

HITTING THE BULLSEYE

During a Personal Interview!

By Greg Doersching & Phil Kulwicki



Adapted for and printed by:



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INTERVIEW PREPARATION

One of the best ways to separate yourself from the competition is to be prepared!

So we made it to the interview, now what? First of all, you need to understand what the interview is all about. Your winning resume and the way Celarity presented your abilities, character and background have gained you entry into the potential employer's office. The interviewer has already reviewed your resume in detail, so they already know about the hard facts of your employment history and skills. The actual interview is a more subtle, subjective aspect of the job-hunting process. During the course of the interview process, every person you meet will be forming an opinion of you and gauging your compatibility with the needs of the organization, and more importantly, your ability to work with them within that role. Bottom line – You're trying to make a good impression!

You need to be sincere, polite and enthusiastic about your knowledge of their company and the industry in order to secure the position. Your resume may have shown good examples of your skills as a team player, but now you need to convince them that you fit their team. In order to make a good impression you need to be prepared, know what to expect and what to do if things don't go quite as you had planned.

Proper Attire

First impressions are extremely important. The way you present yourself can be as important as what you say. Dress conservatively, and if you are unsure of what to wear, give Celarity a call.



Researching the Company

- Check out the company website to know about their history and growth over the years.
- Research other company profiles in the same business through websites like LinkedIn®, Indeed®, Hoovers® and Glassdoor®.
- Look for relevant press about the company in major news sources or trade publications.
- Read through any notes you have surrounding the interviewers you will meet. Try to understand their role within the organization and make sure you answer their questions with a focus toward their area of expertise.
- Study the job description so you can gear your background effectively toward the needs of the job title.
- Be ready with a set of questions for each interviewer. Focus on responsibility related issues, not “what’s in it for me?” questions.

Presenting Yourself

- Arrive early.
- Bring extra copies of your resume, references, along with notepad and pen.
- Be sure you know how to pronounce your interviewer’s name correctly.
- Be polite to everyone you meet, because they all matter.
- Be personable and professional.
- Do NOT chew gum, smoke, swear or use slang.
- Assume all questions are asked for a reason and answer accordingly.
- Do not assume that your interviewer knows how to elicit the information he/she is looking for.
- Feel free to ask for clarification before answering a question.
- Take some time to formulate your answers before you speak.
- Answer all questions honestly, in the most positive way that you can.
- Do NOT badmouth old employers.



THE INTERVIEW

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS

Behavioral Interviewing is a more systematic and standardized process for evaluating job candidates than the traditional interview process. The primary intent is to increase the success rate of an organization's good hires and is the form of interview being used most often by a wide variety of recruiting organizations. Behavioral Interviewing is based on the Behavioral Consistency Principle, which essentially states that the best predictor of future performance is past performance in similar circumstances. Therefore, the questions you are asked will focus on behavior, and try to evoke how you responded to a variety of specific personal and interpersonal situations, and what results occurred from your actions.

PREPARING FOR A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

Recall recent situations that exhibit favorable behaviors or actions, particularly involving coursework, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning and customer service. You can prepare short descriptions of each situation and be ready to give details if they ask you. Be sure each story has a beginning, middle and end. For example, describe the situation, your action, and the outcome and make sure it reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable). Be honest, and don't embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation, so be specific. Don't generalize about several events, give a detailed account of one event.

More Info

You will find a number of informative articles written by experts in the field on page 10 of this document. Read them carefully before you go into your interviews.



EXAMPLE

A possible response for the question, "Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn't pulling their weight" might go as follows: "I had been assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn't showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team, and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn't passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time and received a 'B' on the project."

The interviewer might then probe: "How did you feel when you confronted this person?" "Exactly what was the nature of the project?" "What was his responsibility as a team member?" "What was your role?" "At what point did you take it on yourself to confront him?" You can see it is important that you not make up or "shade" information, so when you go in, you should have a clear memory of the entire incident.

DON'T FORGET THE BASICS

Instead of feeling anxious or threatened by the prospect of a behavioral interview, remember the essential difference between the traditional and behavioral interview: the traditional interviewer may allow you to project what you might do in a given situation, whereas the behavioral interviewer is looking for past actions only. It will always be important to put your best foot forward and make a good impression on the interviewer with appropriate attire, good grooming, a firm handshake and direct eye contact. There is no substitute for promptness, courtesy, preparation, enthusiasm and a positive attitude.



