

INTERVIEW HANDBOOK

IDEAS AND TIPS FOR TURNING INTERVIEWS INTO OFFERS

This booklet will provide you with valuable interviewing tips that can give you an edge over other, less prepared candidates. Review it thoroughly and prepare your responses and questions from the suggestions contained in this packet. You will see many things that you already know and have utilized, however there may be some information that you simply haven't had to think about in a long time. Please take a look through the material and call with any general questions or feedback.

Remember that your resume will get you in the door but your ability to communicate you abilities and how you fit in the company that will get you the job.

As always, feel free to call your Consultant if you have any questions, GOOD LUCK!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. 8 POINT PREP-QUICK, STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW FORMAT
2. OVERVIEW
3. PREPARATION
4. APPEARANCE
5. THE INTERVIEW ITSELF
6. TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
7. THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW
8. LETTERS: FOLLOW UP, THANK YOU AND RESIGNATION
9. PRE-EMPLOYMENT PHYSICAL
10. FINAL THINGS TO CONSIDER

8-POINT PREP FOR INTERVIEWS

- Throughout your conversations make sure that you build rapport with the person you are talking with. You are interviewing because you have the capabilities to do this job, you will move to the next step **because they like you.**
- Your goal throughout this meeting is to get them to want to move forward with you.
- To do this – it is my recommendation to sell them **BEFORE** you begin to screen them.

Point 1: Get to know how they do what they do. You may also want to find out the different nuances of how they do it compared to the methods and process of your current and prior employers.

Point 2: Find out what their expectations are going to be.

A: What are their expectations for this position

B: What are some of the obstacles I may face?

Point 3: Answer questions directly. If someone asks you what time it is, don't give them the history of the watch.

Point 4: Be prepared for the question: *“Why are you looking to leave?”* Even though you may truly be looking, the following comment/thought is important to remember and communicate.

“I was made aware of your opportunity and from what I have learned from my research, it was certainly worth pursuing. However, I am not necessarily looking. I am open to considering that there may be another opportunity out there where I can truly learn/grow/contribute at a greater pace than where I am currently employed”.

Point 5: Write up 10-15 questions that will allow you to determine if you want this position. (No compensation or benefit questions) This point is of great importance. You need to find out as much information as possible and it also shows your interest level in what they provide, offer and how they operate. Feel free to dig into culture questions, management questions and any others that will be pertinent to you making a solid decision.

Point 6: Avoid Money. The first meeting is not about money. It should be about the chemistry and mutual understanding of what each other are all about. If someone asks, *“how much will it take?”* a solid response may be *“if there is a mutual fit and growth potential for both of us, money will not be the deciding factor”.*

Point 7: Close and see what step 2 may be. Ask: *“Based on what we have talked about and what you have seen/heard, is there any reason why I wouldn't be a good fit within XYZ Company?”* If you are truly interested, let them know you are interested in moving forward, etc. (“Thanks for your time” is not enough)

A: You want the opportunity to overcome objections that may be misunderstandings.

B: If there are no issues/concerns, find out what the next step in the process will be.

Point 8: Call your consultant immediately after your meeting. They will have an appointment scheduled with the people you met with in order to get their feedback and will need your feedback prior to that call.

OVERVIEW: PREPARATION

1. Know Yourself

- ✓ Can you honestly visualize resigning from your current position? (See "Dealing With Counteroffers")
- ✓ What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- ✓ What are your short and long-term goals?
- ✓ Evaluate yourself in terms of the position you seek?
- ✓ Formulate responses by asking the question: "Why should they hire me?"
- ✓ Remember that you're there to sell yourself and secure a job offer.

2. Research the Company

- ✓ Utilize the library to review annual reports, trade magazines and newspaper articles.
- ✓ The Internet offers a wealth of company information and industry statistics.
- ✓ Know the company's products and services.
- ✓ Be prepared to tell the interviewer why their company is attractive to you.

3. Items to Bring to the Interview

References

- ✓ Use three former supervisors who are familiar with your work.
- ✓ Include their name, title and company as well as home and work phone numbers.
- ✓ Always consult with references for their approval and to ensure that their remarks are positive.

Resume

- ✓ Review your resume thoroughly and be prepared to discuss all points.
- ✓ Always bring a resume copy identical to the one supplied to the interviewer.
- ✓ Bring along samples of your work, if possible. Never discuss or show proprietary information.

