

SPIRAL GROUP, INC.

SHAPING TODAY'S JOB SEEKERS FOR EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE.®



STRATEGIC INTERVIEW PREPARATION COURSE | 4

FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT SEND EMAIL TO TECH.SUPPORT@SPIRALGROUP.ORG. TO SPEAK WITH THE INSTRUCTOR CALL 773.242.0705.
FOR GENERAL QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND CONCERNS SEND EMAIL TO INFO@SPIRALGROUP.ORG

TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTERVIEW PREPARATION COURSE—4

The interview is an excellent opportunity to showcase your skills and learn more about the company and job for which you are applying. Therefore, your primary objective as a job seeker is to make the best use of this meeting convincing the interviewer that you are the most suitable candidate for the position.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
THE INTERVIEW	2
DO YOUR RESEARCH BEFORE ANY JOB INTERVIEW	2
THE 13 MOST COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	3
LANDING A JOB WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD	5
IDEAL QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER	6
FOLLOWING UP AFTER AN INTERVIEW	7
TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE FOR JOB SEEKERS	8
DRESSING FOR AN INTERVIEW	9
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	11
CUMULATIVE EXAM	

1 | THE INTERVIEW

An interview is a mutual exchange of information between an employer and job seeker for an open position. Employers use interviews to make inquiries regarding the information provided in a job seeker's resume, cover letter, or application. Interviews may also be used to observe an applicant's manner, disposition, and level of professionalism. Assessing candidates in this way allows the interviewer to gauge a job seeker's abilities and sincerity in performing the required duties of the position, and to determine if she will integrate well into the company's culture.

Alternatively, interviews may be a tool to test an applicant's aptitude, skills, and knowledge through various methods. For example, if you've been a manager for the last year, the interviewer may want to gauge how you have grown as it relates to the delegating of tasks and following up. Others will want you to talk about your mistakes and lessons learned.

Nevertheless, it is an excellent opportunity to showcase your skills and learn more about the company and the job for which you are applying. Therefore, your primary objective as a job seeker is to make the best use of this meeting convincing the interviewer that you are the most suitable candidate for the position.

YOU'VE SURPASSED MANY

When invited to attend an interview, you have outshined other applicants. Your skills and qualifications either match or exceed the employer's expectations. Now, if you shine during the interview and follow up proactively, you stand a good chance of being selected. So, be excited, seize this opportunity to sparkle, and prepare well. Below are suggestions on how to prepare for an interview.

• WHEN YOU RECEIVE NEWS THAT YOU'VE BEEN INVITED TO AN INTERVIEW

- Understand the value of what you have to offer an employer by reviewing your portfolio, cover letter, and resume. Be prepared to give examples to substantiate all claims in your resume.
- Increase your confidence by conducting practice interviews. Doing this will allow you to hear your answers and assess their quality and effectiveness.
- Do your research. Discover more about the company, their values, and the role to make sure you're a good fit.
- Prepare some questions yourself. [There are some suggested questions to ask the interviewer further in this manual.]

• WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE INTERVIEW LOCATION

- Look sharp and dress for confidence so that you feel good and make a great impression.
- Arrive 15 minutes before your interview. Be positive and professional upon your arrival, during the interview, and after the interview has ended.
- Use the restroom before interviewing. ALWAYS go into the restroom before interviewing so that you can give yourself a final look in the mirror.
- Be positive. A firm handshake and plenty of eye contact will reveal your confidence.
- Smile. It makes a big difference, and be polite.

• DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Listen carefully to the questions and don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you're unsure about something.
- Sell yourself by talking about your work, what you've learned, and the skills that make you a great fit for the job. Give examples where your abilities helped you shine. Discuss how you've grown in areas related to the position. This will help the interviewer determine your level of proficiency.
- Awkward situations may occur during the interview, but it is up to you to be prepared to handle whatever happens with confidence.
- Don't feed into personal questions that would have you revealing personal information.
- If you can't say something nice about past co-workers, experiences, and employers, say something nice **anyway**. The interview also provides you with an opportunity to say something nice and positive about yourself.

2 | DO YOUR RESEARCH BEFORE ANY JOB INTERVIEW

If you have an upcoming job interview, you will need to research the organization for which you are applying. Company research is the best way to learn what the company does and what they seek in a candidate. As a result of your research, you'll be better prepared to answer questions and position yourself as the best candidate. Below are six suggested aspects to research about an employer:

1. The skills and experience the company values. To discover the skills and experience the employer values, carefully read their job postings. You can also discover information on the employer's website to get an idea of the type of employees they desire. In addition, you can reach out to current employees and inquire about what they believe the employer values most in the workplace.

2. Key players of the organization. These are the employees who hold important positions in the company. These include managers, department directors, the CEO, etc. You can learn who they are by reading either the company's **About** page, or whichever page that points to these individuals.