INTERVIEW PREPARATION

WORKSHEET

REVIEWING YOUR PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS – Start with your most recent employer – focus on the issues that will relate to this position.

Company:

List your accomplishments/achievements while working at this position:

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Position:

List the strategy, implementation and development processes you used to bring these results:

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List the strategy, implementation and development processes you used to bring about these results:

QUESTIONING THE INTERVIEWER

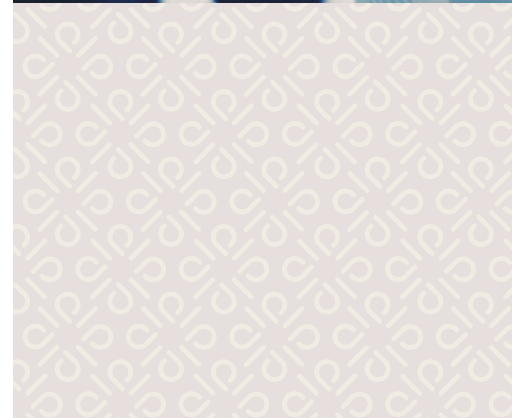
Even if you don't ask any questions during an interview, many interviewers will ask if you have any questions at the end. Make sure you ask a few questions so you don't appear passive in pursuing the opportunity, and be prepared to ask insightful questions about the organization.

Making a list of any questions you have regarding the company is important (it should contain only questions you weren't able to find out through your own research or through us). It will help you identify if this is the right position for you.

Good topics to touch on include:

- The competitive environment in which the organization operates.
- Executive management styles.
- What obstacles the organization anticipates in meeting its goals.
- How the organization's goals have changed over the past three years.
- What obstacles were commonly encountered in reaching corporate goals.
- What resources are available from the company and what must be found elsewhere to reach position objectives.

Generally it is not recommended to ask about compensation or benefits. Questions about these subjects make you seem more interested in what they can do for you and less enthusiastic about the position.



THE “ONE” QUESTION YOU MUST ASK EACH INTERVIEWER

The last question you should ask before concluding with any interviewer is this: “Do you feel I have the qualifications necessary to be successful in this position?”

Listen very carefully to how the interviewer responds. If they give you a resounding “yes,” you have done a good job of covering all the issues that are important to them.

If they say something like : “You appear to have all the qualifications we’re looking for, but ...”

Listen for that “but.” Whatever they say after is an area in which you need to improve their view of you. Try going over your experiences in that area one more time, because it could make a positive difference in how they perceive you.

LAST REMINDERS

- Let us know if you need a copy of your resume that Celarity submitted.
- Follow up immediately with thank–you emails to everyone that you interviewed with.
- Your ultimate goal is to make them want to give you an offer. Remember an interview is not a fishing trip, where you try to fish out information. If you go in with this approach you will discover that you like what you hear about the company and the opportunity. However, if you are so focused on gathering information for yourself that you forget to sell your abilities, it will be too late to give the good impression that you intended.
- We will be eager to know how you thought the interview went. It is important that we speak as soon as possible so we can pass along your feedback to them. Call Celarity as quickly as you can to let us know how it went!

Good Luck!



SOME GOOD THINGS TO READ AND THINK ABOUT:

The next few pages have excellent content to read prior to going into any interview. Experts wrote them so they are worth reading and applying to your interviews.

Six Interview Mistakes – by Michael Neece, founder of Interview Mastery

It's tough to avoid typical interview traps if you're unsure of what they are. Here are six to watch out for:

1 Confusing an Interview with an Interrogation.

Most candidates expect to be interrogated. An interrogation occurs when one person asks the questions and the other gives the answers. You should see it rather as a business conversation in which both people ask and respond to questions. Candidates who expect to be interrogated avoid asking questions, which leaves the interviewer in the role of reluctant interrogator.

2 Leaving Your Cell Phone On.

Although we live in a wired, always-available society, a ringing cell phone is not appropriate for an interview. Turn it off before you go in for an interview.

3 Failing to Ask Questions.

Every interview concludes with the interviewer asking if you have any questions. The worst thing to say is that you have no questions. Having no questions to ask indicates you are not interested or prepared. Interviewers are more impressed by the questions you ask them than the selling points you try to make. Before each interview, make a list of five questions you want to ask. "I think a good question is, 'Can you tell me about your career?'" says Kent Kirch, director of global recruiting at Deloitte. "Everybody likes to talk about themselves, so you're probably pretty safe asking that question."