Other Items

- ✓ Bring a pad of paper and pen to the interview to jot down notes.
- ✓ Prepare and review your questions as well as specific responses.
- ✓ Bring directions to the interview location as well as the interviewer's phone number in case you're running late.
- ✓ Bring along your recruiter's phone number to give immediate feedback after the interview.

4. Arrival at the Interview

- ✓ Arrive no earlier than fifteen minutes before the interview (but no later than five minutes prior to the interview).
- ✓ Allow adequate time for traffic, parking and a last minute appearance check. If possible, scout out the location the day before the interview to avoid last minute problems.
- ✓ Review your notes and go in with confidence.
- ✓ If asked, complete an application. Complete the application in full and leave no blanks. Do not write "see resume" as a response to any application question. Respond to "expected salary" questions as "open" and "current salary" questions truthfully. List references if requested, your recruiter's name should be your response to any "referred by" questions.

APPEARANCE

(Although these may seem obvious it is always good to have a reminder)

Male Candidates

- ✓ Fingernails should be short, clean and manicured if possible.
- ✓ Hair should be clean, well groomed and freshly trimmed. Use a dandruff shampoo, if necessary, and always comb hair with your jacket off.
- ✓ If you are coming from a jobsite, they should be made aware ahead of time so that they won't expect a suit and tie. If not (depending on region and climate) you should at a minimum be wearing slacks, jacket and a tie.
- ✓ Shirts should be white, freshly laundered and well pressed. A quiet tie with a subtle design and a hint of red is suitable for a first interview. Avoid loud colors and busy designs.
- ✓ Jewelry should be kept minimal. A watch and wedding/class ring are acceptable. Don't wear jewelry or pins that indicate membership in religious or service organizations.
- ✓ Avoid strong colognes or fragrances completely.
- ✓ Shoes that are black and freshly polished (including the heels) are a safe choice for an interview. Socks should be black or blue (no argyle or bright colors).
- ✓ For good posture cross legs at the ankles, not at the knees.
- ✓ Maintain good eye contact.
- ✓ *Do not take cell phones or beepers into an interview.*

Female Candidates

- ✓ Fingernails should be clean and manicured if possible. Choose subtle low-key colors over bright fashion colors for nail polishes.
- ✓ Avoid exotic hairstyles and excessive makeup. Hair should be neat, clean and brushed with your jacket off. Makeup should be light and natural looking.
- ✓ If you are coming from a jobsite, they should be made aware ahead of time so that they won't expect a suit or tailored dress. If you have time to prepare a suit or tailored dress in basic navy or gray works well.
- ✓ Blouses should also be tailored and color coordinated. Don't wear big bows or ties.
- ✓ Jewelry should be limited and subtle. Don't wear jewelry or pins that indicate membership in religious or service organizations.
- ✓ Avoid strong fragrances completely.
- ✓ A closed toe pump that is color coordinated with your outfit is appropriate for an interview. Avoid open-toed shoes or sling-backs.
- ✓ For good posture cross legs at the ankles, not at the knees.
- ✓ Maintain good eye contact
- ✓ *Do not take cell phones or beepers into an interview.*

THE INTERVIEW ITSELF

Typical sequences of events are:

- ✓ Interview with personnel (general questions, review of the company and benefits).
- ✓ Interview with the immediate supervisor and peers.
- ✓ Interview with the hiring authority (manager, etc.).

Tips for interviewing:

- ✓ Shake hands firmly and maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- ✓ Maintain a high energy level. Sit up with back straight. No coffee (to spill) and no smoking.
- ✓ It is to your advantage if a subject of mutual interest arises, but do not fake knowledge.
- ✓ Be yourself. Poise, confidence, and self-respect are of great importance.

If there is interest by both parties:

- ✓ Testing (physical drug test, written test, and proof of employment eligibility).
- ✓ Offer.

Personnel will usually provide company information and available benefits. Thorough review and questions concerning benefits should be addressed after the interview. Remember, the interviewers are trying to see how you can contribute to their company.

Conduct yourself with confidence and determination to get the job. You have other options, of course, and your interviewer knows this, but he/she wants to think that you want a job with this company. Don't play coy. Sell yourself. This is your first meeting and the position, as well as future promotions, may depend on your presentation. Are you going to sell them on the idea of hiring you, or will they sell you on the idea that this job is not for you? You must present a positive attitude to the prospective employer. You must NOT seem disinterested or appear to be job shopping.

