Interview Tips

Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Employment Resource Center, W207
Agenda

- Interview Purpose/Hiring Process
- Before the Interview
- During the Interview
- Interview Questions
- After the Interview
What is the purpose of the interview?

- Answer the employer’s question: “How can you be valuable to me?”
- Talk about whether your skills & experience match what the employer is looking for.
- To learn about the position.
- To sell your skills and get the job!
The Hiring Process

- Apply for position
- Offer

Candidate Leverage Increases throughout Process
Before the Interview

Taking the Employer Call

- First impressions count
- Phone etiquette/Voicemail
- Cell phones/Phone interviews
- Scheduling; respond promptly, be flexible
- Date, time, location, name of person
Before the interview

Research the position and agency

- Demonstrates interest in the position/company
- Interview questions will relate to the job, department and company
- An employer wants someone who is knowledgeable about the position, company and industry.
Before the interview

Find the location of the interview

- Figure out parking.
- Find the room number/building.
- Time your commute and allow extra time.
Before the interview

Assemble everything you might need

- Resume, 2-3 copies
- Pen and paper
- Folder or portfolio
- Questions for Employer
- References
- Proof of ability to work in United States
Before the interview

Assemble your Interview attire

- Review attire several days before
- No perfume/cigarette smoke
- Be conservative jewelry/style
- Pay attention to color and style. Blues, grays, blacks are best
- “Dress Casual” – what is it?
- Ways to find out what to wear
Before the interview

Anticipate Interview questions:

- Review the job announcement
- Research the company/position
  - Business reference resources
  - Networking
- Lists of typical interview questions
Before the interview

Practice Interview Answers

- What is your learning (remembering) style?
  - Write and study
  - Talk and listen
  - Tape and listen
  - Read and Type
- Talking out loud
- Watch yourself on Interviewstream.com
During the interview

First Impressions

- First impressions count!
- Be prompt. Arrive 10 minutes early.
- The interview starts before the interview
During the interview

Stages of the interview

- Introduction
- Employer questions
- Candidate questions
- Closing statement
Introduction Stage

- Shake hands (before and after the interview)
- Neutral chit chat – weather, driving etc.
- Be positive and upbeat
- Judiciously refuse offers of food, coffee etc.
- Remain standing until you are asked to sit
During the interview

Non-verbal cues

- Maintain your poise and posture. Sit leaning slightly forward
- Do not cross your arms
- Maintain eye contact
During the Interview

Employer questions - types

- Screening questions
- Questions about Qualifications/Skills
- Work history
- Personal characteristics
- Job & company match (with you!)
- Negative questions
- Behavioral Interviewing
Answer Guidelines:

- Positive and upbeat
- Verifying the facts
- Emphasize what you DO have...
- Short, targeted answers (2-3 min. max)
- Examples are wins/accomplishments
- Management perspective on teamwork
- Spend time on Similar jobs, less time on less similar jobs...
During the Interview

Screening Questions

- Questions covered on e-application
- Reconfirmed in interview
  - Availability – Hours, Shift, Days of week...
  - Right to work in United States
  - Willing to relocate/travel
- Minimum requirements: Licenses/Certifications/Education/Experience
During the Interview

Qualifications

“So, Tell me about yourself”?
During the Interview

Qualifications

- Sounds like – “3 years Accounting experience”
- Study the job announcement
- Review your work experience relative to the qualifications
- Be able to easily explain how your past fits the employer’s qualifications
During the Interview

Work History

- Study the job announcement/read your own resume
- **Know!**
  - Employer
  - Title
  - Dates
- Responsibilities
- Reason for Leaving
- Talk more about similar jobs, and less about dissimilar jobs
- Anticipate rough spots and have an answer
During the Interview

Behavioral Interviewing

- Sounds like - “Tell me about a time when...” or “give me an example of a time when”
- Respond in STARS format:
  - S - Situation
  - T - Task
  - A - Action
  - R - Result
  - S - Show how this will help the Employer
During the Interview

Personal Characteristics

- Sounds like – “Explain how you multi-task in your current position?” or, “How would your friends describe you?”
- Study the job announcement for key phrases - “teamwork” “energetic” “demonstrates patience”
- Respond in STARS format, giving evidence
During the Interview

Job & Company match (with you!)

- Sounds like –
  - “What did you most enjoy about your past work, and what did you enjoy the least?”
  - Do you prefer to work alone or with others?
  - Why are you interested in working here?
  - Where do you see yourself in five years?

- Why? To ensure the candidate understands the position, is a fit, and has realistic expectations
During the interview

Job & Company match (with you)

- Understand the type of work you are applying for
- Study the job announcement – research the organization
During the Interview

Negative Questioning

- Sounds like –
  - “Tell me about the worst mistake you ever made”
  - “Tell me about the worst boss you ever had”
  - “What’s your worst characteristic?”

- Advice: DON’T
  - Tell about a mistake – not the biggest
  - Emphasize how you recovered, what you learned, how you have improved as a result
Off-the-Wall interviews

- Know what you want to say
- Memorize 2-3 strongest qualifications relative to the position
- Break in gently if you must
- Get your message across!
- Off the wall questions – relate back to the qualifications for the position
During the Interview

Questions about Pay

- Early in process vs. negotiation step before offer
- Early - Be as flexible as possible – know where you stand on pay. View offer as a total package.
- Negotiation: first to name a number loses:
  - A - Avoid - “Negotiable” “the Market rate”
  - R - Range - “I understand the market rate is from $12 - $15/hour, I’m in that range”
  - T - Turn it around - “What is the company’s pay range?”
During the Interview

Candidate questions for the Employer:

- Show interest in the work being done
- Ask about: the position, the department, how work is organized, organizational structure
- Ask about: the interviewer’s professional background
- Avoid - “What’s in it for Me?” especially at the early stages
- Remember: Candidate Leverage Increases throughout the hiring Process
After the interview

Send a thank you letter

- Makes a positive impression on the employer.
- Thank them for their assistance.
- Send it as soon as possible after the interview.
After the Interview

The Offer

- Get it in writing
- Get your questions answered in a follow-up meeting:
  - HR for benefits questions
  - Manager for operations/position questions
Thank You

More information:

www.lwtech.edu/erc

or

Employment Resource Center - W207
425-739-8113
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