3. News and recent events about the employer. Become knowledgeable about the company's latest news and updates. Most companies have a page on their website dedicated to press releases and events. Even a media kit that you can download may contain a wealth of information.

4. The company's culture, mission, and values. Pay attention to the employer's website regarding company values and mission. Job seekers should be able to confidently say they're a good fit for the company's culture. Cultural fit is one of the most important qualities that a job seeker can possess. You can also learn more about the company culture by following the organization on its social media networks.

5. Clients, products, and services. These are usually found on their website. Reading through the company's blog, case studies, and white papers may also provide this information. This will familiarize you with their target audience, clients, and the types of products and services they offer.

6. The person interviewing you. If you know the name of the person conducting the interview, then it may be a good idea to learn more about him, professionally. This will give you an advantage because you'll have a better chance of connecting with him and sparking a meaningful conversation.

WIKIPEDIA—THE JOB SEEKER'S COMPANY RESEARCH MEGASOURCE

Wikipedia is an ideal source that can assist job seekers in discovering proprietary information of a company that may not otherwise be found on its website. For example, it may contain information, such as salaries, employee functions and duties, products and services, details about the hiring process, and its key players. Just type in the name of the company in the Wikipedia search engine, and go from there.

3 | THE 13 MOST COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1. TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF.** The interviewer is not fishing for information about where you were born, your favorite color, or where you lived. This is where you'd highlight the most important points of your resume and discuss how these experiences make you a great fit for the job. Here's a suggested response: *"I'm a motivated and reliable professional. I have over 10 years' experience in the foodservice industry as a foodservice worker for Burger King, where I safely prepared customer's food orders and delivered them in a prompt and courteous manner. I was also responsible for operating the cash register, inventory control, and assisting with the overall cleanliness of the restaurant. In those 10 years, I developed an unparalleled sense of urgency and other pertinent, transferable skills that will accompany me in this position. I enjoy this kind of work because..."*
- 2. WHY DO YOU WANT TO WORK FOR THIS COMPANY?** The interviewer needs to know why you chose their company. It is your responsibility to know the employer and why you want to become part of their team. Help the interviewer to visualize you adeptly executing the duties of the position you're seeking to fill. This is where your research efforts will count.
- 3. WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?** The interviewer is looking for how you perceive yourself and what you bring to the position. This is your opportunity to highlight specific achievements, what makes you marketable, and why you are the right candidate for the job.
- 4. WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES?** Again, the interviewer is looking for how you perceive yourself. This is an opportunity to discuss the skills you would like to develop further. For example, if your weakness is that you have difficulty confronting people with bad news, say that you've learned to begin with something positive before moving into the negative. Alternatively, you could say *"Although I don't believe in weaknesses, I do believe in opportunities for improvement. Therefore, as a dedicated professional I am committed to improving in all areas including my areas of expertise."* Either response shows that you're someone who can learn and seeks improvement.
- 5. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TERMINATED?** If yes, then respond with the truth and explain why. Then discuss what you learned from the experience that would help you in the position for which you are applying. For example, *"When I was employed at Subway in 2015, I had difficulties with being punctual. Now I make sure to arrive early for all my appointments."* Don't blame or speak negatively about past co-workers, bosses, or the company.
- 6. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME?** If the answer is yes, then say yes. For example, *"Yes. However, I am no longer that person. I now spend my time (state the positive things you have been doing, such as volunteering, taking classes, etc.)."* Then mention that you will submit a "Letter of Explanation". Do **not** begin to discuss the nature of the crime. Such details will be addressed appropriately in the "Letter of Explanation".
- 7. TELL ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU _____.** This question sounds simple, but it's difficult to clearly and concisely share a meaningful story. Laszlo Bock, the head of HR at Google, says you should approach this question like this: *"Here's the attribute I'm going to demonstrate; here's the story demonstrating it; and here's how that story demonstrated that attribute."* Bock also says, *"Most people in an interview don't make explicit their thought process behind how or why they did something and, even if they are able to come up with a compelling story, they are unable to explain their thought processes."* The best way to answer this question is to explain what you did and why you did it. Have stories prepared that demonstrate different desirable attributes of yourself, and explain the thinking that went into your actions.

In addition, sometimes an interviewer may ask what you would do using a hypothetical situation, such as *"What would you do if...?"* If this type of question is posed, you can use the following response: *"I don't know how to handle this situation, but once employed with this organization I will learn your policies and procedures. From there, I will be knowledgeable in handling that kind of situation. I will do so professionally, and in accordance with your company's policies."* Refrain from definitively answering hypothetical questions.

