

## PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

### Before:

- When you are called to schedule the interview, ask if there will be an application or any paperwork you will need to fill out. If so, make sure you have reference information with you, so you can complete the application.
- Know your resume backwards and forwards. Most interviewers will work from your resume, so knowing your resume will help you know where things are headed. Also, an automatic disqualifier in many cases is being stumped by something on your own resume.
- Have examples of your significant accomplishments ready to present. It's important that you know your successes, and you need to be able to communicate them concisely, yet fully, making sure to describe your role in the success, and the value it delivered to the business. Every one of your accomplishments needs to be able to be correlated to increasing profit or decreasing costs; that's how salaries are determined. So if you are asked how you work with a tough deadline in place, don't say, "I work well under pressure." Give the interviewer a specific example. Not only will that prove that you can do it, but it also will go a long way in showcasing your communications skills.
- Dress for success. Wear professional business attire, even if you know it's a casual environment. Pay attention to details, (clean, pressed suit, polished shoes.) Choose attire that is conservative. Also, don't bathe in perfume or cologne. This frequently turns off interviewers. You want to leave an impression based on your skills and experiences, not the way you smell.
- Bring a few copies of your resume, and something like a planner or portfolio so that you can take notes during the interview.

### During:

- Timing is everything. Don't be one minute late, but also be aware that being too early may not reflect well on you. Some interviewers would interpret a candidate being too early as being inconsiderate. Ideally, you want to make your entrance five to ten minutes ahead of your scheduled time. Give yourself plenty of time to get to the interview, but sit in your car and review your resume and success stories until the appropriate time.
- First impression is a key. Greet the receptionist warmly; it will help you set the tone for the interview. When the interviewer comes to meet you, introduce yourself; make eye contact and a firm handshake, along with "It's a pleasure to meet you."
- If the interviewer wants to tell you more about the company and what they are looking for first, that's great. They are drawing you a road map to success, and you will know how to present yourself. If they go straight into questions about your background, remember the behavioral interviewing approach, and use your success stories to prove you can do that job.

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- If given the opportunity to ask questions, have some ready. Ask about long-term company goals, and how your role would impact those goals. Ask what could have been better about previous employees performing that role.
- As the interview winds down, express your interest in the position and the company, and go for the close. Successful closes sound like this, “XYZ Company looks like a great place to work, and I’m very excited about this opportunity. I’m interested in working with/for you. What’s the next step in the process?”
- Get a business card from your interviewers. It will give you what you need to follow up with a thank you email or hand written note.

### **After:**

- Make sure to follow up same day with a thank you email.
- If you’d prefer to write a hand written note, make sure you get it in the mail quickly.
- Make it known that you are available for follow up questions, or to meet again at their convenience.

**Good Luck!**