The interview should be a two-way conversation. Ask questions of the interviewers. This shows your interest in the company and the position, and enables you to gather the right information to make an intelligent decision afterwards. The questions you have prepared can be asked to the different people you see. You should prepare many of these questions prior to your interview.

Remember that the objective of the interview is to obtain an offer. During the interview, you must gather enough information concerning the position to make a decision.

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You should give complete but brief and relaxed answers to questions. When possible use questions as a basis for developing information that you want to make sure is presented. Continue to sell yourself in a positive way.

- ✓ Describe jobs in terms of duties and give indicators of good performance such as raises, profits, awards, sales volume, and promotions, etc.
- ✓ Include short stories involving problems or challenges and how you were able to solve or overcome them. Describe the results you achieved.

QUESTIONS TO EXPECT

A. Exploring your Background Questions

Tell me about yourself.

- Answer these questions in terms of the qualifications required of the position.
- Keep responses concise and brief and avoid being derogatory or negative about previous jobs and bosses.
- "Tell-me-about-yourself" means, "Tell me about your qualifications." Prepare a one to two minute discussion of your qualifications. Start with education and discuss your experiences. Describe your performance (in raises, promotions, innovative designs, sales volume, increased profits, etc.)

What are your greatest strengths? Interviewers like to hear abstract qualities. Loyalty, willingness to work hard, eagerness, fast-learner, technical skills, politeness, and promptness, expressed in concrete terms are good examples. Avoid the simple generalization "I like people". It's not a good answer.

What are your greatest weaknesses? Don't be intimidated. The interviewer probably wants reassurance that hiring you won't be a mistake. This is not the time to confess all of your imperfections. (Do not state "not being able to go to work on Mondays", or "coming in late", etc.). Present your weaknesses as professional strengths, (i.e., "Sometimes I work too hard to make sure things are done accurately").

B. Personality Questions

What do you do in your spare time? Workaholics are not always the best employees. Present yourself as a well-rounded person. Your answer gives you dimension. Name some hobbies.

C. Motive Questions

Answer motive questions enthusiastically. Show the interviewer that you are interested in the position and that you really want the job. Remember to maintain eye contact and be sincere.

How can you contribute to this company? Be positive and sell yourself! Bringing strong technical skills, enthusiasm, and desire to complete projects correctly and efficiently are good responses.

Why should we hire you for this position? Explain your qualifications and how they "fit" the available position. Address your interest in the job and the field and why it's work that you enjoy. Emphasize your ability to successfully perform the duties required.

Why do you want to work for our firm? Make a compliment about what the company does, it's location, or it's people. Other positive remarks might be about the company's product or service, content of the position or possibilities for growth or advancement. Research about the company is important here.

Where do you hope to be in five years? Use conservative growth positions that clearly show you plan to be there in five years, and that their investment in you will pay. Be sure that you know what can and cannot be achieved by the ideal candidate in the position. Never tell the interviewer that you feel you'll be more successful than they are. But do show a strong desire for promotions.

What interests you most about this position? Teasing the interviewer with a truthful one or two-word answer such as, "the challenge" or "the opportunity", will force them to ask you to explain. Here again, you have a chance to demonstrate your knowledge of the company.

How long do you plan to be with this company? As with marriage, most employers expect a till-death-do-us-part attitude, but they can be equally attracted to the candidate with ambition and candor. "As long as I continue to learn and grow in my field", is a reasonable response.

What are your career goals? (Your answer should depend on a specific time frame)

Short term - I want to be the best in my current position, while learning additional responsibilities. This, in itself, will assure my commitment to the firm and raise me to the next level of responsibility and promotion. I see myself wanting to stay technical but learn the necessary skills to lead people and projects."

Long term - "After proving my abilities, I see myself in a firm with the possibility of moving into a level of management that allows me to keep my skills sharp."

What are you doing to achieve your goals? "I look at continued learning as the key to success. I've continued my education. As you see from my resume, by taking company educational courses, when offered, and college courses. I also read trade publications and magazines to keep me informed about the current and future directions 'in my field. When possible, I participate in professional organizations in my field."

