

INTERVIEWING
STRATEGIES &
SALARY
NEGOTIATION

A Comprehensive Guide
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PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

I. Researching the Organization

Would you ever drive on an unfamiliar road without using your GPS, or without knowing the address of your destination? One of the biggest complaints heard by interviewers is that candidates do not know enough about the organization! Your knowledge of the company/place you're interviewing will set the tone for the interview and establish a common base of knowledge from which questions can be asked as well as information can be added. Don't try to wing it – do your research!

You can research organizations by:

1. Using the *internet* to visit company *websites*. Find out the who's what's where's when's, why's and how's of the organization and/or department
2. Reading *annual reports*, other *company literature*, and *business directories*. Check out your local *libraries*, college *career centers* and *alumni organizations*, as well through *professional organizations* such as the Chamber of Commerce for printed literature
3. Keeping up to date with your particular field of interest by reading *newspapers*, news *magazines*, *professional journals*, and other *related periodicals*

IMPORTANT EMPLOYER INFORMATION

- Relative size of the firm in the industry
- Annual percentage sales growth in the last five years
- Various price points in product or service lines
- Number of plants, stores, or sales outlets
- Annual percentage growth in earnings per share
- Name/title of the recruiter/interviewer
- The organization's competitors
- Variety of product line/service
- Location of the home office
- Potential growth of the industry

An interviewer will always be impressed if you are knowledgeable about current events within the organization. If you should mention something like this during the interview, be sure that it is something positive about the organization. Mentioning something negative could mean that **YOU** will be remembered in a negative light!

II. Know Yourself

It is extremely important that you are fully aware of your skills, interests, goals and capabilities before you interview. Never try to "fake it, 'till you make it". Review your resume the morning of, or the night before your interview. Use the following "Check list" to honestly assess your positive attributes, and be eager to change your negative ones.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION CHECK LIST

This is a self-help exercise to assist you in organizing your thoughts in preparation for a successful interview. Respond to those questions which are relevant to your background. Elaborate as much as you can, but be specific. The questions in parentheses can help to guide you in responding to the primary question. Feel free to take notes in the blank spaces underneath each question.

1. What information do I have concerning this company, organization, and/or job? (Where did I obtain this knowledge? Why am I interested in this position?)
2. What is my educational background? (How is my background relevant to the job? What skills did I learn in previous educational experiences that are relevant to this job? What did I contribute in and out of the classroom?)
3. What is my work experience background? (How are my experiences transferrable to this job? What specific skills did I use in previous experiences that are relevant to this job? What did I contribute in my past jobs?)
4. What are my career goals? (How are my goals related to this organization?)
5. What are some of my personal skills and abilities? (How do these skills relate to the future job? What are some specific examples of how I used these skills in the past?)
6. What interested me in seeking this job/organization? (How are my career goals related to my interests in this position? What knowledge do I have concerning the job/organization? How does my background relate to the skills in this position?)
7. My strengths are . . . (How did they develop? How are they maintained?)
8. My weaknesses are . . . (How am I improving them?)
9. What questions do I want to ask the interviewer? (Is there growth potential at this organization? What kind of training, if any, is provided? ** See the section in this booklet which lists Questions for the Interviewer.)

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

An interviewer's first impression of you is usually the impression that lasts! First impressions count and they are usually made very quickly; therefore, your first impression should be one of professionalism. Always dress in a suit for an interview, even if your job requires you to wear a uniform. Your grooming and attire will go a long way in determining the type of impression you make on an interviewer. Both men and women should avoid wearing strong perfume or cologne because the interviewer may be allergic. Strive to be conservative!