4 Researching the Company But Not Yourself.

Candidates intellectually prepare by researching the company. Most job seekers do not research themselves by taking inventory of their experience, knowledge and skills. Formulating a talent inventory prepares you to immediately respond to any question about your experience. You must be prepared to discuss any part of your background. Creating your talent inventory refreshes your memory and helps you immediately remember experiences you would have otherwise forgotten during the interview.

5 Making a So-Called Weakness Seem Positive.

Interviewers frequently ask candidates, "What are your weaknesses?" Conventional wisdom dictates that you highlight a weakness like, "I'm a perfectionist," and turn it into a positive. Interviewers are not impressed, because they've probably heard the same answer a hundred times. If you are asked this question, you should highlight a skill that you wish to improve upon and describe what you are doing to enhance your skill in this area. Interviewers don't care what your weaknesses are. They want to see how you handle the question and what your answer indicates about you.

6 Waiting for a Call.

Time is your enemy after the interview. After you send a thank-you email and note to every interviewer, follow up a couple of days later with either a question or additional information. Contact the person who can hire you – not the HR department. HR is famous for not returning calls. You could even provide additional information, such as details about your talents, a recent competitor's press release or industry trends. Your intention is to keep their memory of you fresh.

Don't Talk Too Much - by Michael Neece, founder of Interview Mastery

The gift of gab can be something of a curse during an interview. You could end up talking your way right out of the job.

It's important to remember that interviewers are human, and their attention tends to wane as you speak. Understanding this is critical to communicate effectively during any interview. Your response should be less than a minute and a half when an interviewer asks you to tell them about yourself. Why? Because you'll have that interviewer's attention for just about 90 seconds.

The average interviewer's attention span looks something like this:

- As you begin speaking, the interviewer is listening with almost full attention.
- After about 10 seconds, he begins listening with less intensity.
- After 60 seconds, his mind begins to wander and he's devoting less than half his attention to you. The interviewer starts asking questions about your response or begins formulating his next question.
- After you've been speaking for 90 seconds without interruption, the interviewer is barely listening at all.

An interviewer's attention level can be almost impossible to detect, because most people are skilled at nodding their heads and saying "hmmm" while looking at you, all in an effort to disguise their wandering minds. The longer you speak without interruption, the less attention the listener is giving you. Hence, when you provide a long answer that builds to an important conclusion, often the interviewer is no longer listening. This is particularly important when you respond to an interviewer's request to tell him about yourself, because there is just so much you can say on the subject, and you can't be sure what part of your background the interviewer is most interested in learning about.

YOUR QUESTIONS ARE KEY

Near the end of your response, it's important to keep the interviewer engaged by asking questions.

Skilled interviewers will pose behavioral-event questions, asking you to describe specific examples of your experience. In these situations, your response can easily last much longer than 90 seconds. In such situations, interrupt yourself by asking the interviewer a question like, "Is this the level of detail you are looking for?" or "Is this the type of example you're interested in?" This strategy helps to re-engage your listener and promotes two-way communication.

According to Kent Kirch, global director of recruiting at Deloitte, interviewers are more impressed with your questions than any selling points you try to make. "What's really disappointing to an interviewer is at the end of an interview when I ask the candidate, 'Do you have any questions I can answer for you?' and he says, 'Nope, I think you answered them all,' and that's the end of it; it's just really frustrating," he says. "It all goes back to preparation, and (your questions) tell the interviewer what you thought about the interview before you walked in the door."

Asking questions can also give you a strategic edge. "People love to talk about themselves," says Austin Cooke, the global recruitment director at Sapient. "So if you as a candidate can get interviewers talking about themselves, you're one step up."

KNOW YOUR GOAL

Your interview goals are to ensure you are understood and to make the best presentation of your talents. Engaging interviewers in two-way communication by asking questions helps you ensure they are listening to you while you deliver your response.

Interviewer Pet Peeves - by Carole Martin

You sit facing the interviewer, feeling like things are moving along nicely when all of a sudden the interview takes a drastic turn for the worse. What just happened? You may have hit one of the interviewer's pet peeves, one of those things that automatically trigger a negative response.

Here are seven of the most common pet peeves provided by experienced interviewers, along with some tips on how to avoid them:

1 Smells: Too Much of a Good Smell Can Be Bad.

Pat Riley, author of "Secrets of Breaking into Pharmaceutical Sales," has a pet peeve story to relate: "Preparing for an interview is not like preparing for a date. I had one interview with a woman who doused herself with perfume (the same perfume my ex-girlfriend used to wear) right before stepping into the small interview booth. The perfume was overpowering and brought back bad memories."