D. Job Satisfaction Questions

Why did you or do you want to leave your previous/current employer? NEVER speak poorly about a former employer. Be pleasant, be positive and be honest. Your answer will probably be checked. Mention your desire to work for a more progressive company that offers more growth opportunities and recognition.

What did you like least about your previous job? An employer can evaluate the type of worker you will be by the items you choose. Cite specifics. You are also providing clues about the environment you seek. What you liked most can include a strong teamwork atmosphere, high-level of creativity, attainable deadlines. What you liked least should include any situations that you are unlikely to encounter in your new position.

Why are you looking for another job? Again, be positive, I have to say that I have really enjoyed my years at ____ Corporation. There are a lot of good people over there. But I am looking for a more progressive organization with greater opportunities for growth, and recognition. I am looking for a team to join where I can make real contributions and advance my career.' Many people aren't necessarily "looking" but are exploring other opportunities. If you fall in this category, simply say that "I am not looking for another job necessarily. I truly want to find out if there are other opportunities out there that may enhance my career, my life and family".

What do you think your employers obligations are to you? Interviewers listen for employees who want a positive, enthusiastic, company atmosphere, with the opportunity to advance. Such a person, they surmise, has motivation and staying power.

Are you applying for any other jobs? In your answer, show that your search is geared for similar positions. This demonstrates a well-defined, focused objective. Make it known that your talents are applicable to other businesses and that you have explored ways to maximize your potential and are serious about finding the perfect opportunity. Don't give an indication that you are just shopping.

E. Past Performance Questions (To determine behavior based on past examples)

What kind of decisions are most difficult for you? Again, be truthful and admit that not everything comes easily. Be careful what you do admit so as not to instantly disqualify yourself. Explain that you try to gather as much information and advice as you possibly can, so you can make the best decision possible.

What causes you to lose your temper? Everybody has a low boiling point on some particular issue. Pick one of yours: something safe and reasonable. People who are late to meetings, blame shifting, broken appointments and office "back-stabbing" are suitable responses. Don't say that you never fly off the handle. You won't be believed.

What are your greatest accomplishments? Be ready to recant one or two stories that demonstrate strong capabilities or achievements that will make you attractive to your new employer. A special project that you pioneered at your previous job, cutting department expenses, increasing productivity or receiving frequent promotions are a few examples.

How do you feel about a younger male/female boss? A question like this usually means that your boss will either be younger or of the opposite sex or both. Be certain that if you register any concern, you will probably not be hired. Explain that their age or sex is of no importance to you. You are only interested in their capability and what you can learn from them.

What kind of worker are you? Again, no one is perfect. Showing that you tackle every assignment with all of your energy and talents is admirable but mention that you also learn from your mistakes.

F. Salary Questions (Salary discussions should be avoided, if possible.)

What type of salary do you have in mind? Do not state a starting figure. A suitable reply: "I am looking for the right opportunity and I am confident that if you find me the best candidate for this position, you will extend me your best and most fair offer."

What is your current salary? Answer truthfully. Remember that "salary" includes base, bonuses, commissions, benefits, and vacations as well as sick days and personal days. Also, if you are due a raise in the next three months, state the approximate percentage you expect.

G. Other questions you should be prepared to answer truthfully:

Are you willing to relocate?

May we check your references?

May we verify your income?

Answer a question to the best of your ability and then relax. If there is a period of silence before the interviewer asks the next question, stay calm. Interviewers often use silence to see if you can handle stress and maintain poise.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF SO YOU CAN SPEAK ABOUT 'YOU'

Did you help to increase sales, productivity, efficiency, etc.? What was the percentage or dollar contribution? How did you do this? Did you have a unique approach or different results from others?

Did you save money for the company? What were the circumstances? How much more (\$, %) than others? How were your results compared to others?

Did you institute any new systems or changes? What was the situation that led to the change? Who approved? Why was this system selected over others? Did it compete with others? What happened as a result?

Did you identify any problem that had been overlooked? What was the problem? What was the solution? Why was it overlooked?

Were you ever promoted? Why were you promoted? How long between promotions? Did you do something outstanding? How much more responsibility? Did you get to manage people? How many? Were you promoted by more than one party? Were you given significant salary increases or raises?

Did you train anyone? Did you develop training technique? Compare your results to others. Is your technique being used by others? Why is that?