- 8. HAVE YOU EVER HAD A CONFLICT WITH A SUPERVISOR, CO-WORKER, OR CUSTOMER?** The interviewer wants to know how you deal with conflict, but you should never discuss anything specific that may have happened with a previous employer, co-worker, or client because you'd be disclosing proprietary information. Here's a suggested response, *"I cannot discuss anything specific that may have happened with a previous employer, co-worker, or client. I'd be disclosing proprietary information. But I can tell you that whatever challenges I faced while working for previous employers were resolved politely, professionally, and by following company policies."*

You're not obligated to discuss anything that occurred within an organization where you've been employed. If you discuss anything about a previous employer, you'll likely discuss the company with whom you are interviewing. Instead, mention what you learned from a previous employer. For example, *"Although I may have faced a variety of challenges while employed with ABC Corporation, I learned a lot. For example, I learned conflict resolution, personal responsibility, and high standards of service. All of which I will carry into this position."*

- 9. WHY ARE YOU LEAVING YOUR CURRENT JOB, OR WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LAST JOB?** This challenges many job seekers, because it can place them into a negative mindset about their current or previous employer. The interviewer may inquire about your reasons for leaving to determine if those concerns will follow you in the new position. This is a way for him to gauge your attitude toward work, management, and policies.

Begin with a positive statement regarding your previous place of employment. Honestly state your reasons for leaving. If you left on good terms, offer the interviewer letters of reference that outline your achievements. If the reasons were negative, again focus the interviewer's attention on what you accomplished. Emphasize that you'll be able to handle the present job no matter what may have happened in the past.

- 10. WHAT ARE YOUR SHORT AND LONG TERM GOALS?** The interviewer would like to know if you have made plans for your future. An example of an appropriate response is: *“Both my long and short term goals are learning and gaining experience, enjoying my work and the people, fitting neatly into the culture, and supporting the philosophy and goals of the company so that I can become an even greater asset to the organization.”*
- 11. WHAT ARE YOUR SALARY EXPECTATIONS OR REQUIREMENTS?** Unless the salary is already known, you may be faced with this question at some point during the interview process. Think about how much money will be sufficient for you to execute the duties of the position in a professional and highly motivated manner. Don’t settle for less because you won’t be a happy and motivated worker if you do. In addition, simply because you made less money in a previous position doesn’t mean you have to settle for less pay in the job for which you are applying. Below are some suggested responses:
- *“The least I would expect is \$_____.”* State your hourly or yearly expectation.
 - *“I will consider any reasonable offer you’d make to your best candidate.”* This response implies that YOU are the best candidate.
 - *“Other foodservice professionals, with my experience and expertise, employed with similar organizations make anywhere between [state the pay range]. I’d prefer to be somewhere within that range. This doesn’t include bonuses. I also seek full benefits.”*
- 12. WHY SHOULD WE HIRE YOU?** Focus on business development. The fastest way to become invaluable to any company is by helping to improve and grow the business. Express a genuine interest in building professional relationships and collaborating with potential business interests. Emphasize your desire in networking and being a true ambassador to their brand. At the end of the day, sales and profits are the pulse of any company.
- 13. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?** ABSOLUTELY! Ask questions that show the interviewer you are interested in the job, but refrain from asking questions you should already know, or questions that have already been answered by the interviewer.

RISE ABOVE THE OTHER CANDIDATES

Now that you have guidelines on how to answer the **13 Most Commonly Asked Interviews Questions**, you’ll rise above the other candidates. Prepare and practice your responses until you can share them comfortably and without sounding rehearsed.

MORE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

COMMON QUESTIONS	GETTING STARTED QUESTIONS
Have you ever been terminated?	How would you begin establishing your credibility quickly with the team?
Have you ever had a conflict with a supervisor, co-worker, or customer?	How long will it take to make a significant contribution?
Why should I hire you?	What do you see yourself doing within the first 30 days of this job?
What have you been doing since working for your last employer?	If selected for this position, can you describe your strategy for the first 90 days?
How long would you expect to work for us if hired?	CAREER DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS
What motivates you to do your best on the job?	What are you looking for in terms of career development?
How well do you handle criticism?	How do you want to improve yourself in the next year?
What is your ideal company?	What kind of goals would you have in mind if you got this job?
What did you like least about your last job?	What would your last boss suggest if asked about additional training for you?
When were you most satisfied in your job?	SALARY QUESTIONS
What can you do for us that other candidates cannot?	What salary are you seeking?
What was the last project you headed up, and what was the outcome?	What is your salary history?

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

Give me an example of a time when you felt you went above and beyond the call of duty at work.
Describe a time when your work was criticized.
Have you ever been on a team where someone was not pulling their own weight? How did you handle it?
Tell me about a time when you had to give someone difficult feedback. How did you handle it?
What is your greatest failure, and what did you learn from it?
What irritates you about other people, and how do you deal with it?
If I were your supervisor and asked you to do something that you disagreed with, what would you do?
What was the most difficult period in your life, and how did you deal with it?
Give me an example of a time when you did something wrong. How did you handle it?
If you were at a business lunch and ordered a rare steak, but they brought it to you well done; what would you do?
If you found out your company was doing something against the law, what would you do?
What assignment was too difficult for you, and how did you resolve the issue?
What’s the most difficult decision you’ve made in the last 2 years and how did you come to that decision?
Describe how you’d handle a situation if required to finish multiple tasks by the end of the day, and there was no conceivable way that you could finish them.

