

INTERVIEW IDEAS

Regarding interviews, many candidates adopt an attitude that is almost fatalistic. "I'll answer all their questions honestly and let the chips fall where they may." So most of them get the old "...other people scheduled for interviews. We'll get back to you" response. This is because, although most candidates want to make a good impression, many of them don't have a clue of the proper way to do it.

Remember, you have no decision to make as far as a prospective employer is concerned, **until you GET THE OFFER**. Here are some of the principals, learned long ago, that still apply today.

Turn the interview into a conversation.

Easily said, difficult for many interviewees to accomplish. The key is learning how to answer questions and incorporate a question into a response.

Simple example: Mr. Doe, are you willing to travel? Yes I am. Can you please give me an idea of the extent and kind of travel involved in MY position? You, as the candidate, get valuable information to factor into a decision beyond "...% of travel", and by personalizing the question, forces the interviewer into visualizing him/her on the job, which is a key part of:

...Using Assumptive Interviewing techniques.

Personalize the interview whenever and wherever possible. Never discuss job responsibilities or job duties. Use phrases like, "What will I be doing for you on a day to day basis? Who will I report to? Who will be reporting to me?" There seems no question as to whether the candidate will get the job because the interviewer is visualizing the candidate on the job in order to answer these questions.

The Salary Question

Many candidates have a very difficult time answering questions about expected income. A few will even bring up the subject of pay and benefits during interviews. The latter is easy to correct (don't do it), but responding to the salary issue can be difficult.

"What salary are you expecting?" Or, "what kind of income do you want?" "Mr./Ms. Employer, like everyone, no matter how much I earn, there never seems to be enough. Like everyone (with a grin), I want as much as I can get. (Turning serious) Money is important to me Mr./Ms Employer, but it isn't my primary goal or motivation. I am more interested in the people I will be working with on a day-to-day basis and the kind of long-term opportunities here at ABC Co. But since you brought it up, what kind of salary RANGE did you have in mind?" If the employer names a salary range the stock response would be "When you decide I am the person for you, I am sure we can come to an agreement in that range." If forced to name figures the candidate should respond with a salary range of his/her own and add, "How does that fit into the range you had in mind."

Blue Sky Questions

"Blue Sky" questions (generally asked by Human Resource interviewers) can cause candidates problems because they are forced to deal with abstract ideas rather than skills and facts.

A question like "What are your long term goals?" can be tricky because many candidates think in terms of job titles and answer "I want to be an Operations Manager some day". There are no pat answers here, but try to understand why the question is asked (expectations vs. ambitions). A good general answer discusses future job CONTENT such as "I would like to have the responsibility for people reporting to me, helping them to realize their potential, strengthening weaknesses, motivating them, etc. Is this opportunity available to me here at ABC Co?"

Another question, generally from HR or an astute manager, may ask a candidate to discuss weaknesses. Have you done a self-assessment? One can't hope to become a better person without knowing one's strengths and weaknesses. Think of traits you may have noticed in yourself that you are trying to change, i.e.; too bold, impetuous, impatient, etc. A response to this question might be "I am aware that sometimes I am too impatient. When I see someone doing a job for which I know a better technique, I want to jump in and do the job for him or her. I try to remind myself that people have to learn on their own so I try to hold

myself back. Later on I will mention to the person that they might try this technique. Sometimes I forget and dive in, but I'm working on that issue".

ASK FOR THE JOB.

When an interview closes, **ASK FOR THE JOB.** Most employers close an interview by saying; "we have covered a lot of ground today. I have to discuss this with... Do you have any further questions at this time?" The best response should be something along the following lines "Thank you for your time. I am sure that I will think of questions I should have asked, after I leave. However, based on our conversation, I want you to know that I am very interested in this position. I am confident I can more than meet your expectations. How do you see me fitting into your team?" Or, if you have a feeling that there is a doubt in the employers mind; "Do you have any question about my ability to handle the work?" The fitting-in" question finishes off the assumptive interview by seeking re-enforcement from the employer that you have succeeded in creating a favorable impression. The "ability" question should only be used if the candidate is unsure of the interviewer's impression.