Did you suggest any new programs? What were they about? What were the results? Did they increase efficiency or sales? Were they published or presented at any industry seminars?

Did you help to establish any new goals or objectives for your company? Did you convince management that they should adopt these goals or objectives? Why were they adopted?

Did you change the nature or scope of your job? Why or how did you redefine your position? Have others with similar positions had their positions redefined because of you? Were there responsibility changes because of this? What were they?

Did you ever undertake a project that was not part of your responsibility because you liked the problem? This is proof of job interest as well as the ability to take initiative.

Did you ever do anything to lighten your job or make it easier? (This could result in increased profits or productivity.)

What special problems were you hired for or brought in to solve? What did you do? How did you do it? What were the results?

Show any areas where you were creative (i.e., solutions, products, applications, markets, accounts, etc.).

What would you say would be the most important qualities for the position you seek? Put yourself in the shoes of your prospective boss. Describe six qualities and look for examples you have for each of them. How do you stack up?

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK THEM

Your interviews, however, should be a two-way conversation. You must ask questions and take an active role in the interview. This demonstrates the importance you place on your work and career. Asking questions gives you a chance to demonstrate your depth of knowledge in the field as well as to establish an easy flow of conversation and relaxed atmosphere between you and the interviewer. Building this kind of rapport is always a plus in an interview.

Remember, you are not just there for the interviewer to determine if you are right for the position but your questions can help you determine if this job is right for you. Some of your questions should evolve from research you've done on the company in preparing for the interview. Following are some guidelines for your questions as well as some examples:

- ✓ Don't cross-examine the employer.
- ✓ Ask questions requiring an explanation. Questions which can be answered with a "yes" or "no" are conversation stoppers.
- ✓ Don't interrupt when the employer is answering YOUR question.
- ✓ Ask job-relevant questions. Focus on the job: the company, products, services, and people.
- ✓ Prior to the interview, write your list of Interest Questions and take them with you. Ask about your potential peers, subordinates, and superiors. Take notes.
- ✓ Ask the employer how he/she got where they are today.

A. Interest Questions

Why do you want/need someone for this job? Force the interviewer to explain why this job can't be done by one of his current employees. The answer may give you a valuable job description.

B. Job Satisfaction Questions

Ask questions that relate to the responsibilities, importance and authority of the position as well as those investigating the rewards for a job well done and the long-range career opportunities.

C. Past Performance Questions

Why isn't this position being filled from within the company? You may discover that nobody in this organization would accept it or that your future fellow employees are too weak.

How many people have held this job in the last five years? Were they promoted or did they leave the company? If the turnover has been high, you have a right to suspect that the job may leave something to be desired. Or it could mean that you can expect to be promoted quickly.

How did you get started in the company? A good way to get to know the interviewer better and gain insight into the promotional path the company follows.

What are examples of the best results produced by people in this job? Here you may discover you are overqualified or in a position to ask for considerably more money.

D. Additional Questions

- ✓ What would my responsibilities and duties be?
- ✓ What are the most difficult aspects of the position?
- ✓ Describe a typical day on the job.
- ✓ Describe the department's/company's growth in the next 2 years.
- ✓ What is the philosophy on training and development here?
- ✓ Has there been downsizing within the company? How is it handled?
- ✓ How do you think I'd fit into the job and into your organization?
- ✓ What projects would I be involved in now? In the future?
- ✓ Who would I be working for and with?
- ✓ What is the person doing who used to hold this position?
- ✓ When would you need me to start?
- ✓ May I see my work area?
- ✓ May I meet some of my future coworkers?

THE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Establishing rapport at the beginning of the phone conversation sets a favorable tone. During the first few minutes, mention something that shows commonality of interest or similarity in background. This helps both parties feel more comfortable as the conversation progresses.

Get to know the person behind the voice. Does he/she show a sense of humor? Is he/she direct and forthright in supplying information? Does his/her speech sound "canned", or does it exhibit freshness of thought and expression? Just as importantly, does he/she actively listen to you, or merely wait for the chance to ask his/her next question? The interviewer may be a personnel official or a hiring manager. If the individual is someone with whom you will be working, pay all the more attention to his/her explanation of the job and what potential it offers.

Your prepared list of questions will indicate that you have given careful thought to the prospect of joining the firm. Even though you don't know everything about the position at this point, convey the impression that it's something you are interested in and competent at handling.