MORE ABOUT YOU—PART I

What is your favorite childhood memory?	How would you describe your work style?
What would be your ideal working environment?	What do you look for in terms of culture—structured or entrepreneurial?
Give examples of ideas you’ve had or implemented.	What tools and techniques and tools do you use to keep yourself organized?
Tell me about your proudest achievement.	Who was your favorite manager and why?
What do you think of your previous boss?	What kind of personality do you work best with and why?
What are you most proud of?	What do you like to do?
What are your lifelong dreams?	What do you ultimately want to become?
What is your personal mission statement?	What are three positive things your last boss would say about you?
What negative things would your former employer say about you?	What three character traits would your friends use to describe you?
What are three positive character traits you don’t possess?	If you were interviewing someone for this position, what traits would you seek?
List 5 words that describe your character?	Who has impacted you most in your career and how?
What is your greatest fear?	What is your biggest regret and why?
What’s the most important thing you learned in school?	What will you miss about your last job?
What is your greatest achievement outside of work?	What are the qualities of a good leader; a bad leader?
Do you think a leader should be feared or liked?	How do you feel about taking no for an answer?

MORE ABOUT YOU—PART II	
How would you feel about working for someone who knows less than you?	How do you think I rate as an interviewer?
Tell me one thing about yourself you wouldn't want me to know.	Tell me the difference between good and exceptional.
What's the last book you read?	What magazines do you subscribe to?
What's the best movie you've seen in the last year?	What would you do if you won the lottery?
What do you do in your spare time?	What do you like to do for fun?

4 | LANDING A JOB WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD

This module is intended to serve as a guide so that your chances of landing a job with a criminal record may increase. Interview processes will likely vary from company to company, and the way that you will have to address your criminal background will vary as a result. Either you'll be required to provide a formal "Letter of Explanation", or the organization may conduct a background check and make their decision based on the information provided in the report only, without allowing you to explain. There have been instances where employers have chosen to hire individuals before conducting background checks, and then terminate their employment once a criminal record is revealed, at a later date. So, what should you do?

IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Unless your criminal record has been sealed or expunged, it's your responsibility to disclose this information to an employer if you know that conducting background checks is customary for the position you're seeking to fill. Therefore, before applying to jobs, it's important to know your record. If you are currently on parole or probation, you can receive a copy of your Rap Sheet free of charge. Contact me for more information about this.

THE JOB APPLICATION—READ ALL QUESTIONS CAREFULLY

If the application form contains any questions regarding a criminal history, you're not required to answer. As of January 1, 2015 any question inquiring about the criminal past of an applicant has been legally banned from all employment applications in the state of Illinois. However, an employer may still inquire about your background during a face-to-face interview. For example, you may be asked, "Are you willing to submit to a background check?" If so, be prepared by saying that you will submit to a background check, then acknowledge and briefly address your criminal history. Once you have done this, begin discussing the positive steps you've taken since your release. Examples of how to accomplish this are listed below.

• ADDRESSING THE CRIMINAL HISTORY

"In 2008, I was convicted of a felony and successfully completed my probation period following. In 2012, I was convicted of a felony and successfully completed my parole and other requirements pertaining to the conviction." Keep in mind that once you begin to address your criminal history, the interviewer is allowed to ask the name of the offense—some organizations cannot take into consideration some criminal offenses.

Addressing the criminal history is a sensitive matter. The interviewer may not use this as an opportunity to interrogate you, or pass judgment. If the employer begins asking questions such as, "Did you really commit the crime?", "What would make you do such a thing?", "Your crime involved a celebrity; who was he or she?", or "Do you still feel compelled to commit crimes like that?", they have gone too far.

In addition, providing the interviewer with too much information can negatively affect the positive impression you are attempting to make. If this occurs, politely and respectfully tell him that you prefer not to discuss the details of your conviction, and then begin to address the positive things you've accomplished while incarcerated and since your release.

• THE POSITIVE STEPS TAKEN SINCE YOUR INCARCERATION AND RELEASE

"While incarcerated at the Logan Correctional facility, I worked as a dish room worker. Because I was diligent, methodical, and dependable I gained the trust of the cafeteria supervisors and was promoted to dish room supervisor. While in that role, my responsibilities included training new employees, delegating tasks, and maintaining equipment and the overall cleanliness of the dish room. Along with my team, I was able to improve throughput and reduce service times considerably by improving our sense of urgency and level of professionalism. We increased the number of clean trays, utensils, and serving pans required for use by the prison population and cooks by at least 30 minutes."

"Because I thoroughly enjoy working in the foodservice industry, when released from prison I regained my foodservice sanitation manager's certification. In 2015, I became a certified ServSafe Instructor. I have been honing my skills in the following areas: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. In 2000, I became a web developer, and have increased my level of proficiency in that area, as well. I've developed a website that promotes my current professional endeavor, an Employment Preparation Training program for returning citizens."

