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Interview Tips

Your goal is to get an offer. If you don't get an offer, you will have nothing to consider. If you do get an offer, you will have a choice!

Getting an Offer

Think of the process in terms of buying and selling. When an employer first hears about you (usually via resume), he/she is like a buyer evaluating you as a product that he/she may want to buy. However, you are very complex, not at all like an ordinary product, with skills, aspirations, personal traits, and a host of other characteristics. Your initial job is to convince the buyer that you are something he/she should buy. That's called selling and at this stage of the process, you are the seller. This is a fortunate situation for you, because not many products have the opportunity to speak up for themselves in an effort to sell themselves; your focus should be to sell yourself at the interviews and you can do this in several ways:

Listen. You will hear details about specific skills and other needs that the employer seeks. Point out that you have these specifics and give examples to prove it.

Show Enthusiasm. Make sure to show your excitement about the position. Speak with confidence, and use as much eye contact as you can. You can also show your interest by listening. Pay attention to what others are saying and reiterate important points that they tell you.

Don't mention your needs. At this point, you want to address the employer's needs, not yours. If you do this skillfully, the employer will become convinced that you are a product he wants to buy.

When the employer has decided to buy, everything from here on is confirmation of that decision including additional interviews, reference checks, etc.

The tables have now turned to where it is appropriate for you to address your issues relating to compensation and other matters, as the employer asks about them. This may not happen until a second interview, or it may happen as part of the offer process. Always consult with your *Allied Personnel Services*

representative as we are a resource you should use throughout the process. We can be extremely valuable to you in helping negotiate compensation, getting answers to sensitive questions, keeping the process moving in a timely fashion, and much more.

More offers are lost by people making their demands too early in the process, than for any other reason. We often hear "the interview was terrific" as feedback from the candidate but when we call the employer, we hear "he/she didn't seem much interested in us" or "all he/she cared about was money and benefits, not what he/she could do for us."

Other Hints

Research the employer and the job specs before the interview.

Prepare some questions to ask, and prepare yourself for questions you will be asked (see sample questions below). Role-play the answers to the questions to get comfortable with what you are going to say in the interview. It's important to prepare and rehearse your answers.

What to wear?

Male: Dark suit, black polished shoes, black socks, contrasting tie. No cologne, be clean shaven or have neatly groomed facial hair.

Female: Business suit, white/ivory blouse, matching shoes, matching hosiery. No cologne/perfume and avoid too much or no make-up.

Always arrive early! 15 minutes early. Gives you time to relax while adhering to a schedule. Shows that you are prompt and respect the interviewer's calendar. DO NOT arrive too early. This shows no consideration on your part since they may have other appointments or things going on.

First impression! Body language: Firm handshake, direct eye contact, sit up straight and be polite and friendly to all employees you meet particularly the gatekeeper.

Listen carefully and focus answers on the questions asked. Avoid going off on tangents and always give more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

Stay positive and focused on getting an offer. If you find out something negative during the interview, take a note and carry on (it's OK to take notes). We will discuss any concerns with you immediately following the interview.

Find out what is the next step?

The closing of the interview is very important. Ask for the job! You must impart the following to the hiring authority before you leave the office:

- I can do the job!
- I enjoy doing this type of work!
- I fit in with the team!
- Thank you very much for your time. I am very interested in this opportunity.

Gather business cards from all interviews and write a thank you letter to each immediately following the interview. This gets your name in front of the decision maker(s) again.

Typical thank you letter:

Dear Mr. or Ms. _____,

Thank you for the opportunity to visit <<company name>> today. I very much enjoyed the interview. I know I can be of value to the department and would welcome the opportunity to be part of your team.

<<Add a paragraph detailing why you're very qualified for the job and specific ideas or solutions to issues discussed.>>

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you and best regards,

Call Allied Personnel Services as soon as possible after the interview. It is crucial that we talk prior to my conversation with the company. I need to know four things:

- Chemistry: How did you get along with everyone you met?
- Concerns: Yours or theirs?
- Cash: If money was discussed, what was said?
- Closing: What is the next step? Where do we go from here?

Sample Questions:

You can expect to be asked these questions:

- Why are you looking to make a change, and why did you leave your last job?

- What do you like about this opportunity?
- Describe your background and experiences or tell me about yourself?
- What has been your greatest accomplishment/what are your strengths?
- What has been your biggest failure/what are your weaknesses?
- Tell me about the last team you were on. What was your role? What did you accomplish?
- Have you ever disagreed with your supervisor? If so, how did you deal with it?
- Where do you expect to be in five to ten years?
- How will you benefit this organization?
- Why should I hire you?
- The money question! What are you looking for? What will it take to attract you? Response: "I don't have a specific figure in mind, but I would expect to receive a fair offer. The most important thing to me is the opportunity." Avoid specific dollar amounts or salary ranges; you can create a lose/lose situation.

Here are some questions you might ask to get some immediate feedback:

- Do you think I can handle the job responsibilities and be successful for you?" If no or undecided, "Are there any questions or concerns on your mind that we need to discuss before I leave here today?"
- Do you see anything that you feel would prevent me from doing a first rate job for you?
- What are the two or three most important results that you would expect from me in the first year?

Here are some general questions you might ask:

- What would be my career growth prospects with your organization?
- How does this position fit into the organization?
- Why is it open and how soon do you expect to make a final decision?