WARDROBE FOR WOMEN

- SUIT:** Suits for professional women have more flair and style than in previous years. Go with conservative business colors such as navy blue, gray or a soft tweed.
- JEWELRY:** Jewelry should be simple and should not call attention to itself. Wear no more than one ring on each hand. Earrings should be pearls, studs, or very small hoops. A string of pearls or a thin chain is acceptable. You may also wear a conservative watch and/or a small pin for your lapel.
- SHOES:** Shoes should be solid colored dress shoes. Don't wear extremely high heels or sling backs. A small wedge or pump is the best fit. Only wear flats if you can't wear heels for some physical reason like having a bad back.
- HOSIERY:** The style now is no hosiery at all. You can wear a girdle underneath your suit to smooth out panty lines, and you can use self-tanner to minimize the look of spider veins. If, however, you have unsightly veins or are uncomfortable with bare legs, wear flesh colored panty hose. Tights or black stockings are not appropriate.
- MAKE-UP:** Use natural tones and avoid dark black eyeliner (a soft smudge is O.K.) Comb through eyelashes to get rid of mascara clumping. Stay away from bright red lipstick.
- HAIR:** Neat, clean, and away from eyes and face. Younger people should pull their long hair back in a braid, or fashionable clip/tie.
- NAILS:** Should be neatly manicured and not too long. Avoid bright polish.

WARDROBE FOR MEN

- SUIT:** A solid navy blue, black or gray suit works best. Subtle pinstripes will also do in most cases. A strait leg, no-cuff, suit works well – double breasted suits are no longer in style. Although three piece suits are making a come-back, you don't see them too often yet.
- SHIRT:** A long sleeve, white cotton shirt with a straight collar is best. Short sleeve shirts should not be worn to an interview, even when it's hot outside.
- TIE:** A conservative color will always work well. It should not display loud colors, designs, or patterns. Be sure you know how to tie your tie properly.
- SHOES/SOCKS:** Men should always wear dress socks to an interview. Socks should be navy blue or black. Never wear argyle, white, or other brightly colored socks.
- JEWELRY:** Wear no more than one ring on each hand. If you wear a chain, be sure it isn't noticeable. Men should NEVER WEAR ERINGS to any interview.

QUICK TIPS

1. Know where you are going and with whom you are interviewing
2. Take a **trial run** the day before the interview and at the same time when you will be interviewing. (You don't want to get lost or stuck in traffic!)
3. Arrive at the interview **10-15 minutes early** so you can freshen up and relax a bit
4. Bring **extra copies** of your resume with references listed on a separate page.
5. Have a **firm handshake** – no wimpy shakes (men and women alike).
6. Establish **eye contact** throughout the interview. (Eye contact in the USA is a sign of honesty and respect).
7. Be aware of your own **body language** (tapping feet, crossed arms) and **non-verbal cues** (rolling your eyes, smiling, nodding).
8. Avoid talking **too much** or **too little** (30 seconds – 2 minutes).
9. Always answer questions in **complete sentences** (no yeah's, na's, or um's)
10. Create a dialogue by remembering this formula:
 - A. Answer the question
 - B. Give an example
 - C. Ask a question

DO's

DON'Ts

Thoroughly research the company

Be unprepared

Smile, relax, be pleasant and friendly

Argue with the interviewer over an issue

Wait to be offered a chair – sit up straight

Slouch in your chair

Be able to have specific goals and examples

Make elaborate promises

Assertively express your strengths

Criticize yourself

Be sincere and listen

Go into too much detail about anything unless asked

Express your 100% interest in the job

Criticize your former boss

Address the interviewer as Mr. or Ms. _____

Address the interviewer by first name unless asked

Have the answers to tough questions rehearsed

“Hem and Haw” with embarrassment

Be able to explain anything that's on your resume

Forget what you have written

THE INTERVIEW

Job interviews usually consist of three parts:

- A. Introduction
- B. Body
- C. Close

INTRODUCTION

The ***introduction*** is the initial ice-breaking portion of the interview. This is the time when the interviewer will attempt to put you at ease by making small talk about the weather, your commute, or some similar innocuous subject. ***DO NOT DOWNPLAY*** this part of the interview! The introduction is very important and may go a long way in determining your success during the interview. Your appearance, speech, and general suitability for the company and for the position are being evaluated at this time.

After being greeted by the interviewer, ***look at him/her in the eye, give a firm handshake, and introduce yourself***. Eye contact should be maintained throughout the entire interview. Wait until the interviewer offers you a chair or until he/she sits down before you sit down. The introduction part of the interview is a very brief, but important, thirty seconds to two minutes. Now you're ready to begin the main portion of the interview.

