not mention offers of interviews with other companies. Show serious interest so that you will be considered a serious candidate. **QUESTIONS TO EXPECT**—YOU SHOULD ANSWER QUESTIONS IN A CLEAR, POSITIVE MANNER. **AVOID SHORT YES/NO ANSWERS. USE DEPTH AND THOUGHT IN YOUR RESPONSES.** "TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF" This is not an open door to tell your life story. Hit on general topics, i.e. your professional background, hobbies etc. "WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS" Be prepared to give specific examples of your strengths. An example would be, "I am highly motivated, detail oriented" "WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES" Don't say "I do not have any that I can think of". An example would be, "I am not a good speller, so I keep a dictionary handy" or "I sometimes am impatient, so I sometimes find myself working excessively to pick up the slack of others" "WHAT KIND OF MANAGER ARE YOU/HOW WILL YOU MANAGE YOUR PEOPLE?" Be prepared to describe your style of management. Are you a hands on manager? Are you a delegator? Give examples of when your type of management style was successful. "WHY DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE YOUR CURRENT JOB?" The way you answer this question is important because you do not want to seem negative towards your current employer. A good response would be: "I am always looking to better myself. I heard positive things about your company from John Watson, so I wanted to explore my options" "WHERE DO YOU WANT TO BE IN FIVE YEARS" This question has two sides: 1) How ambitious are you? Do you want to be constantly growing in your career? 2) How loyal are you? Are you planning on staying with a company for that long? A good response would be: "I want to be a better manager than I am now. I would be actively working towards promotions in my company." **OTHER QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO BE PREPARED TO ANSWER:**

- How will you be an asset to our company—good opportunity to mention prior achievements, without being boastful.
- Why did you pick the restaurant/retail industry?
- Describe a leadership role, other than restaurant/retail management, that you held.
- What has been your greatest challenge?
- Give me an example of a problem that arose in your store, and how you solved it.
- Tell me about a project you initiated.
- What types of situations put you under pressure and how did you deal with it?
- Give me a situation in which you failed, how did you deal with it?
- How do you work with difficult people?
- What was your greatest accomplishment?
- What challenges are you looking for in a position?
- What motivates you?
- If I asked people who know you to describe you, what three words would they use?
- Describe a situation where you had to work with someone who was difficult. How did you handle it?
- What traits are most important for a good manager?
- Tell me about a team project of which you are particularly proud of. What was your contribution?
- What type of environment appeals to you the most?
- What characteristics are most important in a good manager? How have you displayed one of them?
- What makes someone a good leader?
- What are your expectations of a good employer?
- What do you do in your spare time? UNIVERSAL INTERVIEW QUALITIES

Professionalism Command of Presence Body language Dress Hygiene Punctuality Intelligence Depth Common sense Logical Organized People Skills Smile Sociable Upbeat Approachable Positive Personal Adjustment Flexible Mature Emotional Stability Confident Open to Influence Leadership Commands Respect Responsible Take Charge Tough Minded Empathy Communicating Skills Vocabulary/Grammer Listening Skills Tone of Voice Eye Contact Specificity of Answers Drive and Energy Pace Enthusiasm Achievements Posture Integrity Personal Standards Honesty Sincere/Genuine Accurate dates Gut Feel Track Record Progression Length Commitment Successes Compatible Experience

CLOSING: Many candidates are so relieved at the end of an interview that they just hop up, pump the interviewer's hand and leave. That's a wasted opportunity. In addition to the handshake, smile, and thank-you, the closing should yield information for both parties. As the candidate, you need to tell the interviewer that you want the job. The information you need back is about the hiring process. Here's a sample closing sentence: "I've enjoyed our interview, and I'm very interested in this job. I'd like to make myself available for the next step. Can I contact you next week?" If it seems too forward for your style, say, "I'm interested in this job. What's the next step in the hiring process?" In either case, make it your plan to know the time line and to contact the interviewer again. Make it part of your job search strategy to prepare for all interviews before you go.