

Lesson Proper for Week 11

Introduction

A job interview is an interview consisting of a conversation between a job applicant and a representative of an employer which is conducted to assess whether the applicant should be hired. The job interview is probably the most important step you will take in your job search journey – it is your best chance to show the company and hiring manager that you're the best person for their job.

Types of Job Interviews

Screening and Phone Interviews

These are usually the first steps in the interview process and are normally quick and take place over the phone. This first interview is crucial as it will decide if you go on to further interviews. Normally performed by a member of the human resources department, these interviews use direct questions to find out if you would fit the company's culture and have the knowledge, experience, and qualifications for the position. Providing facts about your skills and experience is more important than establishing rapport.

One-On-One Interviews / Face-To-Face Interviews

This is the interview that most are familiar with and typically takes place after a phone screening interview. It is typically established that you have the requirements for the position from your resume and screening interview. The interviewer wants to see how you will fit into the company and will ask questions to test your listed skills and experience. Please make sure that you focus on the questions, don't go off on a rant and keep your answers short and to the point. Your goal is to build a rapport with the interviewer and market you to them and how you can contribute to their organization.

Multiple Interviews

It is very common that you will go through several levels of interviews, on average most candidates are interviewed by three different individuals, and it is not unusual to be interviewed up to 5 times; these can take place on the same day or over several weeks. The larger the company, the more interviews you can expect and it can be a combination of one-on-one, group and panel interviews. Small and private companies might only take as little as one interview.

Candidate Group Interviews

These interviews set two or more applicants against each other as you all will be interviewed at the same time and most likely there are two or more interviewers. All applicants will be applying for the same position. These interviews test your style, professionalism, leadership skills and the ability to function in a group under pressure. You will be judged on your answers, and how you interact and handle yourself in a group of peers and stressful situations. Don't get stressed out during this interview; you are among the cream of the crop, now you just need to shine above the other candidates.

Panel or Committee Interviews

This is when several members of the company who have a say whether you will be hired, interview you at that same time. Sometimes this is performed as a time saver method or as a way to see how you deal under more pressures than a traditional interview. You need to make sure that you address each interviewer so that you can connect with them as individuals. Shake hands with each person and repeat their names during the introduction; maintain eye contact with the panel member who is asking the current question but as you give your answers seek eye contact with all the members. When you are asking questions, ensure you engage with all members of the panel and not just one individual, even when addressing only one the interviewers. This type of interview can put more pressure on you, and you need to stay calm and collected.

Breakfast or Lunch Interviews

Some managers like to interview outside the office setting and get an insight on how you behave in more relaxing surroundings. You need to maintain the same standards for these types of interviews as you would interview in an office setting. The environment might be more casual, but you're still closely monitored. Use this type of interview to build common ground with the interviewer and follow their lead with menu choices and etiquette, but don't order selections you won't eat or drink. Do not order the most expensive items and never consume alcoholic beverages during these interviews. Be aware of your table manners and never speak with your mouth full. This sounds like common sense tips, but many don't follow them.

Teleconferencing / Web Conferencing Interviews

Many times you are interviewing for a company where their corporate office is a distance away, as a way to save on travel expenses. Many companies are utilizing the newest process of interviewing using an online webcam format. Technology has made this a very viable method; you may be doing this interview from your home or at one of the company's remote locations. It can't be emphasized enough that you treat this interview in the same manner as a face-to-face interview, from your attire to your professionalism; remember they can still see you and read your expressions. If you are taking this interview in your home ensure your cam viewed environment is organized and neat, and there are no background noises to distract you. Turn off your house and cell phones and close your windows, so outside noise is kept out. If other family members are around the home, ask them to step outside if possible and have them take the family dog with them, a barking dog can distract from the interview.

Behavioral Interviews

This method can take place during any of the above interview types, and it's a test as to how well you have handled certain stressful situations in your past. With behavioral interviews, the interviewer is examining for behavior patterns rather than correct answers they probe into what you have done in the past, not what you say you will do in the future. It's predicted that you will repeat your past performance in the future. You will be asked a series of questions on how you handled various situations from your past that are relevant to the position you're interviewing. Review your resume to come up with a list of challenges and issues you were faced with and how you conquered them.

Stress Interviews

These types of interviews are performed to see how you react to unexpected situations and pressures. The interviewer can be sarcastic, argumentative and rude with you; he/she might make you wait a while before they perform the interview. They will even leave long pauses between questions. All this is their attempt to unnerve you and evaluate how you act under this type of pressure. Ideally, you will show them what you are made of by keeping your cool; the more pressure they apply the calmer you need to become.

Preparing for a Job Interview

You never get a second chance to make a great first impression during your job interview, so having a well-prepared plan is vitally important to increase your chances of landing that dream job. Interview preparation is the key to success and a well-polished presentation can give you an edge over others whose credentials might just be better than yours. You do not need to memorize an answer, but do take the time to consider how you'll respond. The more you prepare, the more confident you'll feel during a job interview.

