

# INTERVIEWING

*Roberts Wesleyan College • Office of Career Services • (585) 594-6540*

While the resume and cover letter are essential in getting your foot in the door of an organization, the interview will get you hired. During the interview you will exchange information with the organization's representative, will have the opportunity to "sell yourself", and determine if the position and organization are right for you. At the same time the interviewer is gathering information about you, evaluating your skills and qualifications, and observing your professional mannerisms.

## **PREPARATION**

- Know yourself, what you want, and be confident in who you are
- Analyze your strengths, weaknesses academic performance, career interests, personal goals, work experiences and other special skills you may have
- Be prepared to tell the interviewer why he/she should hire you. If you are not prepared to tell the employer why he should hire you, then do not expect to be hired
- Be enthusiastic about the opportunity
- Research the organization thoroughly before you walk in the door. You should know the organization's history, products/services, business methods, philosophy, reputation, locations, standing in the industry or field, organizational structure and prospects for growth or change. (Information on employers can be found by contacting the employer or their websites.)
- Find out names and correct pronunciation/spelling of interviewers
- Visit beforehand - plan on arriving 10-15 minutes ahead of time
- Select appropriate apparel - conservative dress is your best guide.
- Get a good night's sleep
- Bring extra copies of resume, portfolio samples, letters of recommendation, names and addresses of references

## **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

- Ask what employer is looking for in successful candidate
- Explain what you can offer THEM (not what they can do for you)
- Sell yourself - enthusiasm, interest, flexibility and willingness to work
- Impress everyone you come in contact with (i.e. secretaries, elevator monitors, etc.)
- Shake hands at beginning and end of meeting
- Relax
- Speak clearly, directly and to the point
- Be completely honest
- Provide relevant examples whenever possible - a "yes" or "no" answer is usually not adequate
- Listen and respond to what is asked
- Anticipate questions and prepare responses
- Emphasize the positive
- Don't initiate discussion on salary or benefits
- Prepare relevant questions

- Emphasize interest before leaving
- Thank interviewer for time and opportunity
- Follow up with appropriate, timely thank you note

## **WHAT ARE EMPLOYERS LOOKING FOR?**

### **1. Personal Qualities**

A good interviewer relies heavily on the first impression he/she receives. The unique ability to make a good first impression is an admirable quality and will be an asset to the organization. Remember, people don't hire people they don't like. During the interview you will be evaluated on such personal traits as:

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| • Personal appearance | • Ability to communicate |
| • Stability           | • Self-reliance          |
| • Poise               | • Maturity               |
| • Integrity           |                          |

### **2. Job Interests and Career Goals**

You should determine beforehand what you want and why you want it. The interviewer will ask you to justify job and career decisions. In doing this he/she will ask about your:

- |                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Aptitudes and abilities | • Willingness to work and learn    |
| • Adaptability            | • Enthusiasm                       |
| • Initiative              | • Ability to get along with others |

### **3. Job Qualifications**

Your basic qualifications for the job are of most importance. No matter how commendable a person you are or how well you have defined and demonstrated what you want to do the final decision regarding an offer will be made based on your qualifications relating to:

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| • .Level and appropriateness of academic training and achievement | • .Leadership potential       |
| • Work experience   | • Recommendations             |
| • Job-related hobbies and interests                               | • Special training and skills |

Remember that the interview is a two-way street. Be prepared to make something happen. Interviewers look for "well- rounded" individuals whose work interests seem to match acquired knowledge, skills, and talents. It is your responsibility to insure that the interviewer receives the information needed to make an employment decision in your favor.

## **WHY PEOPLE DON'T GET HIRED**

- Poor communication/interpersonal skills
- Could not articulate clear goals or future career direction
- Mismatch of skills, academic background or personality with corporate culture or position
- .Lack of enthusiasm and energy
- Inadequate critical thinking, analytical or problem-solving skills
- No active participation in extracurricular activities or community.
- No pattern or history of success in performance
- Unrealistic expectations

- Overemphasis on money
- No relevant work experience
- Not a team player
- Condemnation of past employer
- Did not research organization
- Immature and/or lacking in self-confidence
- .Personality is arrogant, overly aggressive or over-confident
- Misrepresentation on resume
- .Appearance - lack of professional presence (dress, grooming habits)

