



THE JOB INTERVIEW

Part I - Preparation

Presented by
T. Lahdhiri, PhD, PE, PMP, SM-IEEE

March 2010

Part I Overview

- Interview types
- Preparation

Interview Types

- Phone Screen
- Structured vs. unstructured
- Job skills vs. personality traits
- Formal Interview formats
 - One-on-One interview
 - Group interview
 - Technical seminar



Interview Preparation

- Sharpen your technical skills
- Understand the industry; major players
- Understand the job description (network)
- Understand their current pain points
- Research your future team (network)
- Review common interview questions
- Prepare a list of your own questions

Interview Preparation

- Interviews “by instance”
- Self assessment
- Preparation of “instances”
- One-Minute Professional Autobiography
- Company & Salary Research
- Identify any contacts into the organization

Self Assessment

- What can you do?
- What do you like to do?
- What are your core values?
- What type of person are you?
- In what kind of work environment are you at your best?



Preparation

- Gather Important Experiences
- Convert Experiences into Stories
 - A situation with a problem, and the potential for conflict of some type
 - The actions taken by the main character (you) to solve the problem
 - The resolution
 - Append a moral, or a “lesson learned”

Behavioral Questions

- Requests for behavioral (negative/stress) information
- Some negative questions are not legitimate
 - If the interviewer advances some strange theory, and then asks for your opinion
 - If the interviewer poses a difficult hypothetical question
 - Illegal questions

Behavioral Examples

- **Tell me about...**
 - The time you had to fire someone.
 - Situations you had to work for a woman.
 - Two interpersonal relationship problems you have had on the job. Instances when you have worked with minority groups.
 - You weren't getting along with a co-worker.
 - Being laid off.

Behavioral Examples (2)

- **How...**
 - Have your past job experiences prepared you, directly or indirectly, for this job?
 - Would you describe your previous supervisor?
 - Would you evaluate your present company?
 - Do you feel you learn best?

Behavioral Examples (3)

- **What ...**
 - Interests you most about the position we have?
 - Methods do you use to make decisions?
 - Methods have you found to be successful in setting job objectives? Is your interpretation of success?
 - Kinds of challenges bring out your potential?
 - Other companies/jobs are you considering?
 - Qualification do you have that make you feel that you will be successful'?
 - Jobs have you held? How were they obtained and why did you leave?

Behavioral Questions - Coping

- Restate the question in your own words, and ask if your interpretation is correct
- Tactfully disagree OR admit to the flaw
- Highlight a compensating strength
- Show how you learned from the experience
- Try to show the good side of weakness
- Distinguish between personality trait and behavior
- Back it up with an instance, if you can

Illegal Questions

- Answer the question?
- Don't answer the questions?
- Get a lawyer?



Salary Comparisons

- What are you worth?
- How much do you need?
- IEEE-USA Salary Calculator

<http://www.ieeeusa.org/careers/salarycalculator>



Sources

- “Get Hired!” by Paul Green - Bard Books, Inc.
- “Engineer’s Guide to Lifelong Employability” – IEEE-USA E-book
- “What Color is Your Parachute?” by Richard Bolles - Ten Speed Press
- “Winning Through Intimidation” by Robert Ringer - Fawcett Books
- Region 3 Employment Assistance Web Page

THE JOB INTERVIEW

Part II – The Interview

Part II Overview

- The interview
- What really matters
- Appearance
- Behavior, good and bad
- Topics to avoid
- Questions to ask
- Salary negotiations
- Afterwards

The Interview

- You are already Qualified for the job
- Question to answer – how do/will you fit?
- Five Steps Of A Success Sale
 - Build rapport
 - Ask questions to uncover needs
 - Describe benefits, strengths, abilities
 - Overcome objections, ask questions to uncover them; restate strengths, satisfy needs
 - Close - where do we go from here!

Impact of Your Presence

- Never distract the interviewer
- Impact of one's presence:
 - 55% body language
 - 38% voice tone
 - 7% word content
- Listen – they talk 70%; you talk 30%

Appearance

- Dress to blend
- Good grooming is important
- Don't be late



Behavior

- Lean forward to show interest
- Keep your hands away from face and head
- Do not fold your arms across your chest
- Make eye contact, but don't stare
- Try to smile occasionally
- Try to sound enthusiastic
- Have self-confidence

Behavior

- Do not over-talk
- Do not display arrogance
- Do not use profanity or risqué humor
- Restrain any distracting physical habits
- Do not complain about peripheral items
- Do not make negative references to others

Topics to Avoid

- Sex
- Race and ethnicity
- Religion
- Money
- Lunch
- Who you know in the organization
- Don't compliment their appearance



Interview Focus Factors

- **Experience:** How does your experience or education relate to the position?
- **Capability & Skills:** What value you can add and can you prove it.
- **Motivation:** Do you show signs of initiative, persistence, self-discipline and/or ambition?
- **Personal:** The interviewer is visualizing your appearance and personality as well as poise, confidence, maturity, and enthusiasm.