Read and review the job description

You have received a call for that dream job, so how do you prepare for the interview? The first step in the preparation process should be to go back and review the job description. Most job descriptions follow a similar pattern and are usually categorized by the following points:

- Job title/Department

- Duties and tasks
- Skills required

The job title and department will give you an understanding of the major purpose of the position and where the role fits into the organization, allowing you to discover who your potential line manager could be.

Read and review the job description very thoroughly and be sure to align your competencies with the skills required for the job. You will consequently ready yourself for questions around your previous experiences, performing similar duties in other organizations.

Research the company

Organizations look to hire people with similar values to those of the company culture. Researching the company before an interview will give you an insight into the organization's future goals and plans and being able to discuss these points will make you seem like a long-term investment to your future employer. The following interview preparation tips will give you a guide as to which aspect of the company should be researched:

- **Company financials:** Check the company website. Doing a Google search can also uncover the current state of the company. Have they gone through a merger? Or have they expanded recently? LinkedIn is also a good source of information.
- **Culture:** Look at LinkedIn and Facebook or check Google reviews for comments by current or former employees.
- **Executive team:** Look through the company website to research the company hierarchy and find out who the executives are.
- **Competitors:** Find out who the company's main competitors are and look into the websites of organizations in the same industry.

What to wear to a job interview

If you're wondering how to dress for an interview, you're not alone. Wearing the right clothes to the interview won't get you the job, but wearing the wrong clothes will sink any chances of impressing the interviewer. There is one rule that stands above all: Dress professionally. Wear business attire appropriate for the role, while still making sure you feel comfortable.

Plan your journey to the job interview

When preparing for a job interview one of the most important things to consider is how you are going to get there. A failure to plan is a plan to fail. If you are planning on driving to the interview, make sure you fill your car with fuel the night before. You don't want to be filling up on the way dressed in your suit.

Make sure you arrive on time, or better yet, at least 15 minutes early. Ensure this by knowing the address and if you can, have a trial run a couple of days before. The morning of the interview, check the traffic reports and have a backup route planned just in case. If you are travelling by train or bus, make sure you check the weather report the night before and keep an eye on the public transport websites for any delays. Look out for track works or traffic conditions that can potentially delay your train or bus trip. Go to bed early the night before and wake up early to give yourself plenty of time.

How to prepare for a phone interview

In today's digital world some hiring managers choose to conduct preliminary interviews by phone. Phone interviews can be challenging as you're not physically in the room with your interviewer and in some cases, you have to work even harder to stand out.

Take phone interviews seriously. Dressing as you would for any other interview will put you in the right mindset. Also, sit at a desk or table. It is important to create a setting similar to as you would be sitting in front of the hiring manager.

How to prepare for a video interview

As with phone calls, video interviews can be tricky - the good news is, at least during a video interview, the hiring manager can see you. Video interviews are a great way to connect and can save both parties the hassle of travel. Before your video interview make sure your technology is up to date and working. Take the time to also check that your surroundings are clean and tidy. It may seem obvious, but in the midst of delivering an answer, it can be easy to forget that you're sitting in front of a camera.

How to act in an interview

Once you've completed your interview preparation, the next step is to ace the job interview itself. Whether you get offered the job depends largely on how you perform during the interview, so it is imperative to make a great first impression on your hiring manager. It is not just what you do, it's also what you say, and how you say it. Read our job interview tips on questions to ask in an interview below.

Common interview questions and answers

The most important part of preparing for an interview is practicing how to answer interview questions you might be asked on the day. Knowing the most common types of job interview questions is an advantage - that way, you can craft your answers well in advance, and feel confident in your responses when the pressure is on.

Job interview tips: dos and don'ts

Do:

- Dress to impress. Make sure your clothes are clean, ironed and presentable.
- Make eye contact, and begin with a strong handshake. This will signal your confidence when you meet your interviewer for the first time.
- Sit still, with your feet firmly on the ground. This will help you maintain your posture and avoid fidgeting.
- Remember your CV details. In particular the experience most relevant to the role you're interviewing for.
- Make a note of your questions. Bring a note-pad if you feel you might forget important points.
- Remember. It's just as important for the interviewer to sell the benefits of working at their business, as it is for you to impress your next potential employer.

Don't:

- Turn up late to the interview. If for some reason on the day it's unavoidable, call ahead to let your interviewer know your expected time of arrival.
- Dress sloppily or inappropriately. Not sure what to wear? Read our guidelines.
- Smoke before your interview. Whilst a quick cigarette might seem like a good idea to calm your nerves, the smell will be noticeable and unpleasant for your interviewer.
- Volunteer your weaknesses. Whilst honesty is always the best policy, there is no need to volunteer your shortfalls unless asked directly.
- Criticize your current or previous employer. Doing so could give your interviewer the impression you're difficult to work with.

