

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

### **Before the Interview:**

1. Spend time doing pre-interview preparation on yourself, the employer, and how you can be an asset to the company.
2. Practice presenting your career goals, qualifications, and experience in a mock interview or to a friend before interviewing. Ask for feedback about vocal quality, eye contact, length of answers, body language and content.
3. Know when and where your interview is, plan to leave ample time to get dressed carefully and professionally, organize all materials prior to interview, arrive 15 minutes early, and collect your thoughts as you observe the tone of the organization.
4. Shake the interviewer's hand firmly, look them in the eye, smile and make a point of repeating and remembering his or her name for future reference.

### **During the Interview:**

1. Expect some small talk to establish rapport and ease some of the tension. Be friendly and chat about common interests but do not become too relaxed.
2. Listen carefully to the interviewer's question, take a few minutes to collect your thoughts, and then respond to the question you are asked. Ask for clarification if necessary.
3. Make your comments concise. Be elaborate and give examples that illustrate important skills and experiences but don't ramble.
4. Look for opportunities to bring up topics and experiences that highlight your attributes but don't brag.
5. Let the interviewer control the flow and direction of the interview--they have certain goals they must accomplish during the interview.
6. Ask questions that a) show your interest in the work performed, b) demonstrate your knowledge of the industry and organization, c) let the interviewer know you are serious about the position.
7. Always request information about the time frame of their selection process and what might you expect as a next step.
8. Show your enthusiasm, thank the interviewer for his or her time, remember to shake hands, look them in the eye, and smile as you leave.

### **After the Interview:**

1. Jot down your reactions, thoughts, and any information you wish to recall soon after the interview. Take some notes on how the interview went and critique your own performance.
2. Type a thank you letter and send it to the interviewer within a day or two. Remind them of your key assets express your continued interest, and let them know you appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the organization.
3. Don't be afraid to call the interviewer to follow-up if you haven't heard from them in the expected time frame.

## **EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS THE INTERVIEWER MAY ASK**

### **EDUCATION**

1. Describe your educational background.
2. Why did you attend Millersville University?
3. Why did you major in \_\_\_\_\_?
4. What is your GPA and is it reflective of your knowledge of the field?
5. What subjects did you enjoy the most? Least? Why?
6. What school, activities have you participated in?
7. What leadership positions did you hold?
8. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?

### **WORK EXPERIENCE**

1. What were your major achievements in each of your past positions?
2. Which job did you enjoy the most? Why?
3. Which job did you enjoy the least? Why?
4. How has your previous work experience prepared you for this position?
5. Why did you choose this particular field of work? What do you know about our company?
6. What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
7. Have you ever been fired? Why?
8. What qualifications do you have that will make you be successful in your field?
9. How do you determine you are successfully doing your job?
10. On what criteria would you wish to be evaluated?
11. What area of the position would you find most difficult?
12. What would be the two most important aspects of this position that would influence whether you accepted or rejected our offer?

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

1. What made your past teaching experiences successful?
2. What is your teaching philosophy?
3. How have you challenged your students in the classroom?
4. Describe an effective teacher.
5. What experiences have you had with volunteers in the classroom?
6. How have you individualized instruction for students?
7. What strategies have you used in working with parents?
8. How do you manage your classroom?
9. How have you incorporated multicultural/gender-free practices in you classroom?
10. What motivated you to enter the teaching profession?
11. Tell me about the type of learning environment you create.

### **CAREER GOALS AND MISCELLANEOUS**

1. What ideally would you like to do?
2. What do you want to be doing five years from now?
3. What are your short-range and long-range career goals?
4. Tell me about yourself.
5. Why do you want to join our organization?
6. How do you feel about relocating, traveling, working overtime, and spending weekends in the office?
7. Why should we hire you?
8. What do you do in your spare time?

## **EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS THE INTERVIEWEES MAY ASK**

### **POSITION**

1. Could you describe the duties of the position?
2. Whom would I report to? What are their management styles? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
3. Could you give me some examples of projects I would be working on?
4. Describe a typical day at XYZ company?
5. I understand that this position requires travel. What percentage of my work week would be travel?
6. How frequently are performance appraisals conducted?

### **COMPANY/ORGANIZATIONS**

1. How is the organization structured in terms of divisions, departments, etc?
2. Where does this position fit into the organization?
3. How many people does the company employ?
4. How has the company changed in the past 10 years?
5. What growth areas are expected?
6. Who would you consider to be your major competitor?
7. Has the company laid off employees in recent years?