BODY

The ***body*** of the interview is when the interviewer, using questions and answers, will evaluate your qualifications and suitability for the position. Your responses to questions should be **professionally and educationally** related unless the interviewer specifically calls for a different type of answer. Remember: The *way* you answer a question is almost as important as *what* you say.

It is impossible to anticipate every question that may be asked on an interview; however, there are many "typical" questions that may be asked in a variety of ways. (****see the next few pages for typical questions asked on an interview****) Be prepared to discuss your last position and why you are no longer there. In addition, you will most likely discuss your short and long term goals, and how you hope to achieve them. Above all ***be honest!*** If you don't know the answer to a question (or if it's a stress question) it is better to say that you're unsure of the answer than it is to make up a lie in order to impress your interviewer. Honesty should be a factor in all of your responses.

CLOSE

The ***close*** is the final part of the interview. Be aware when the interviewer is starting to wind down the interview. This is your opportunity to **let the interviewer know that you are still very interested** in the position. If your feelings are not expressed, don't expect the interviewer to read your mind. Prior to leaving, ask the interviewer for his/her business card. This will assist you when you're ready to write your "thank-you" email/letter once you get home. Ask when you can be expected to be contacted by the interviewer, *or should you be the one to call?*

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Tell me about yourself** The answer to this question should be rehearsed ahead of time because it's a question that's almost always asked on an interview. Discuss your education, your skills, and your work experience as they relate to the position. Where did you start out, where are you now, and where do you want to be with your career. Be enthusiastic, but remember to keep everything professionally, *NOT PERSONALLY*, related. Try to answer this question as briefly as possible – between one to three minutes.
2. **What do you know about our organization?** **Why do you want to work here?** This is where your research of the organization will pay off. Refer to reports, brochures, websites, articles, and anything else you may have read to obtain this information. Explain why this information has made the organization so appealing to you. You should **never tell an interviewer** that you there simply because you need a job, or because you heard the salary/benefits were good!
3. **How has your experience prepared you for this position?** Obviously an employer is looking for a competent worker, but being a problem solver and someone who is able to make an immediate impact will always work to your advantage. Be aware of skills that you have developed at other positions, and which you can transfer to this position.
4. **What are your strengths?** You should already know your strong points, however, make sure that you don't keep repeating the same strengths over and over again. Enter the interview with at least five or six strengths in your mind, and intersperse them throughout the interview.
5. **What are your weaknesses?** You can state a weakness that isn't really a weakness (i.e. you are overly conscientious about your work), however this method has become a bit overused. A stronger response to this question is to answer with an honest weakness that isn't really job related (i.e. You may need a little work with your public speaking, but the job to which you are applying requires little or no public speaking). Don't forget to follow up your weakness with a plan on how you intend to rectify the problem.
6. **Where do you see yourself in five years?** It's good to be ambitious, but know your audience. If the interviewer is the only manager in that small office, don't say you want to be the manager. The interviewer will think you're after his/her job. If you don't know where you want to be in five years, it's O.K. to say that you're keeping your options open to new learning experiences, but in 10 years you'd like to be
7. **Do you plan on furthering your education?** This doesn't necessarily mean college or graduate school. It could mean continuing your education through specialized trade classes to keep current in your field. It's always good to portray a need to grow in your specialty, and if you've done your research, you should know where the company stands. If you are planning to go back to college or graduate school, make it clear that you're not going to quit in a few months to go back to school full time.
8. **Are you a leader or a follower?** Most people are both at different times in their lives, but it's usually better to be a leader. Be prepared to give examples.