## **SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

It is a good idea to be prepared for the types of questions that will be asked of you in the interview. Although it is beneficial to practice with someone beforehand, do not memorize your answers. Nothing turns a recruiter off more quickly than memorized interview answers. Be spontaneous, original and most importantly, be yourself.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you leave your last job?
3. Can you work under pressure?
4. What are some of your strengths? weaknesses?
5. How long would you stay with us if this job were offered to you?
6. What other positions are you considering?
7. What can you offer us that someone else cannot?
8. What did you learn on your last job?
9. What did you like least about your last job?
10. What position and salary do you expect to hold in two years? five years?
11. What do you know about our company? organization? district?
12. Why are you interested in working for us?
13. How long do you think it would take you to make a positive contribution to our organization?
14. What is your opinion of the organization you currently or previously worked for?
15. Describe a typical day in your current or most recent job.
16. What about the position under discussion interests you the least? the most?
17. What preparation have you had for this position/program?
18. Are you willing to be flexible in your work hours?
19. Why do you like this kind of work or program?
20. Do you prefer working with people? data? things? ideas?
21. What kind of supervisor or boss do you prefer?
22. What do you find satisfying about this kind of work?
23. Would you choose this same line of work or major again? Why?
24. Are you willing to relocate?
25. Which is more important to you, money or job satisfaction?
26. How many days of work or school did you miss last year?
27. How did you find out about this position/program?
28. Why did you choose Roberts Wesleyan College?
29. What is the best course you had in college?
30. Why did you select your major? this career area?
31. Describe an accomplishment that made you particularly proud of yourself.
32. What are your hobbies and interests?
33. Are you satisfied with your education?
34. What personal attributes do you feel are necessary to succeed in this field?
35. Describe your ideal job after graduation.
36. Do you plan to pursue graduate work?
37. What does success mean to you?

38. Do you prefer to work for a small or large organization?
39. When can you begin work?
40. What special project work have you done, which relates to this position?
41. Describe what you learned as an intern or co-op student.
42. Do you have references? May we contact your former or present employer?
43. In what areas do you perceive a need for additional training?
44. What is your GPA? Do you think it is a good indicator of your academic ability?
45. In what community and/or college activities have you been involved?
46. If you are not offered this position, what do you plan to do?
47. Identify a major problem you've encountered and how you dealt with it.
48. Why should we offer you this position?
49. Would you prefer to work with an organization that emphasizes high volume, productivity or product quality? Why?
50. What questions do you have for me?
51. What is the single most important idea you contributed or your single most noteworthy accomplishment in your present job?
52. What specific things did you do in your last job to improve your effectiveness? (Employers appreciate linkages to increased revenues and decreased expenses.)
53. How do you make important decisions?
54. Walk me through your progression with your present company leading me up to what you do now on a day-to-day basis.
55. In retrospect, why is ABC Corp. a better company for your having worked there?
56. What would your past employer say on a reference if we asked what your greatest contribution to the organization was?
57. What makes you stand out among your peers?

### **SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK AN INTERVIEWER**

At some point in the interview the interviewer will ask if you have any questions. Since it is impossible for you to know everything about the job or the organization beforehand it is a good idea to think of intelligent, appropriate questions. The following list highlights questions you might want to consider.

1. What are the responsibilities of this position? 2. What is a typical day like in the department? 3. How long has this position been open?
4. What might the career path be for this position? 5. With whom would I be working?
6. To whom would I be reporting? More than one person?
7. Where does this department fit into the company's organizational plan? 8. Who makes the final decision on hiring for this position?
9. Is there a training or orientation program for the employees? 10. Is there specific training for this position?
11. Are there any questions that you have about my background that I might clarify for you?
12. May I take a tour of the facility?
13. Would you like me to have reference letters and transcripts forwarded? 14. What is the next step in the hiring/admissions process?
15. How many positions are available? Is this a new or replacement position? 16. When does the position begin?
17. What kind of person are you looking for? 18. What is the job's most important responsibility?
19. What are the last three (3) people who held this position now doing? 20. What is the background of my potential boss?
21. What are the job holder's most important relationships -clients, customers, other employees? 22. Are there performance reviews?
23. What are some of the departmental goals in the next two (2) to five (5) years?
24. Does your organization have an in-service educational plan?
25. Does this organization have a policy to hire from within?

## **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

While the interview is still fresh in your mind, you may want to make notes on questions you could have answered better in order to improve future interviews. Remember to send a typed thank you letter immediately after the interview.

Check on your status by following the interviewer's directions. (If you are to call back in two weeks, be sure to do so.)

If you don't get the position, try not to take it as a personal rejection. The position may not have been right for you, or the person selected may have been better qualified. If you think this position or program was "just right" for you, continue your search and don't be discouraged. Finding a job requires the investment of a good deal of time and energy. Your hard work will payoff in the end.

*In addition to this handout be sure .to attend an interviewing workshop and check out the information available to you in the Career Services Library in the Rinker Center.*