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Would I be encouraged to attend professional conferences?
2. What are the company's policies on supporting professional development?
3. Could you tell me about your training programs for new employees?
4. What are the advancement opportunities for this position?
5. What is the typical time frame for these advancements?

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

1. How do you feel about the company?
2. How long have you been with this company?
3. Could you describe your advancement in the company?
4. Could you give me the names of some people who hold the position now or who have been promoted from this position that I could contact?
5. What is the next step in the interview process?

## **BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING**

Behavioral interviewing is a new, popular form of interviewing that employers are using to encourage prospective employees to pinpoint how they react in a situation. Employers use this type of interviewing technique because they believe the most accurate predictor of future performance is how you reacted in a past situation.

### **BEHAVIORAL**

1. Give me a specific example of when you did not meet a deadline.
2. Tell me about a specific time when you had to address an angry customer.
3. Tell me about a specific time when you made a mistake at your previous job that cost the Company time and money.
4. Give me an example of a situation in which you had to work under extreme pressure?

## PRE-EMPLOYMENT INQUIRES

“Privacy” is defined as a person’s right to keep personal information away from the world at large. Seeking information of a personal nature that is not job related can expose the employer to liability to invasion of privacy. Courts have held that the burden of proof is to the interviewer to show that the answers, whether verbal or written are not used in a discriminatory manner in making employment decisions. Therefore, asking for information that is not essential to evaluating a person’s occupational qualifications leaves the employer vulnerable to charges of discrimination. The focus of all pre-employment questions should be “What do I **need to know** to decide whether or not this person can perform the functions of the job?” Inquiries into areas that do **not** meet the job-related test should not be used. Information provided by CPC Legal Briefs: Preemployment Inquires: What...And What Not ... To Ask (1993).

| Inquiry Area                    | Undesirable Inquiry  | Recommended Inquiry  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| National Origin/<br>Citizenship | <p>Are you a U.S. citizen?</p> <p>Where were your parents born?</p> <p>What is your native tongue?</p>                       | <p>Are you authorized to work full time in the U.S? (This does include practical training.)</p> <p>What language do you read and write fluently. (If related to job performance)</p>                     |
| Age                             | <p>How old are you?</p> <p>What is your birth date?</p>  | <p>Are you over the age of 18?</p>   |
| Marital & Family Status         | <p>What is your marital status?</p> <p>How many children do you have?</p> <p>What child care arrangements have you made?</p> | <p>Travel is an important part of the job for which you are interviewing.</p> <p>Would you be able and willing to travel as needed by the job?</p> <p>Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?</p> |
| Organizations                   | <p>List any clubs or social organizations to which you belong.</p>   | <p>List any professional, trade groups or other organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.</p>  |
| Personal                        | <p>What is your sex?</p> <p>What is your height and weight?</p>  | <p>Are you able to lift a 50-lb. weight and carry it a 100 yards as that will be apart of the job you are interviewing for.</p>  |

| <b>Inquiry Area</b> | <b>Undesirable Inquiry</b>  | <b>Recommended Inquiry</b>   |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Military            | If you have ever been in the military were you honorably discharged?  | In what branch of the Armed Services did you serve?<br><br>What type of training or education did you receive in the military?   |
| Arrest Record       | Have you ever been arrested?  | Have you ever committed a of_____? (A crime that is related to the performance of the job in question.)  |
| Disabilities        | Do you have any handicaps or disabilities?<br><br>Please complete the following medical history.<br><br>Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations?<br><br>What was the date of your last physical exam?<br><br>How is your family's health?<br><br>General inquires that would elicit information about handicaps or health conditions that do not relate to job performance. | Based upon a description of the available position, are you able to perform the essentials of the job?<br><br>If no, based upon a description of the available, which job duties would you be able to perform, or would you be limited in performing?<br><br>Please describe purposes of assessing any accommodations that could be made.<br><br>Are you willing to undergo a post-offer medical exam?<br><br>Do you understand that any employment is conditional based on the results of a medical exam.<br><br>The results of such an exam will be kept confidential, except that 1) medical safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and 2) supervisors may be informed of any necessary accommodations that may be made to your duties due to the medical exam. |