SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW
- Research the position, the organization, and the community.
- Find “insider” information (company mission statement, strategic objectives, corporate values, etc.)
- Know the information on your resume
- Create a list of the skills/qualities you have to offer an employer that relate to the position for which you are interviewing (organization, leadership, computer knowledge, dependability, flexibility, etc.)
- Think about one or two weaknesses and what you have done to successfully overcome them.
- Be prepared to answer behavioral questions using the STAR model (see reverse).
- Prepare questions to ask the employer (see below).
- Rehearse... Rehearse... Rehearse... in front of a mirror... on a tape recorder... with a friend...

DURING THE INTERVIEW
- Arrive early with a portfolio holding extra resumes, a list of your key skills, and questions to ask.
- Meet the interviewer with a firm handshake, a friendly smile, and a polite greeting.
- Use body language to show interest (appropriate posture and eye contact).
- Ask about the next step in the process.
- Thank the interviewer and collect a business card.
- Conclude the interview by telling the interviewer that you're very interested in the position. Ask for the job!

AFTER THE INTERVIEW
- Send a thank-you letter via email immediately and via USPS within one to two days to all interviewers.
- If you don’t hear from the company in two weeks, contact them and inquire about the status of the position.
- Keep a record of all interviews, correspondence, and subsequent follow-up.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PERSONAL
- Tell me about yourself. (Relate your answer to the job – What about you makes a good fit?)
- What three key words would your peers use to describe you and why?

THE JOB
- Why do you want to work for our company/organization?
- What do you know about our company/organization?
- Why should we hire you?

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
- Describe a workplace challenge you faced and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a time you worked in a team environment and you encountered conflict. How did you handle it?
- Describe an experience involving a deadline. What methods did you use, and were you able to accomplish the task on time?
- Describe a time you went above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Describe a situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you wish you had done more planning. What happened? How could it have been avoided? What did you learn from this experience?
QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

- What is a typical day like?
- What are your department goals for the next two to three years? What are the long-term goals?
- What are some common characteristics of successful employees within your company?
- What type of training is available? How is one evaluated in this position?
- What has been your career path within this company?
- Prepare specific questions for each position/company (e.g. "I’m interested in knowing more about the new product line that your company has just launched.")

PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

- Be well groomed: moderate makeup, light or no perfume/aftershave, ironed clothes, polished shoes.
- Dress in conservative business attire: slacks or skirt; jacket or nice sweater
- Be courteous to everyone you meet: receptionists, secretaries, and others.
- Be confident, poised, and enthusiastic; use professional language.

THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

- Arrange the interview for a time and place that is quiet and calm.
- Be prepared by keeping resume and notes by the telephone.
- Clarify and write down the name(s) of the interviewer(s) to whom you are speaking.
- Speak clearly and directly into the telephone; take notes.
- Exhibit personality and energy through the voice tone and inflection.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES

Behavioral questions center around skills, qualities, and abilities important for success on the job. For example, if teamwork is important to a job, the interviewer might ask, "Tell me about a time you worked on a team and you encountered conflict. How did you handle it?"

- **STAR technique:** State the situation, the Task assigned, Action taken, and the end Result. For example:

  **Situation/Task:** "I worked on a team of five in my Marketing class. We were analyzing survey data to determine the effectiveness of customer service for a local retailer. One of our team members continually failed to show up for group meetings or turn in assignments."

  **Action:** "After talking with other group members, I approached the team member to find out more about their lack of participation. After finding out that she had a family illness she was dealing with, we worked out a plan for her to contribute to the project, but on a smaller scale."

  **Result:** "Our team bonded after understanding the team member’s situation. The team member, after our discussion, contributed significantly to the assignment. We received an A on the project!"

- Select situations in which you have demonstrated the behaviors important to the current job.
- Be detailed and specific in discussing how you contributed to the success of the event described.

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