

HOW TO BE INTERVIEWED AND LIKE IT

We do a lot more than Coach our Clients on the Job Search: We teach our job seeker clients how to go about getting every employer with whom they interview to make them an offer. In fact that is our first bit of advice.

- I. **Job Offers:** It doesn't matter if you are not sure yet if you want this job, or even if you are sure you don't want it, you can always turn it down. The important thing is to master the art of being interviewed and getting job offers so when you really run into "**The Right Job**" you will be able to get that employer to offer it to you.
- II. **Key Phrase:** Never ask for the **job**. Ask only for an **offer** using the key words that follow, then you will always have the opportunity to accept or reject it later. If you say you would like the job, they may offer it on the spot and put you on the spot:

"I would like to have an offer from you that I can consider along with the other opportunities I am looking at."

Practice this with your Coach or with your family or spouse until you are comfortable saying it. This is salary negotiation without mentioning dollars. They will usually tell you they have some others to interview (in essence, telling you that you have competition) so you return the favor and let them know they have competition as well. Note this statement on your part is always preceded with a compliment of some kind, usually about the company and the staff.

- III. **Driver's seat:** Once you have a job offer, in writing, you are in the driver's seat. Now you can ask all those questions you knew not to ask during the interview: Fringe Benefits, raises, bonuses, profit sharing, additional schooling/outside training paid for by the company, vacations, holidays, etc.
- IV. **Questions not to ask:** There are certain questions that you don't want to ask during the interview. Save them for after the offer is made: Fringe benefits, vacations, raises, bonuses, etc. Think them through ahead of time. If you ask what the pay is, you open yourself to the question, "*How much are you asking for?*" You do not want to bid against yourself by pricing yourself out of the market or by not asking for enough. Let them go first with an offer. However, if they ask how much do you want, whether it occurs during a phone interview or in a face to face interview, you need to give them a figure, preferably a range. Show them you understand how companies work by saying something like, "*I understand you probably have a salary range in your budget for this position and I too have a range... but one that depends on many other factors, such as possible bonuses, commissions, fringe benefits like a 401k... my range is \$___ to \$___, tell me did our ranges overlap?*" This way you are not putting them on the spot. You are not asking how much they pay. They will usually say yes and go on with the interview. If your ranges are too far apart you will not hear from them again and that's OK, saves their time and yours.
- V. **Questions to ask:** In your small three ring notebook, you should have a list of good questions to ask the interviewer that you have rehearsed so they come off naturally. The first question to ask, even before answering their first one is, "*Do you mind if I take a few notes?*" They will

never say no. This is your permission to open your notebook with a list of questions on the left page. Your list should be in relation to the job, but could include some of these.

1. *"Who would I be reporting to?"*
2. *"How long have they been with the company?"*
3. *"Were they promoted from within or hired from the outside?"*
4. *"Why is this job available?" or "is this position a new one or a replacement?"*
5. *If a replacement, "what happened to the person who had the job?"*
6. *"Who would you say are your major competitors?"*
7. *"Is there some additional schooling or training that I could take to enhance my position with your company once I start to work?"*
7. *"Would the experience I've had supervising and motivating others be useful on this job?"*
8. *"I have a history of stability and 15 years to give to a good company. How many of your staff have stayed with you that long?"*
This is a good one to use if you have that feeling that they might consider you too old.
9. *"How long has this position been unfilled?"*
10. *"Why is that?"*
11. *"It appears that I have more than enough experience for this position, would that be a problem?"*
This allows you to explore why you would be a good investment for them.
12. *"Is this position budgeted?" (If so, when does it come on line?)*
13. *"What is your time frame in making a decision?"*
14. *"Will someone else have to interview me as well?"*
15. *"I noticed that your stock has had a sharp increase/decrease recently, why was that?"*

Interviews must be conversations not interrogations:

This is why you must be prepared in advance with your questions, so you don't have to try to think them up as you go. This is not the time to look up or down for help. Praying should be done in advance, and the Devil isn't about to help you. Look at your notebook for questions to insert in the conversation. Be sure to ask one after you have answered their first one to set the tone. Questions let them know how knowledgeable you are about business in general and their business specifically. If the interviewer bores in, not allowing questions, stop them with something like this,

"I'll answer that in a moment, but first, you said this opening was a replacement. What happened to the person who held the position?"

VI. To Do's:

1. **Think Fast:** When the employer asks a tough question, turn it around and make a positive statement. Example: When they ask you to tell them about your last job, don't start listing a bunch of duties. Say, ***"What made me so valuable to them was, I saved my company over \$60,000 a year for five years."*** Don't feel the necessity to answer every question. When they ask, "What is your greatest weakness?" It's OK to say, ***"Sorry I just don't have an answer for that one and I don't feel comfortable trying to dream one up, is that OK?"*** Then ask the interviewer one of your tough ones.
Get there early... at least ½ hour to fill out applications, take tests, comb hair, get the lay

of the land. How are people dressed? Do they look happy or harried?