Focus ONLY on your qualifications, accomplishments, and why you're a great candidate for the position. Emphasize the positive changes you've made in order to convince the interviewer that you have dedicated your time, energy, and efforts to becoming a law abiding citizen; and that you are willing to continue to develop yourself further so that you'll be an asset to an Employer of Choice.

If the interviewer begins inquiring about your criminal past, again, steer the conversation back to your qualifications, but if he persists, then that probably isn't the job for you. If you decide that this is the case, then be prepared to end the interview on a positive note. Here's a suggestion, "Unfortunately, you seem to be more interested in my criminal past than in my qualifications and skills as they pertain to this position. Therefore, I will have to end this meeting with you. When you are prepared to discuss my skillset, feel free to contact me using the information provided in my CV (Curriculum Vitae). It was a pleasure meeting you. Thank you for your consideration."

THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES

Again, this module serves only as a guide, and to provide a framework for addressing your criminal past with tact and dignity. Simply filling out an application and attending a selection interview does not guarantee that you'll be hired. But doing so with honesty and integrity can increase the possibility of landing the job you want ... and keeping it.

MICHELLE A. JONES

500 North Itasca Street | Chicago, IL 60600 | (312) 555-0123 | michelleajones@spiralgroup.com

Feb. 28, 2012

Janet Ramos—VP Marketing
XYZ Company
1515 Market Street
Sometown, CA 55555
888-123-5467

Greetings, Ms. Ramos:

I would like to express how excited I am to be invited for a second interview at ABC Company, following the pre-screen interview at the Chicago Community Center on Friday of last week. I am fully confident that I will bring a great work ethic and positive attitude to the ABC team.

As the application process requests, I wish to further explain my prior convictions. In 2008, I was convicted of a felony charge and successfully completed my probation period following. In addition, I had a felony conviction in 2012 and successfully completed my parole.

For 20 years, prior to my convictions, I was gainfully employed in retail sales, foodservice operations, and restaurant management. As you can see from my past experience on my resume, I thoroughly enjoy working within the foodservice industry and providing customers' needs. In addition, I have a current foodservice manager's sanitation license; I'm a certified ServSafe Instructor; and I possess outstanding technical skills in the following: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook, and One Drive.

Once again, I greatly appreciate your time and consideration for employment at ABC Company, and look forward to the opportunity to make a successful contribution as a member of ABC in the role of Operations Consultant.

Best regards,

Michelle A. Jones

5 | IDEAL QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

Typically, at the end of any interview, you'll be asked if you have any questions. If you don't, it can be taken as a sign of lack of preparation or lack of interest. Asking the right questions during an interview is important for two reasons. First, the questions you ask confirm your qualifications, and shows that you have conducted research on the company. Second, you are interviewing the employer just as much as the employer is interviewing you. Use this as an opportunity to determine if this is an organization where you want to work. Below are some questions to ask during the interview.

1. **WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES WOULD MAKE AN IDEAL CANDIDATE?** This question will have the interviewer stating exactly what the employer is seeking. If the interviewer mentions something you have not had the chance to cover yet, here's your chance.
2. **WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOUR STAFF IS FACING, AND WOULD I BE IN A POSITION TO HELP SOLVE IT?** This question shows that you are thinking about ways to contribute to the organization soon after joining the team. It also encourages the interviewer to envision you working in the position.
3. **WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED ABOUT WORKING HERE?** This question allows the interviewer to connect with you on a personal level. The answer will give you unique insight into how satisfied people are with their jobs. If the interviewer is pained to come up with an answer, it's a red flag.
4. **WHAT CONSTITUTES SUCCESS IN THIS POSITION?** This question shows your interest in being successful. The answer will show you both how to get ahead and whether it is a good fit for you.
5. **DO YOU HAVE ANY HESITATIONS ABOUT MY QUALIFICATIONS?** This question will show that you are confident in your skills and abilities.
6. **DO YOU OFFER CONTINUING EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING?** This shows that you seek to expand your knowledge and grow with the employer.
7. **CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE TEAM I'LL BE JOINING?** This question assumes you'll get the job, and informs you of the people with whom you'll interact.
8. **WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR NEW PRODUCTS OR PLANS FOR GROWTH?** Do your homework, beforehand, and mention a new product or service the company is launching to demonstrate your research and interest. The answer will give you a good idea of where the company is headed.
9. **WHY IS THIS POSITION AVAILABLE?** The answer you receive will tell you whether the person was promoted, fired, resigned, or retired. As a result, you will be provided with another clue to whether there's a chance for advancement, employees are unhappy, or the place is in turmoil.
10. **WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?** Begin closing the interview by emphasizing your interest in taking the process to the next level. This is the time to determine if the interviewer will contact you and when he will likely do so, or if he prefers that you follow up with him and the best method for doing so. This sentiment is reinforced by asking your interviewer for his business card.
11. **CLOSE THE MEETING.** Shake the interviewer's hand, with confidence, while making sincere eye contact. Thank him for his time. Leave him with the impression that you're the right person for the job by allowing your positive attitude, confidence, and enthusiasm to speak for you.