9. **How do you feel about your progress to date?** Never apologize for yourself, but you also don't want the employer to think that you have accomplished all there is to accomplish. A good response might be something like this, "I think I've done well, but I'm always looking for new challenges." Give a specific "hero" story to provide proof of your successes.
10. **Would you do anything differently if you were starting over again?** Be sincere, but remember that everything you've done thus far (good or bad) has been a learning experience which has made you what you are today.
11. **What is your definition of success? How would you measure an individual's success on the job?** Success is many things to many people – recognition, leadership, respect, etc. Always avoid answering this question in terms of how much money you want to earn *unless the position you are applying for is a high-pressure sales position motivated by making money.*
12. **Give me an example showing where you've displayed initiative and a willingness to work.** These types of questions are attempting to determine how well you can function as a team player. Know your industry and how its workers usually perform.
13. **How do you work under pressure?** In today's fast paced world (and especially on the east coast) it's important to work effectively "under the gun". When you answer this question, prove you work well under pressure by giving the interviewer a concrete example.
14. **What is your most significant accomplishment?** Always assume they mean work-related accomplishments unless otherwise stated. Was there anything you've done that you're particularly proud of? Be prepared to brag *a little.*
15. **Could you please explain these gaps in your work history?** This is a difficult question to answer because it might lead to personal information. Keep your answer as positive as you can (perhaps you decided to take a few courses to update or strengthen your skills). If you have taken time off to raise your children or to take care of a sick relative, focus on your *complete dedication* to returning to work. If you have been unemployed and actively searching for a job, employers usually understand that it is difficult to find a job in today's market.
16. **Why have you changed jobs so frequently?** No matter what, don't "bad mouth" your previous employers. Always take responsibility for your actions . . . then you must convince the interviewer that your job hopping days are over and that you are ready to embark on a permanent path.
17. **Why do you want to change jobs?** This is a little different from the previous question. If you're currently in a dead-end position, locked out of advancement opportunities or new learning experiences, briefly explain what's going on. The interviewer will understand.
18. **Why do you want to change your field of interest?** Before your interview, spend some time organizing and memorizing your thoughts on this subject. Your explanation should include:
(a) How your previous work experience can contribute to the new career (b) What excites you the most about this new field (c) How you came to make this career decision.
19. **Why are you interested in this type of work?** Remember your excitement when you first got involved with your career choice. Express your enthusiasm.

20. **Are you willing to travel? If you are, what percentage of time would you be willing to travel?** Be very honest with your answer to this question. If you exaggerate, it will surely affect you in the long run.
21. **What types of hobbies and outside interests do you have?** This is an example of the only time you should get personal –WHEN THE INTERVIEWER ASKS! Don't offer anything that could be a controversial topic, it could start an argument.
22. **What's the most difficult situation you've faced at work and how did you handle it?** This is a pressure question. Take a deep breath and answer honestly. Keep in mind that the interviewer is as interested in *how* you handle your "difficult situation" as he/she is in *the way* you are answering this question. Try to stay positive and watch what you're saying about the people you worked with. If you are stumped, it's perfectly alright to ask if you can come back to this question later.
23. **What's the biggest mistake you've made and how did you handle it?** Another pressure question! Keep your cool and don't reveal anything too incriminating.
24. **Why should we hire you? Why are you the best person for this position?** The way you answer this question should be similar to the "Tell me about yourself" question. Focus on those accomplishments, skills, knowledge, education and experiences that you haven't already mentioned.
25. **How long will you stay with this organization?** A reasonable response might be, "As long as I continue to grow in my field."
26. **What would your first week on the job look like?** Don't be too "gung ho" and want to change the whole company in five days. In your first week, you should be taking the time to meet your co-workers, get acquainted with the corporate culture, set up your desk, etc.
27. **So far, what is your impression of our department?** Always be positive and come up with at least two concrete examples. Don't just shake your head in agreement that it looks like a nice place to work – the interview doesn't want an empty opinion.
28. **Was there anything that you were afraid I might ask you today?** If you're too up front about this, be prepared to be asked the very question you most feared. It may be best to say that you were prepared for all questions, and you weren't concerned because you have nothing to hide.
29. **Is there anything else you would like to share with me that might assist in the decision-making process?** This type of question is a good indication that the interview is coming to a close. It is your last chance to make a good, lasting impression.
30. **Do you have any questions?** ALWAYS HAVE QUESTIONS PREPARED TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER! These questions can be generic questions or they can be questions based on what you and the interviewer have just discussed. The answers to your questions can be written down before hand, but they shouldn't be ones you could have answered on your own by visiting the company website. **** See the next page for good questions for the interviewer****

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER

Some of these questions may have been answered during the interview. Keep in mind which ones were answered and DON'T ask them again – it will seem as though you weren't paying attention. Remember, it's perfectly acceptable to write your questions down prior to the interview, just be careful not to take notes while you're interviewing - you'll lose the one-on-one dynamic. NEVER ASK ABOUT THE SALARY ON THE FIRST INTERVIEW UNLESS THE POSITION IS A SALES OR MONEY MOTIVATED POSITION.