2. **Look sharp.** We find it amazing that we have to tell grown men to shine their shoes, cut and clean their nails or tell college students to wear a suit (and explain that is where the Jacket and Pants are made from the same cloth) white shirt and subtle tie; and ladies to dress professionally and use make up & perfume conservatively.
3. **Stand up straight.** Shoulders back, look everyone you meet in the eye; shake their hand firmly, no limp wrist or fingers only, especially the ladies.
4. **Speak up.** Use a firm, strong voice to show confidence. Keep your head up and your eyes on theirs.
5. **Smile.** Smile, Smile, even while talking to them on the phone. You can hear a smile a mile away.
6. **Be prepared.** To ask intelligent questions and not to answer dumb ones.
7. **Sit up.** No slouching, both feet on the floor, especially the ladies.
8. **Fill out.** All paperwork & the application they give you in detail, putting your best foot forward, in legible handwriting or printing. Never put, *see resume*.
9. **Study** the company on the internet. Know your own good points forwards and backwards.
10. **Ask** for an offer, again and again. (see follow up and close)

VII. Not to Do's:

It may surprise you, but it won't for long. After you have been interviewed several times and worked through these with your Coach, you will have more confidence and find yourself doing much better.

1. **Don't** take a friend along and that includes an active cell phone, even on vibrate.
2. **Don't** take children along - get someone to help you out and keep them.
3. **Don't** take shopping bags in with you, or a newspaper or magazine. If you have them, keep them in a neat brief case or attaché case.
4. **Don't** jingle coins in your pocket, play with or handle anything on their desk or even look like you are reading any document on their desk. Concentrate on them and look them in the eye.
4. **Don't** say anything bad about your last employer or boss.
5. **Don't** ramble - keep your answers short and to the point.
6. **Don't** hedge when asked a question, like what did you earn at XYZ co? Tell them, explain if necessary, then ask them a question.
7. **Don't** ever lie... about anything, age, education, reason fired...
8. **Don't** put "*see resume*" on their application and never say that in an interview.
9. **Don't** give them your long resume. You want them talking to you, not reading
10. **Don't** eat garlic or onions before an interview, use mints or gum, but get rid of it before the interview.
11. **Don't** look up or down, look them in the eye without staring them down.

VIII. FOLLOW UP AND CLOSE - These proven techniques have worked for years and are still working, when used diligently and properly. Orchestrate these steps all the way.

1. **Close** the interview with a compliment for him/her, their staff, the company: *"I'm excited about the opportunity you have here. I like the people I've met and I would be comfortable working with them. Because of that, I'd like to have an offer from you that I can consider along with the other things I'm looking at."* When you leave make notes about the interview, the position, the people, the company and any **"Shoulda Saids."**
2. **Be Prepared** to handle this question. "Tell me, what other things are you looking at?" This is not the time to waffle, dance or talk in vague generalities. If you are doing a proper job search you will have the names of several companies who are looking for people like you, whether or not you have been interviewed by them or have an offer from them. Respond with their name and the job title and possibly something you like about the job and then reiterate your close, *"however, I am very interested in your position and would like to have an offer from you."*
3. **Call your Coach** right away to strategize about the position and how to land an offer. Then go on other interviews you have arranged or scheduled.
4. **Return** unannounced to the company the next day. Ask for 2 minutes of the interviewer's time. Thank them for their time yesterday, proffer your two page **"Take Back"** resume and point out the one or two items you have highlighted and indicate that's why you are the right person for the job. Say: *"I've thought about your opportunity and seen the fine people who work here and I'd like an offer that I can consider along with the other things I'm looking at."*
5. **Call** the employer the third day with something new you have discovered about the company and the three main reasons you deserve an offer. Let your Coach know how that call went.
6. **Write** the company that day, depending on the visit, re-visit and call, with a note about why you are the person that should be offered the job. Most employers are proud of the company they work for and want to hire people who feel the same way. Also people buy from people they know. This is the essence of our *"Getting to know you"* approach.
7. **Shoulda Saids** are a vital part of any Job Search Program. As soon as you leave an interview (telephone or face to face), open your notebook to the company page and make notes of questions they asked where you were not sure of your answers. Hind Sight is always better than Hip Shot responses. Note what you would like to have said, so you can review it for further interviews with this company or others. By the same token, note your really good answers for future review. Learn from your mistakes and your successes.