6 | FOLLOWING UP AFTER AN INTERVIEW

Following-up is an essential step in the hiring process because it demonstrates that you're interested in the position and the company. It shows that you truly appreciate the interviewer setting aside time to meet with you. It also keeps you at the top of the interviewer's mind when it comes time for him to make a decision. It is ideal to begin the following-up process during the interview itself. Here are some suggested steps:

1. **Ask About the Next Steps.** You were instructed to ask about the next step in the hiring process in the previous module. Again, the interviewer's answer will provide you with a timetable of when it's acceptable to touch base. If the hiring manager says he will be making a decision within the next two weeks, then you know how long you have to complete the other steps in the follow-up process.
2. **Acquire a Business Card.** Once again, pay close attention to what is happening as you meet people during the interview process. The professional who interviewed you may have slipped his card in your hand immediately after the hand shake. If he did, then there is no need to ask for it at the end of the interview. If he didn't, be sure to ask for it before you leave. Collecting a business card from each professional you've interviewed with, or met while in the building, makes your life easier when crafting thank you notes—you'll have their titles, emails, and correct spelling of their names. If someone forgot to bring his card, write down his name, email, and title on the pad of paper you brought with you.
3. **Send a Thank You Note.** You'll need to send the interviewer a carefully crafted thank you note expressing your appreciation for setting aside time to meet with you. In addition, it is imperative to integrate key messages from your personal brand and remind the interviewer why you're the ideal candidate. Keep the note pleasant and brief, providing the interviewer with just enough information to recall your meeting. Always send your note within 24-48 hours after the meeting. Although it's appropriate to send a thank you note in the form of an email, sending one using the United States Postal Service is not as antiquated as you may think.
4. **Follow-Up, Again.** Sometimes the hiring process can seem to drag out, especially if you're the first to interview in a long line of candidates that will be meeting with the company over several weeks. To stay at the top of the hiring manager's mind, don't be afraid to check in periodically after sending a thank you note. So, in addition to demonstrating that you're interested in learning the status of the position, give the interviewer something of value when checking in for the second time. Forward a recent industry-related article you've read that you believe he'll find interesting and helpful. Following-up in this way demonstrates that you're a great network connection instead of an irritating, would-be employee.

When the interview is over, breathe a sigh of relief, but don't rest on your laurels. Proper follow-up etiquette keeps you at the top of the hiring manager's mind and gives you an advantage over your competition.

THANK YOU LETTER SAMPLE

MICHELLE A. JONES

500 North Itasca Street | Chicago, IL 60600 | (773) 648-0476 | michelle@spiralgroup.org

Feb. 28, 2012

Janet Jackson—VP Marketing
Spiral Group
1515 Market St.
Hometown, CA 55555
111-222-3333

Greetings, Ms. Jackson:

Thank you for meeting with me Saturday, February 27, 2012 to discuss the Instructor's position at Spiral Group, Inc. I enjoyed our conversation, and am very excited about the possibility of joining your team as an Instructor.

I appreciated learning more about your organization, such as the chain of command; the expectations of an Instructor (volunteering for special projects; recruiting new clients; delivering professional and comprehensive training to our clients; and required certifications); as well as some of the challenges one may face in this position.

Once again, thank you for your time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

Michelle A. Jones

Attachments: The two documents I discussed with you that I designed while employed with XYZ Corporation.

7 | TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE FOR JOB SEEKERS

“First decide what to say and how to say it, and then speak.”—Michelle A. Jones

A significant part of the job seeking process involves talking on the telephone. Unfortunately, however, many job seekers don’t realize they have little or no telephone etiquette as it pertains to job seeking. When they recognize this, they are often unsure about where to start.

One of the first steps to improving your telephone etiquette, as it pertains to job seeking, is to know the different aspects of it, such as tone of voice, choice of words, and the ability to speak clearly and follow specific instructions. Having and correctly applying this knowledge can help job seekers feel more confident when speaking to prospective employers and hiring managers.

TONE OF VOICE

Our tone of voice can portray a variety of emotions and feelings. When sad or angry, our voice can lower in tone. When happy or excited, it can increase. When possible, use inflection in your voice to help stress important points and give the caller verbal hints as to where the conversation is going. As it relates to job seeking, it is recommended that you speak on the telephone using your normal tone of voice.

SPEAK CLEARLY

When speaking on the telephone, it’s important to speak clearly and in a professional manner. Avoid speaking too quickly—this can cause your words to sound jumbled or rushed. Articulate your words to ensure that you’re not slurring any sounds together. When finished speaking, pause periodically for signs that the caller has heard and understood you. In the end, if they did not catch what you said, calmly and politely repeat the information.

