Interviewing Guide

Congratulations!

You’ve been invited to a job interview. Based on your cover letter and résumé, your qualifications match with what the employer is seeking in a candidate. The next step is the INTERVIEW, which gives you the opportunity to convey to an employer how you will benefit his/her organization. The employer has seen your résumé, now you must articulate what you have learned from your experiences.

The interview is a two-way street. Both you and the employer are learning from one another to assess if this position and organization are a good fit. This is your time to gain insight about the company and job position, as it is the employer’s time to assess if you have the skills, abilities, and personality to be an effective member of his/her work environment.

The most effective interview will come from PREPARATION and PRACTICE.

What should I do to prepare for interviews?

Assess Yourself

- Review your skills, interests and values, especially those that are most relevant to the organization with which you are interviewing.
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses. How can your weaknesses turn out to be strengths in this new position?
- Be ready to discuss decisions you’ve made about your future (graduate school, relocation, and salary) if they come up.
- Identify your accomplishments; prioritize them as they relate to the organization, and be ready to discuss them in detail.
- Build a list of your best skills and back them up with examples of how these skills were used in an effective manner (at work, in school, or during extracurricular activities).
- Be able to articulate your interest in this field of work. Think about your long-term goals and how they fit in with this position.

Research the employer and industry

- Do thorough research on the employer, position, and industry.
- Read current trade journals for trends in the field. Visit the company web site for insight about their culture.
- Review any financial information and/or annual reports.
- Read the organization’s mission statement and literature.
- Identify the organization’s competitors, clients and customers, product and services.
- Be familiar with the organizational structure of the company. (Is there a parent company? Private or publicly owned?)

Practice Makes Perfect

- Meet with a career advisor to review your interview knowledge and strategy.
- Participate in a “mock interview”.
- Review typical and industry specific questions with a friend and/or record your answers to critique your ability.
- Be aware of ‘illegal’ employment issues which MAY be asked, such as family planning and disabilities. Develop a plan for addressing such questions.
What does the employer pay attention to when I am interviewing?

Nonverbal Communication Skills
- Dress professionally and be well groomed.
- Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake.
- Maintain steady eye contact with the interviewer.
- Use non-distracting gestures and positive facial expressions to show interest.
- Sit attentively to demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm.
- Smile!

Verbal Communication Skills
- Listen carefully to the question being asked.
- Use clear and concise answers.
- Use proper grammar; DO NOT use SLANG.
- Don’t exaggerate, yet don’t downplay skills.
- Don’t use negative language.
- Be specific and refer to concrete experiences.

Interview Etiquette
- Arrive ON TIME - It is best to arrive 5-10 minutes early.
- Treat everyone you encounter as though they are interviewing you.
- Introduce yourself; state why you are there.
- Be sure to address the person with the correct name and pronunciation.
- ALWAYS send a thank you note to all interviewers within 24 hours after the meeting.

What kind of questions might I be asked at the interview?

Questions about your college experience
- Why did you choose Emmanuel? Why did you choose your major?
- Which classes and subjects interested you the most? The least? Why?
- Do you think your grades are good indication of your academic ability?
- Have you participated in any extracurricular activities? What have you learned from participating in them?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- How did you become interested in this field?

Questions about your characteristics/personality
- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you consider to be your major strengths and weaknesses?
- How would a professor who knows you well describe you? How would a classmate or friend describe you?
- What accomplishment has given you the most satisfaction?
- What major problem have you encountered, and how did you handle it?

Questions about the position and company
- Why did you decide to seek a position with us?
- What do you know about what we do?
- What led you to seek a career in this field?
- Why do you think you are better-suited for this position than other candidates we are meeting?
- What factors are most important to you in a job?
- How are your computer skills?
- What kind of management style is most effective for you?
- Do you have a geographic preference? Are you willing to travel? If so, how much?
- What are your salary requirements?
- Where do you see yourself in five/ten years?
- Do you have any questions for me?
Questions about your work/internship experience

- What have you learned from the jobs listed on your résumé? Which job did you enjoy most?
- What kind of work environment do you prefer?
- How did your internship teach you about your career field of interest?

Additional questions

- What was your worst job and why?
- Tell us about an experience where you had to deal with a difficult person.
- Describe your most unprofessional experience.
- How would you deal with a micromanager?
- How do you deal with a manager who isn’t there, someone who is hands-off?
- Do you use a calendar? How many? Do you make lists?

What kind of questions should I ask at the interview?

- Could you describe for me a typical path of a (job title) at (company name)?
- How much contact and exposure to clients/customers is there for a (job title)?
- What would be the normal, daily routine for a (job title)?
- How often are performance reviews given and by whom?
- What are some of the problem-areas that you see the person in this position being able to help rectify?
- What issues or concerns are facing this department/organization now?
- What are the goals for this department/organization for the upcoming year?
- What new projects has this department/organization undertaken recently?
- When can I expect to hear from you? How can I as a candidate follow-up with you?

What should I do after the interview is over?

- Be sure to obtain a business card and any other “hand-out” information to file for reference.
- Write a summary of the interview, stressing your interest in the job and company as well as the “gut feeling” of the interview itself.
- Write a thank-you note to all of those who interviewed you. You should try to send a thank-you within 24 hours of the meeting. (See page 4 to review a sample thank you letter)
- Follow up. Be in contact with the interviewer 5-10 days after the interview, so that you can show your interest and possibly gain some answers about the interviewing process.
- Meet with your career advisor to discuss any interviewing obstacles or difficult questions you encountered during your interview.
What does a Thank-You Letter look like?

400 The Fenway #007
Boston, MA 02115

January 1, 2013

Ms. Josephine Gerald
Director of Development
Non-Profit USA
1 Plaza Road
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Dr. Gerald:

It was a pleasure meeting with you today to discuss the position of Development Assistant at Non-Profit USA. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with me.

Our conversation has left me feeling extremely enthusiastic and positive about the position and Non-Profit USA. After learning more about Non-Profit USA’s challenges and goals for the upcoming year, I am certain I will be able to make an immediate contribution. My computer and organizational skills will be a great asset as Non-Profit USA expands its services with limited resources. I am committed and enthusiastic about development work in the non-profit sector. During our conversation, I may have neglected to mention that I will be completing an advanced database design computer-training course next month. I am sure this will be helpful as Non-Profit USA redesigns its databases.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration for the position of Development Assistant at Non-Profit USA. I look forward to speaking with you soon. If you have any further questions, I welcome the opportunity to answer them. Please feel free to contact me directly by phone at (617) 555-5555 or via email at politestudent@emmanuel.edu.

Sincerely,

Polite Student

Polite Student