

INTERVIEWING – CANDIDATE TIPS, BRIEFING AND PREPARATION

Ask any questions you'd like. In fact, I encourage you to **have some questions prepared** in advance. **But please refrain from asking about compensation or benefits questions.** If either Sandy or Tom asks you about compensation, you are welcome to tell them what you are currently making, and that you would consider their best offer based on your experience.

Timing - You must be punctual to every interview. Before your first meeting with a prospective employer, you should drive to the location where your interview will take place on a "dry run" to determine the best route to your meeting. On every actual interview occasion, you should plan on arriving early to the interview time. Park out of site of your prospective employer's facility and take time to prepare mentally for your meeting. Parked away from any line of view, you can also attend to any last minute grooming needs. Approximately 10 minutes before your scheduled interview time, you should pull into the company's parking lot, get out of your car and with a purposeful stride and a smile on your face and walk to the front door.

First Impressions - Every candidate should dress for an interview at one level above what the position will require on a daily basis. On all other occasions men should wear a jacket and tie (preferably a suit) and women should wear a dress or business suit. Conservative clothes - gray or navy blue - are always the safest choice. Men should wear a white professionally laundered shirt, a silk tie (no novelty or theme ties!), black shoes and a black belt. Both men and women should avoid excessive jewelry, and little, if any, fragrance should be worn.

Breath smell is important - No alcoholic beverages or cigarettes should be used within six (6) hours before the interview. All personal grooming and preparation should be completed prior to arriving in the prospective employer's parking lot. You should begin smiling in the parking lot and not quit until you are answering a serious question in the interview. Greet the receptionist with a full introduction like "Hello, I am (name) and I am here for my _____ o'clock meeting with (employer's name)." Any application offered should be filled out entirely. It is always inappropriate to put "see resume" on an application for employment. Salary information should be completed honestly, and requests for salary desired should be answered, "open" not "negotiable". When you are introduced to the interviewer, offer a warm and firm handshake. Do not sit until asked to do so, and at that point, offer your prospective employer a clean original resume in a new manila folder.

Answering the Tough Questions - The interview should take place in a conversational style. Open-ended questions should be completely answered in three or four sentences. Closed ended questions (answers to which are usually yes or no) should be answered directly, but with short elaboration or a return questions - "yes, we did cut our defect rate by 20%, but most of that was accomplished by an accountability program we implemented." Your goal is to answer every question completely but concisely, while fostering a conversational style so that your interviewer will openly share information about the position and company with you.

Getting Your Questions Answered - The questions you have about a prospective new employer are important and must be asked in a way that ensures you an accurate and meaningful answer. During your interviewing process, all of your questions should be strictly related to the company and the *performance* of the position, centering on the company's products, services, and plan, as well as any contemporary issues that may have a direct impact on the company. Questions regarding benefits, hours, vacation policy, smoking privileges, and other personal questions should be addressed only to your search consultant until after you have a firm offer in hand. Frankly, those issues are not pertinent to the candidate who is not going to receive an offer, and all of your attention needs to be directed toward winning the best possible offer.

At the close of the interview, you should thank the interviewer for his/her time and say something along the lines of "From our conversation today, I feel certain that I could be effective in this position. Can you tell me what I need to do next?"