1. From what I've researched about your company, I have found out (xxx). Can you tell me anything more about the company's history?
2. Do you have a written job description I can look at?
3. What is a typical career path that someone entering this position might follow?
4. Does the company place great emphasis on its' employees continuing their education?
5. What would my responsibilities be?
6. To whom would I report?
7. Would I be working independently or with a team?
8. Does the company offer any training programs?
9. Will there be close supervision? What are my bosses' credentials?
10. Does the company offer any on the job training programs?
11. What characteristics do you look for in your employees?
12. What is the schedule? Is there much overtime?
13. What are the day-to-day responsibilities?
14. How was this vacancy created?
15. How does this company measure its' success?
16. Do you like working here?
17. How do the people generally get along in the office?
18. So far, how many people have applied for this position? How many have you interviewed?
19. When do you plan on making a decision regarding this position?
20. May I call you in (2 weeks) regarding the status of this position?
21. **May I have your business card?** (always ask this so you can send thank-you emails or letters to everyone with whom you've met and interviewed)

NEGOTIATING SALARY

CARDINAL RULE:

DO NOT MENTION SALARY OR BENEFITS UNTIL IT IS BROUGHT UP BY THE INTERVIEWER!

Some interviewers are kind enough to mention the starting salary so that you know where you stand – others do not. If you are fortunate enough to find out the starting salary at the beginning of the interview, but it doesn't meet your requirements, DON'T GIVE UP. At the very best of all possible situations, you can ***negotiate later in the interview*** to a salary that's mutually beneficial. If you are a strong candidate by the time the interview is completed, you will have a better chance to negotiate your terms. Remember that stock options, benefits, tuition reimbursement, regular raise/review periods, bonus', company car, etc., are all factors that should be considered in the negotiation process.

If the company is firm on its' decision and you're still not happy, it's obvious that this job isn't right for you. But don't consider the interview a waste of time. You have now gained some valuable practice which will be beneficial to all future interviews!

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE ASKED ABOUT SALARY

- Do your research before the interview to find out what the “going rate” or salary is for your field of interest, years of experience, and geographic location of your job. Websites like *payscale.com* or books like The Occupational Outlook Handbook are very helpful.
- Enter the interview knowing how much money you need to survive and add 10% (this way, you can come down 10% if you really need or want this job).
- Never give a flat figure, always give a ***salary range*** to show the interviewer you have some flexibility. Keep in mind that your salary range should be a little bit higher if you will not be receiving any benefits or additional perks.
- Try to make salary negotiations the ***last thing you discuss***. If the interviewer brings it up too early, smile and say something like, “Salary is an important issue to discuss once we both decide that this is where I belong. Right now, I'm more interested in learning about “

ILLEGAL PRE-EMPLOYMENT INQUIRIES

Various federal, state, and local laws regulate the questions an employer can legally ask you. An employer's question on the application, during the interview, or during the testing process, must be related to the job for which you are applying. The employer must focus on: "What do I need to know to decide whether or not this person can perform the functions of the job?" If you have something that you don't really want the interviewer to use against you in his/her decision making process, make sure you *have a rehearsed answer* that you can live with. Practice saying it out loud a few times before the actual interview.

YOU HAVE THREE OPTIONS IF YOU ARE ASKED AN ILLEGAL QUESTION:

1. You are free to answer the question, but if you do, realize that you are giving information that is not job related. You could harm your candidacy by giving the "wrong" answer.
2. You can refuse to answer the question. If you don't answer, you'll be within your rights, but you may also appear to be uncooperative, confrontational, or that you have something to hide . . . not exactly the type of individual an employer is looking to hire.
3. Your third option is to examine the intent behind the question and respond with an answer as it might apply to the job. For example – "I'd be happy to answer that question if you can tell me how it relates to this position."

ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE PRE-EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Subject: Name

Acceptable: "Have you ever worked for this company under a different name?" or "Have you ever been convicted of a crime under a different name?"

