

## *Answering Interview Questions*

Regardless of what type of question you are asked, you will find it easier to respond effectively if you keep in mind some basic question answering strategies:

- λ You can never predict every question that you will encounter, so approach the interview with an **inventory** of important points. Make a list of the points about yourself that you want the interviewer to know. For example, if you were to apply for a job as a Sales Representative, you might want to list the products you have sold before, types of customers (by industry, age, etc.), languages spoken, personal experience in that industry and related knowledge (perhaps from your academic program).
- λ Consider each question an opportunity to provide some of this information.
- λ Don't assume anything. **You will be evaluated on your answers, not your resume.** Therefore, ensure you incorporate the relevant information from your resume in your answers.
- λ Pause a couple of seconds before you respond to each question, even if you know exactly what you want to say. Take this time to quickly plan your answer, this helps to avoid misunderstandings and produces much more concise answers.
- λ If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification. This is expected and is preferable to providing an unsuitable answer.
- λ If you need time to collect your thoughts - take it. When people are nervous they tend either to "draw a blank" or to babble. It is better to think for a few moments and make sure that your answer is doing you justice and that there is a point to what you are saying.
- λ Always expand. Never answer a question with a "yes" or "no."
- λ The interview is an opportunity for you to sell yourself. Don't be afraid to 'blow your own horn.' As long as you can back up what you are saying with examples which demonstrate that what you are saying is true, you are not bragging. Third party observations can also be mentioned. For example, *"My last employer told me that I was promoted because of how I handled conflicts with clients."*
- λ Be very positive. Don't complain about anything - from your former employer to the weather - and don't apologize for experience that you don't have. Just sell what you **do** have and let the employer decide if you have what he/she is looking for. Also, avoid negative words. For example, you would not say *"I have a **little** experience..."*, you would say *"I have experience....."*
- λ Don't be afraid to repeat important points. In fact, it is a good idea to do this.

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