2 Communication: Too Little Leaves Interviewers Exasperated.

"My number one interviewing pet peeve is an applicant who won't talk," says Steve Jones, a manager of client services at a software company in Dallas. "I try to ask open-ended questions and prod them for longer answers, but no luck. I've even mentioned to a few that I need more information so I can get an idea of where they're coming from – still no luck. I always end the interview saying, 'Now it's your turn to ask questions,' and still no luck; they don't have any. Oh well – next!" "Help me out here," says Jones. "Come prepared to answer questions and talk about yourself."

3 Communication: Too Much Can Be Too Much.

"Candidates who ramble are the ones who get to me," says Dotti Bousquet of Resource Group Staffing in West Hartford, Connecticut. "Last week, I was interviewing a candidate and asked her one question. The candidate talked and talked and talked for 45 minutes straight. I was unable to stop her. I had to say, 'Let's wrap this up,' and I stood up while she continued to talk. I walked to the door of the office and opened it. She left, but continued to talk while walking out the door." The lesson? "Candidates should stay focused, and answer the question asked -- in less than two to three minutes," advises Bousquet.

4 Lack of Focus: Results in Losing the Interviewer.

"Typically, candidates are simply too intimidated by the process," says Mark Fulop, project director for a large nonprofit agency. "Relating the answer given to one question back with another – and asking clarifying or follow-up questions – shows me that the candidate is confident and thinking about the whole picture instead of enduring an interrogation."

5 Averting Your Eyes: One Way to Avert an Offer.

"People who do not make any eye contact during the entire interview" irritate Gwen Sobiech, an agency recruiter in West Hartford, Connecticut. "I realize some people are shy, but to never look at me once – they look down, around, everywhere, but not at me for the entire interview. I find that extremely annoying. I also tend to distrust someone who will not look at me when I've asked a question."

If you are uncomfortable looking into someone's eyes, look at his "third eye," just above and between the person's two eyes.

6 Slang and Street Speak: Leave Them on the Street.

"Poor communication skills really get to me," says Robert Fodge of Power Brokers in Dover, Delaware. "What I mean by this is not merely their language fluency, but more about the use of language. Slang words and street speak just don't have a place in most business environments. Also, candidates who say 'um,' 'like' and 'uh' between every other word lose my attention very quickly."

7 Deception: Little Lies Leave a Big Impression.

One major complaint among recruiters is when a candidate is not completely truthful; small lies are all too common in the world of recruitment. This includes not being completely forthcoming with relevant information, embellishing accomplishments, hiding jobs or leading the process on with no intention of ever following through. Building trust during the interview is key to getting an offer.

The Truth About Counter Offers - by Greg Doerschling & Phil Kulwicki

REASONS TO KEEP YOU

Look at the logic behind the counter offer. Of course, what we would like to do is accept it as flattery, a sign of our unrivaled importance and value to our employer, a definite signal that they'll go to serious lengths to keep us.

What you should be thinking, though, is that aside from boosting your ego so much your head looks like a beach ball, your employer may have other reasons for counter-offering you. These may include:

- Replacing an employee can be expensive.
- It might mess up their budget to re-recruit that time of year.
- They haven't got time to re-recruit right now.
- They want to have you cover while they hunt for your replacement.
- They want you to finish the project you are working on.
- They don't have the time to train someone new at the moment.
- Losing staff might reflect badly on your boss.

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

There is rarely a good reason to accept a counter-offer and stay where you are. You wanted to move, you've been through the recruitment process, you've been successful and you have scored a job that meets your criteria. Think about a few factors, which include:

- From the day of your resignation, your loyalty will always be in question.
- This lack of loyalty is likely to be an obstacle to future promotions.
- Your colleagues will look at you differently – after all, you don't really want to be there, do you?
- Your boss will probably start casting around for your replacement immediately – whether you stay or not.
- Why are they offering you what you deserve now, rather than before your resignation?
- Has the real reason you resigned been adequately addressed?
- How guilty do you really feel? After all, shouldn't you be putting yourself first? Would the company think twice about getting rid of you if the chips were down?
- Don't let an unexpected counter offer stop you in your tracks. Take it in stride, and thank your employer for the opportunity and reaffirm your intention to leave. Stand your ground.