Top “Cliche” Questions

- Tell me about yourself
- Why are you seeking Employment?
- What do you feel are your Strengths?
- What are some of your Weaknesses?
- What did you like about your last Position?
- What did you Least Enjoy?
- Why would you like to join our firm? (or Why should we hire you?)

List courtesy Tom Sale

Top “Cliche” Questions (2)

- What do you know about our Organization?
- What are your Salary Requirements? / What was your Previous Salary?
 - In all cases you should assure the interviewer that when it comes time to discuss compensation *you will be flexible and you expect the company to be fair.*
- Where would you like to be in 5 years?
- How quickly can you make a contribution to the Firm?
- Is there anything else I should know about you?

Question Types to Ask

- Taking charge questions or “Tie-on” Questions
- Feedback questions - test the interviewer's reaction to you, your stories, or your success in overcoming an objection
- Protective questions - designed to keep you from pursuing or accepting a position with a company where you might be unhappy or unsuccessful

List courtesy Tom Sale

Questions You Should Ask

- Your questions should, if possible, allow your respondent to display their knowledge.
- Ask questions about the industry or business.
- Avoid questions that are too personal or to which you have no right to expect an answer.
- Any questions should have the potential of leading to something of interest to you.
- Always be prepared with a potential follow-up question, such as “Why is that?”

Questions You Should Ask (2)

- What is it like to work for the group manager?
- What is the corporate culture? The group culture?
- The training and continuous education policy
- The group structure & prospects for advancement
- Turnover rate
- Why did the previous person leave?
- Detailed job description

Salary Negotiations

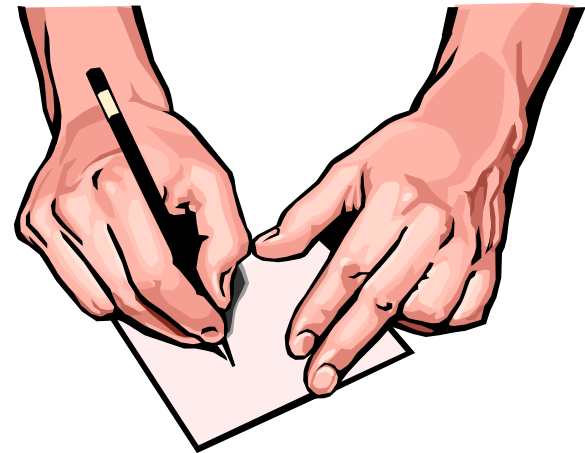
- Employers want to know if your salary expectation fits inside their Salary Range
- Do not mention salary prematurely
- Know beforehand what you are worth and how much you need
- Do not be the first one to mention a number
- Salary is not everything

The Last Few Minutes

- Verify the next step.
- Say “Thank you”, and smile
- Leave

Follow Up!

- Send Thank-You letter
- within 24 - 48 hours
- Debrief yourself



Twenty Tips to Nail an Interview

Based on "hidden camera" interview experiment

<http://www.howtonailaninterview.com/>

1. 10 seconds to sell or say so long – tailor to job description
2. Be on time
3. Cell phone off
4. Know the company, and why you want to work there
5. Bring resumes – shows you're prepared and serious about the job
6. Bring a notepad; take notes
7. Dress in a clean conservative manner; ditch the cologne/perfume
8. Social network profiles private; interviewers use the net to check
9. Don't make jokes
10. Don't babble on

Twenty Tips cont'd

11. Don't badmouth a prior boss
12. Don't flirt with the interviewer
13. Don't play with face/hair – look like lack confidence or lying
14. Less is more – sometimes details are best left unsaid
15. Have good eye contact – makes you appear interested in job
16. Have goals – if you can't state any you appear un-ambitious
17. Have accomplishments (shows how you will add value)
18. Have passion – express why you want to work in that field/industry and what you to further your knowledge
19. Ask questions – reinforces your interest in the job
20. Send a [hand written] thank you note – doesn't need to be long but be sincere.

Sources

- “Get Hired”, by Paul Green, Bard Books, Inc.
- “Engineer’s Guide to Lifelong Employability”, IEEE Press
- “What Color Is Your Parachute?” by Richard Bolles, Ten Speed Press.