Only in a face-to-face interview can you totally sell yourself. The purpose of the phone interview is to identify areas of mutual interest that warrant further investigation. In other words, give them good reasons for wanting to invite you to the company location.

Basically, what the interviewer needs to hear and conclude is that you can get the job done. Mentally, he is making the connection between the company's problems and you as a problem solver. Don't overwhelm him/her with facts and figures (he's only going to remember so much).

As you glance over your notes and keep an eye on the clock, there may be additional important points to cover in the pre-allotted time frame. Tactfully take control and introduce the subject matter that needs to be discussed or further elaborated. Example: "That's a good point. Can we come back to it a little later? I have some additional thoughts on the subject we were discussing a moment ago."

As the conversation winds down, become less talkative and give more thought to what you say. Your final words will generally have greater impact and be remembered longer. Careful word choice and voice inflection will under-score the significance of your remarks. By contrast, a machine-gun volley of words will likely put the listener on the defensive or turn him/her off altogether.

PHONE PERSONALITY

The need to make a good impression on the phone cannot be overemphasized. The telephone screening interview is a make-or-break proposition, your one chance to convince the interviewer that you are worth serious consideration. The interviewer will be listening carefully to determine three factors: your sincere interest in the job, how you verbalize your qualifications and how aggressively you pursue the position.

Voice reflects personality. A well-modulated, controlled voice communicates authority and heightens the verbal impact you want to make. The quality, pitch and tempo of your speech convey a certain attitude, energy level and enthusiasm. "Enthusiasm and excitement are the biggest selling points of candidates talking on the phone," says Mr. Young of First American Rehab. "This translates directly over to their performance and work ethic."

Here are some practical tips to enhance your phone "personality" and overall presentation:

Talk directly into the mouthpiece. Hold the receiver approximately three inches from the mouth, not below your chin or above your nose. Speak in a relaxed, conversational style as though the other person was in the same room, not on the other side of the planet.

Avoid sitting in a hunched position, grasping the phone in a vise-like grip. This will add a note of stress, and your voice will communicate that uneasiness. Try standing, it opens your diaphragm to a smoother airflow and imparts a feeling of liveliness. Getting up and moving around introduces an element of action, which instills a relaxed, conversational manner and reduces fatigue. A longer cord or cordless phone will allow maximum mobility,

Pay attention to the interviewer's voice patterns. Does he speak slowly or rapidly? Try to match the cadence so that the conversation flows smoothly. According to Mr. Walther at TelExcel, the average person speaks at a rate of 160 words per minute. Adjust your speaking rate, voice volume and phrasing to be more in rhythm with the interviewer.

Sound upbeat. If you had a lousy day and came home to find your spouse and kids arguing, put it out of your mind. Genuine enthusiasm is contagious. Smile to show a sense of humor. After all, the interviewer may have had a bad day too.

Be a conversationalist. Listen carefully to get the big picture and to avoid saying something that indicates any momentary mental distraction. Allow the interviewer to complete questions without you finishing his train of thought or blurting out answers prematurely. No matter how comfortable you get in the interview, do not cuss for any reason.

Handle any trick questions in stride. The interviewer may throw in several "trick questions" to test your alertness or mental keenness. Showing verbal adeptness is a sign of how quickly you can "think on your feet." Be cautious: the interviewer may say something that puzzles you or that you firmly disagree with. Show enough respect to voice your thoughts in a professional manner. A defensive posture or argumentative tone is the surest way to alienate the interviewer and eliminate your candidacy.

THE HOME STRETCH

After 30 minutes, both parties should know how much of a "fit" there is. Provided the job interests you, express your desire to proceed to the next step: a company visit.

The interviewer may extend an invitation at that point. With calendar nearby, suggest several available days and times that agree with your agenda. Should the phone interview go well but end without a specific invitation to visit the company, state your desire to investigate the opportunity further.

Example: "I'd be very interested in such a challenging position. I would be available to come in for a personal interview and discuss my abilities in greater detail on (day)."

He may then mention the likelihood of an onsite interview once he confers with other officials. Your assertiveness will be remembered. If you hear nothing within 48 hours, follow up with a call.