Unacceptable: Former name of applicant whose name has been legally changed

Subject: Address or duration of residence

Acceptable: Applicant's place of residence or how long the applicant has been a resident

Unacceptable: Birthplace of applicant or of applicant's parents or relatives. Requirement that applicant submit a birth certificate, naturalization, or baptismal record

Subject: Age

Acceptable: "Can you, after employment, submit a work permit if under 18?" or "Are you over 18 years of age and can you furnish proof of age after employment?"

Unacceptable: Questions which tend to identify applicants 50-65+ years of age

Subject: Religion

Acceptable: Nothing

Unacceptable: Applicant's religious denomination, affiliation, house of worship, holidays observed, or lack thereof

Subject: Race or Color

Acceptable: Nothing

Unacceptable: Complexion, color of skin, or other questions directly or indirectly relating to race/color

Subject: Photograph
Acceptable: Statement that photographs may be required after employment
Unacceptable: Requirement that the applicant, or at his/her option, affix a photograph to an application form. Requirement of photograph after the interview, but before hiring

Subject: Citizenship
Acceptable: Statement by employer that if hired, applicant may be required to submit proof of authorization to work in the USA
Unacceptable: Whether the applicant, parents, or spouse are naturalized or native born citizens
Date when applicant, parents or spouse acquired U.S. citizenship
Requirement that applicant produce his naturalization or first papers

Subject: National Origin or Ancestry
Acceptable: Languages applicant reads, speaks, or writes fluently
Unacceptable: Applicant's nationality, lineage, ancestry, national origin, decent, or parentage
Date of arrival in the United States or how long the applicant has been a resident
Nationality of applicant's spouse or parents. Maiden name of applicant's mother or wife

Subject: Education
Acceptable: Applicant's academic, vocational, or professional education; schools attended
Unacceptable: Last date of the attended high school

Subject: Experience
Acceptable: Applicant's work history
Applicant's military experience in the U.S. Armed Forces, in (U.S.) State Militia or in a particular branch of the U.S. Armed Forces
Unacceptable: Applicant's type of military discharge

Subject: Marital Status/Children/Relatives
Acceptable: Name and address of parent or guardian if applicant is a minor
Name of the applicant's relatives already employed by the company
Unacceptable: Applicant's sexual preference
Discussion on whether or not the applicant is single or married
Whether the applicant has children and if so, how does the applicant provide child care
With whom the applicant resides (parent, spouse, lover, children, etc.)

Subject: Character
Acceptable: "Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If so, where, when, and disposition of case?"
Unacceptable: "Have you ever been arrested?"

Subject: Notice in case of emergency
Acceptable: Name and address of person to be notified in case of emergency or accident
Unacceptable: Name of relative to be notified in case of emergency

Subject: Physical Condition
Acceptable: "Can you perform all of the duties outlined in the job description?"
Statement by the employer that all job offers are contingent on passing a physical exam
Unacceptable: "Do you have any physical disabilities?"
Questions on general medical condition, inquiries as to receipt of workmen's compensation, and questions on what physical fitness club to which you belong

THE FOLLOW-UP

The interview appears to be over, but the process is really still continuing. You need to follow-up in a number of ways, and for a number of reasons. Many applicants tend to leave the interview and wait for something to happen. Be pro-active, and you'll find that your odds of obtaining that position will increase dramatically. Here's what you need to do:

WRITE YOURSELF NOTES

Write down anything you feel is important which occurred during the interview as soon as you get home, and while it's still fresh in your mind. When you're nervous, it's easy to forget important details and everyone is at least *a little* nervous on an interview. The notes will also assist you when you're writing your thank-you emails/letters.

SEND A THANK-YOU EMAIL OR LETTER

A thank-you email or letter should be sent within **24 hours** after the interview to whomever you've met. Don't send a mass email. Make sure you take the time to personalize each one. A thank-you email/letter serves two purposes: (1) It is a courtesy to the person/people who interviewed you. It thanks the person for his/her time; (2) It lets the interviewer know that you are still interested in the position. You want to keep your name in front of the interviewer in a *positive* way as much, and as often, as you can. The thank-you email/letter also lets the interviewer know that you paid attention during the interview, you understood his or her comments, and that you understand the specifics of the position. **ALWAYS SEND THANK YOU LETTERS IN A BUSINESS LETTER FORMAT – NEVER SEND HANDWRITTEN THANK-YOU CARDS!** It's not professional.