CHOICE OF WORDS

When speaking on the telephone, a professional choice of words is used instead of our everyday jargon. Using a more professional choice of words portrays to prospective employers a sense of confidence and maturity. Additionally, being polite can help the person on the other end of the line feel comfortable and at ease with your politeness. Important phrasing sections include introductions, transitions, and call conclusions. Although some of the phrasing can seem uncomfortable at first, with practice, they can become as natural as your everyday speech. Below are some examples:

- “Sure, I can do that.”
- “Would you prefer that I follow-up with you by email?”
- “Thank you for taking time to discuss this job opportunity.”
- “Yes, I’ll hold.”
- “Are there other jobs for someone with my qualifications?”
- “Can you please transfer me to her voicemail?”

WHEN A PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER CONTACTS YOU

The hiring manager has decided to contact you, by telephone, to invite you for a face-to-face interview! He was impressed with your resume and cover letter. Your self-marketing materials speak volumes about your written communication skills and attention to detail. You answer the phone: “Hello, this is Michelle.” But who, or what, else is also greeting the prospective employer? Is it...

- A crying baby
- Lil Jon and The East Side Boyz “I don’t give a f**k!”
- Maury delivering DNA results: “You are NOT the father!”
- A flushing toilet
- People in the background using profanity
- An excessive amount of noise in the background

Controlling any of the above scenarios is quite simple. **1.** Quickly remove yourself from the noisy area and then take the call. **2.** If you have no control over the environment and can’t locate a quiet space to have a professional conversation, then allow the call to go directly to your voicemail. But make sure to listen to the message, in its entirety, before making contact. There may be specific call-back instructions for you to follow.

Receiving calls from hiring managers can seem intimidating. Nevertheless, these calls require you to be well prepared and capable of knowing what to do and when. It is important to your success that you answer every call professionally and politely. With some helpful techniques and a little practice, you will have no problems impressing prospective employers.

CONTACTING PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS

Placing calls to potential employers and other career contacts can cause anxiety, but with practice, you can gain the confidence and poise you need. When speaking to, or leaving a message for, hiring managers and recruiters, remember the following tips:

- Have all your notes in front of you before placing the call.
- Have a general script of what you’d like to say. This includes what you’d say in a voicemail in the event the person is not available.
- Speak clearly and refrain from chewing gum.
- Take notes on all information you are given.
- Date your notes and write down with whom you spoke for future reference.
- Always address the individual to whom you are speaking with their appropriate title—Reverend, Minister, Doctor, Mister, Miss, or Misses.

YOUR TELEPHONE CONVERSATION SHOULD PROCEED IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER

- Introduce yourself.
- Identify the person with whom you wish to speak.
- Explain the purpose of your call.
- Ask for the information you desire.
- When the conversation ends, thank the person for their time.

IF YOU ARE REQUIRED TO LEAVE A MESSAGE, THE FOLLOWING TIPS WILL HELP

- Leave the message slowly and carefully so the career contact can take notes without having to replay your message.
- Leave your name and number twice—name at beginning of the message and phone number, then proceed using the sequence given on the previous page when you are instructed to leave a detailed message. Then, repeat your name and phone number at the end of the message, “Once again, my name is Michelle Jones. I can be reached at 773-648-0476.”
- Let them choose when to call you back by stating in the message “Please give me a call at your earliest convenience.” Don’t be surprised if you receive calls for jobs you’ve applied for on a holiday, the weekend, or after 5 pm. Just be sure to answer all calls in a professional manner.

ACTIVITY

Call Michelle Jones and express your interest in enrolling in Spiral Group’s online Employment Preparation Training Program. Make your call between 9am and 1 pm, only—any day of the week. Your call may or may not be answered, but be prepared in either case scenario and remember what you have just learned. I look forward to either speaking with you or hearing your professional voice message. Here’s the number to call: 773-242-0705.

8 | DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

The impression you make is important. The first judgment an interviewer makes is going to be based on your appearance. If you're not sure what to wear, it's fine to check with the person scheduling the interview. In general, the candidate dressed in a suit and tie is going to make a much better impression than the candidate dressed in jeans and t-shirt. Here's more on what to wear to an interview when you want to make the best impression.

MEN

Typically, men should wear a suit and tie, along with a coordinated shirt.

WOMEN

In general, it's best that women wear a pant or skirt suit, along with a coordinated blouse.

ACCESSORIES

Your accessories matter. So, remember that less is more. Choose accessories that enhance your attire.

JEWELRY

Women should avoid dangling earrings and multiple bracelets. Men should wear little or no jewelry, other than an appropriate watch and wedding band. When in doubt, no jewelry is better than cheap or gaudy jewelry. When it comes to body and facial piercings and tattoos, consider covering visible tattoos and removing the additional jewelry.

SHOES

Conservative shoes are an ideal choice for both sexes. Women should avoid high heels and platform shoes. Closed toe pumps or a stylish flat in a neutral color are best. For men, slip-on or lace-up dress shoes are ideal. Remove smudges and dirt. Polish your shoes if required.