End the conversation on a positive note. Thank the interviewer for the information shared and again let him/her know that you look forward to visiting his/her company. After all, if the position discussed is not the ideal job for you, something else might be.

LETTERS: FOLLOW-UP, THANK YOU AND RESIGNATION

Follow-up/Thank You

Immediately following the interview, call your consultant. It is very important to convey your impressions of the position and the company. Let the recruiter know whether you are interested in the position or not and if there were questions you forgot to ask at the interview, express them at this time. Only after we get your feedback about the interview and the company do we contact the employer for theirs. And finally, we will follow-up with you regarding the employer's thoughts.

It is always a good idea to send a short note of appreciation to thank the employer or interviewer for their time. Reiterate your interest in the position and the company as well as your ability to do the job. Be sure to mail your correspondence the following day. This is a good way to keep your name current in the interviewer's mind. Following is a sample thank-you letter that you can adapt to fit your specifics:

1. ADDRESS LINE

- ✓ The full company name and address (no abbreviations) as well as the full name of the interviewer and his/her complete title.

2. SUBJECT LINE

- ✓ "Re: Interview for the Position of (title) on (date)." This illustrates the content of the letter.

3. GREETING

- ✓ "Dear Mr./Ms. (last name):"
- ✓ "Miss" or "Mrs." should not be used unless you are sure that person does so. Do not use a first name in the greeting unless you have established a strong rapport.

4. OPENING

- ✓ "It was a pleasure meeting with you (day) to discuss the opening in (department) with (company)."
- ✓ "I appreciated meeting with (name) and yourself in your office on (day) to discuss the (title) position with (company)."
- ✓ "Thanks for taking the time to see me regarding the opening in (department)."

Again, comment or add something discussed during the interview that will allow you to restate your qualifications and confidence in performing the job.

5. BODY

- ✓ "From our discussion, and the fine reputation of your organization, it appears that the (title) position would enable me to fully use my background in _____.
- ✓ "I was particularly impressed with the professionalism evident throughout my visit. (Company) appears to have the kind of environment I have been seeking."
- ✓ "The atmosphere at (company) seems to strongly favor individual involvement, and I would undoubtedly be able to contribute significantly to its goals."

6. CLOSING

- ✓ "While I have been considering other opportunities, I have deferred a decision until I hear from you. Therefore, your prompt reply would be greatly appreciated."
- ✓ "It's an exciting opportunity, and I look forward to hearing your decision very soon."
- ✓ "The (title) position and (company) are exactly what I have been seeking, and I hope to hear from you within the next week."

7. SALUTATION

- ✓ "Sincerely,"
- ✓ "Very truly yours,"
- ✓ "Best regards,"

Resignation Letter

Informing your current employer of your resignation takes tact and discretion. If they inquire as to whom your new job is with, it is best to tell them that you cannot disclose that information until your new employer announces it within his/her own organization. The following sample letter is suitable correspondence to announce your resignation.

Dear _____,

Please accept this letter as my formal resignation as (Title) for (Company) to become effective as of (Date). I have accepted a position in (Location). I believe this position will offer me more challenge and opportunity for advancement as well as allow me to broaden my own experience and knowledge.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and efforts in my training and advancement during the past (Time). The support and concern shown by you and the rest of the management team has been deeply appreciated. I leave (Company) with no animosity or ill will and wish you and your company continued success.

My decision is irrevocable and any counter offers extended by you and/or (Company) will be rejected.

*Sincerely,
(Your Name)*

PRE-EMPLOYMENT PHYSICAL

The use of drug testing as part of a pre-employment physical examination is becoming more prevalent. It is predicted, that within five years, drug testing will become one more standard for getting a job. Some firms are testing for drug use as part of a pre-employment physical without telling the applicant that he/she is being tested for drugs, *Personnel Journal* reports.

Some over-the-counter products can produce positive drug-test results. Among them: Alka-Seltzer Plus, Allerest, Bronkaid, Contact, Donnagel, Nyquil, Primatene, Promlamine capsules, Sinutab, Sudafed and Triaminic. Poppy seeds in your food can also produce a positive drug-test result.

You should not take any medication 48 hours before your pre-employment physicals, but if you must, be sure to list all drugs taken and advise the examiner.

FINAL THINGS TO CONSIDER

Dealing with Counteroffers

What are you really getting when they beg you to stay?