FOLLOWING UP WITH THE EMPLOYER

If you are supposed to phone the interviewer at a specific time on a specific day, **make sure you do it!** An organized individual will always impress an employer. Make sure you get some sort of time frame before you leave the interview, so that you don't follow up with an employer until that "decision time" passes – you don't want to be seen as annoying! If, however; the employer has told you that you will be notified within a specific time period and that period passes without hearing anything, it's appropriate to take the initiative to reach out to them via email or phone. You can say something like, "I just wanted to touch base to see if any decisions have been made, and to let you know that I'm still very interested in the position." Perseverance and assertiveness may prove that you really want this position, and it may be the determining factor regarding who gets the job.

SAMPLE THANK-YOU LETTER

Mary A. Smith
123 Main Street
Anytown, PA 10000
Phone: (555) 555-5555
Email: maryasmith@gmail.com

January 1, 2014

Mr. John Q. Public
Senior Vice President
ABC Corporation
1 Main Street
Anytown, PA 10000

Dear Mr. Public,

I appreciate the time you spent with me last Wednesday to discuss the Senior Management position at ABC Corporation.

I was excited to learn about your department's approach to the commercial product line in this challenging market. I was also interested in learning about your long-term vision for the department, and where this current position fits in with those plans. My extensive experience with Fortune 500 clientele is a very good fit with that vision, and the national perspective associated with this position offers potential for professional growth that I find very attractive.

Thank you once again for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,
Mary A. Smith

SAMPLE THANK-YOU EMAIL

Hi Mr. Public,

Thank you once again for interviewing me today re: the accounting position at ABC Corporation. Not only was I excited to hear about your vision for future growth, but I also felt very comfortable with your staff members. Thank you for making what would otherwise be a tense interview into one where I felt completely at ease. I believe that both my skills and personality will fit in well within your organization. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,
Mary A. Smith

EVALUATING THE JOB OFFER

As with any other big decision in your life, it is important for you to evaluate the facts and impressions of the situation. Does the organization and position provide you with a setting and opportunity that is congruent with your career plans? Think about any job offers you receive in relation to your short term and long term career goals. The following are some things that you might want to consider when deciding on a job offer:

- **Supervision** – What type and how much supervision will I be receiving?
- **Daily Duties** – Will I be working on a variety of tasks? How many hours per week will I be working?
- **Compensation Package** – Salary, bonus, insurance, stock options, automobile, compensation for continuing education, and other perks/fringes
- **Professional Growth** – Will I be learning new concepts and taking on new challenges in my field of interest?
- **Travel** – How much time will be spent visiting other company branches or new clients?
- **Commuting** – How much time will be spent on the daily commute? Can I drive myself or do I have to use mass transit? What kind of traffic is there during rush hours? How much money do I have to spend on gas and tolls? Will there be financial re-imbusement?
- **Supervisor** – What is the management style like and what can I learn from my boss? What are his/her credentials?
- **Work Environment** – In what condition is the building and/or working space, and what are the attitudes of the people that work there?
- **Personal Chemistry** – Does my personality seem to “fit in” with those people currently working in the company, department, office, or firm?
- **Physical Labor vs. Mental Work** – Is this position more of a physical or mental challenge?
- **Opportunity for Advancement** – Does this organization have a career development or succession planning program?

CONCLUSION

If you receive a job offer, try to consider all possible variables and how they will affect your personal and professional life . . . then, accept or reject the job as soon as possible. If you are waiting for responses from more than one employer, you may want to weigh the individual offers against one another. You may want to simply take the first offer that you receive, or you can ask the employer for a few days to consider the offer. **Don't abuse this privilege.** You can't keep putting off an employer indefinitely! After you accept an offer, ask the employer to put it **in writing** and to spell out such things as terms of employment, exact title and job description, start date, salary, and benefits. Don't let fear of making a bad choice stop you from taking a chance. Ultimately, you're the one in charge of your future!