BELTS

If your slacks or skirt have belt loops, then wear a matching belt.

HAIR | MAKE UP | NAILS | COLOGNE

Please choose hairstyles, make up colors, and fragrances that say “I’m a Professional and I’m Job Ready!” Avoid unnatural hair and lip colors. Nails should be clean and neatly manicured. Neutral colors and inoffensive fragrances will work best during the job interview.

PORTFOLIO

A portfolio can be used to store additional copies of your self-marketing materials, lists of references, and notepad for taking notes during the interview. Women may want to consider a small briefcase or oversized purse that can hold all your belongings, plus what you need for the interview.

YOU'RE ALMOST READY

- Before attending the interview, make sure you have everything you need to make a great first impression. Try on the garments you’ve chosen to ensure a proper fit. Be sure to eliminate wrinkles, lint, and hanging threads from garments. Prepare your items the night before so you don't have to spend time getting them ready on the day of the interview.
- Make sure you have all the required documents on hand. Never allow anyone to keep your original documents—politely ask them to make copies.
- Use a breath mint, not chewing gum, before entering the building.

MORE JOB SEEKING TIPS

- On a calendar, list all the interviews scheduled for the month. On days you don’t have interviews scheduled, dedicate your time acquiring them. This will include taking your resume to prospective employers and completing applications either online or at their location. Either you’ll be invited for an interview immediately, or they may promise to call you for an interview in the near future.
- Other productive job seeking activities include: creating a list of potential employers to call, visit, and email; revising your resume and cover letter; polishing your interviewing skills; and keeping interview attire ready at all times.
- Accept the reality that finding a job that is going to meet your needs and fulfill your objectives will take time, energy, and effort. If you’re seeking an opportunity that is worth your time, there will be others competing for the same position. Therefore, you must be the best-prepared candidate.

Wits & Bits

the essence of all our products and services is gnosis.

Our church has been providing Wits and Bits since 2002. We've expanded to over 202 locations throughout the Chicagoland area, and we are still growing. Our goal is to have over 500 locations by the year 2020. As a result of our growth, we are seeking personable and dynamic customer service professionals to join our fun, fabulous, and winning team. The ideal person will have the following, but we will train the right candidate:

- Two years' experience dealing directly with customers
- Able to stand during an 8-hour work shift, and be able to lift up to 45 pounds
- High School diploma or Equivalent—must provide transcripts
- Computer skills: proficiency in MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Capable of working calmly in a fast-paced environment
- Current ServSafe Food Handler's certificate

Qualified candidates can submit their cover letters and resumes by March 31, 2018 to:

WITS & BITS

Minister Michelle A. Jones, Director of Human Resources

555 West East Street, Suite 3200 | Chicago, IL 60644

Office: 773.242.0705 | Fax: 773.648.0477 | E-Mail: MJones@WitsandBits.com



Click to begin the Cumulative Exam for this Course.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Michelle A. Jones is the Founder-Instructor of Spiral Group, Inc. The not for profit organization provides online **Employment Preparation Training** for job seekers who are willing to learn how to become job ready; how to make effective use of the skills they already possess; and how to communicate these skills to Employers of Choice. As a useful services provider, our main goal is to assist individuals in achieving self-sufficiency.

Michelle has over twenty years' experience (1984-2005) in the hospitality industry as an hourly worker, cashier supervisor, assistant manager, general manager, training manager, and franchise operations consultant. She has worked with the following organizations: Subway, Portillo's, Quiznos, Dock's Great Fish, Burger King, Chili's, Target, and Jeepers.

She is a certified ServSafe® Instructor and registered ServSafe® Exam Proctor. She also holds the following diplomas and certifications: Diploma in Human Resources; Diploma in Business and Legal Studies; Certificate in Instructional Systems Design; and Certificate in Six Sigma. Michelle is a Web Developer. She designed and maintains SpiralGroup.org.

Michelle opened her first business, RMRC (Restaurant Materials Resource Center), in 1999 where she designed business documents, labels, and posters for the foodservice industry. In addition, Michelle is a mystic, cartomancer, and ordained minister. She received her ordination on April 19, 2007. Since 1994, she has been a student of Astrology, Mysticism, Magic, Mythology, Theosophy, Numerology, Gnosticism, Hermeticism, the Nordic Runes, Egyptian Hieroglyphs, and other Occult Sciences. From 2009-2012, she taught basic lessons in astrology online.

SOME OF THE MUSIC THAT INSPIRES MICHELLE

- ♪ "Mind Power" & "Superbad" by James Brown
- ♪ "Unbreakable" by Michael Jackson
- ♪ "Every Praise" by Hezekiah Walker
- ♪ "Black Man" & "Jesus Children of America" by Stevie Wonder
- ♪ "It's A Beautiful Thing" by Boney James
- ♪ "I Go To Work" by Kool Moe Dee