Quitting a job is never easy. Career changes are tough enough and the anxieties of leaving a comfortable job, friends and environment for an unknown opportunity can easily cloud anyone's judgment. But what should you do when your current employer "muddies the waters" even more by asking you to stay?

A counteroffer is an inducement from your current employer to get you to stay after you've announced your intentions to accept another job elsewhere. And, in recent years, counteroffers have practically become the norm.

If you are considering a counteroffer, remain focused on your primary objective. Why were you looking for another job to begin with? If an employee is happy with their current job, employer and/or salary, they're usually not paving the road with resumes. So often times a counteroffer that promises more money never really remedies the real reasons for wanting to move on in the first place.

Apart from a short-term bandage on the problem, nothing will change within the company and when the dust settles you can find yourself back in the same old rut. Recruiters report that more than 80% of those who accept counter offers leave, begin looking for another job, or are "let go" within six to twelve months after announcing their intentions.

Counteroffers are certainly flattering and make an employee question their initial decision to leave. But often times they are merely stall tactics used by bosses and companies to alleviate an upheaval a departing employee can cause. High turnover also brings a boss's management skills into question. His reaction is to do what's necessary until he's better prepared to replace you.

The things they'll say:

- ✓ "You can't leave, the department really needs you."
- ✓ "We were just about to give you a raise."
- ✓ "I didn't know you were unhappy. Why didn't you come to me sooner?"
- ✓ "What can we do to make things better?"

Again, stay focused on your decision and your opportunities.

You need to ask yourself:

- ✓ What kind of company do you work for if you have to threaten to resign or they pay you what you're worth?
- ✓ Where did the money for the counteroffer come from? Is it your next raise or promotion just given early? Are future opportunities limited now? Will you have to threaten to leave again for another raise or promotion?

You've demonstrated your unhappiness and will be viewed as having committed blackmail in order to get a raise. Your loyalty will also be questioned come promotion time.

Well-managed companies rarely make counteroffers since they view their employment policies as fair and equitable.

If you do consider being "bought back", obtain the details of the offer in writing, as well as a one-year "no cut" contract from the employer. If they refuse, as two-thirds of counter-offering employers do, your decision to leave is made.

Look at your current job and the new position as if you were unemployed, then make your decision based on which holds the most real potential. It's probably the new job or you wouldn't have accepted it in the first place.

Eleven Reasons for Rejection

1. **Poor attitude.** Many candidates come across as arrogant. While employers can afford to be self-centered, candidates cannot.
2. **Appearance.** Many candidates do not consider their appearance as much as they should. First impressions are quickly made in the first three to five minutes. Review the appearance checklist.
3. **Lack of research.** It's obvious when candidates haven't learned about the job, company or industry prior to the interview. Visit the library or use the Internet to research the company, then talk with friends, peers and other professionals about the opportunity before each meeting.
4. **Not having questions to ask.** Asking questions shows your interest in the company and the position. Prepare a *list of intelligent questions in advance*.
5. **Not readily knowing the answers to interviewers' questions.** Anticipate and rehearse answers to tough questions about your background, such as a recent termination or an employment gap. Practicing with your spouse or a friend before the interview will help you to frame intelligent responses.
6. **Relying too much on resumes.** Employers hire people, not paper. Although a resume can list qualifications and skills, it's the interview dialogue that will portray you as a committed, responsive team player.
7. **Too much humility.** Being conditioned not to brag, candidates are sometimes reluctant to describe their accomplishments. Explaining how you reach difficult or impressive goals helps employers understand what you can do for them.
8. **Not relating skills to employers' needs.** A list of sterling accomplishments means little if you can't relate them to a company's requirements. Reiterate your skills and convince the employer that you can "do the same for them".
9. **Handling salary issues ineptly.** Candidates often ask about salary and benefit packages too early. If they believe an employer is interested, they may demand inappropriate amounts and price themselves out of the jobs. Candidates who ask for too little undervalue themselves or appear desperate.
10. **Lack of career direction.** Job hunters who aren't clear about their career goals often can't spot or commit to appropriate opportunities. Not knowing what you want wastes everyone's time.
11. **Job shopping.** Some applicants, particularly those in certain high-tech, sales and marketing fields, will admit they're just "shopping" for opportunities and have little intention of changing jobs. This wastes time and leaves a bad impression with employers they may need to contact in the future.