

IMPRESSIVE



INTERVIEWS

Presented By:



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INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEWS

We often spend a great deal of time preparing resumes and cover letters. In reality the best resume and cover letter won't get you a job. A solid interview which conveys energy, enthusiasm, your skills and abilities and your willingness to learn will.

The interview is your chance to market yourself as the best candidate for the job. To make the best sales pitch possible, it's important to follow these steps:

- ✓ Make your first impression a lasting impression
- ✓ Prepare a portfolio
- ✓ Know your resume, skills and abilities
- ✓ Research the company
- ✓ Research the job
- ✓ Prepare and practice responses to interview questions
- ✓ Follow-up after the interview

MAKE YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION A LASTING IMPRESSION

You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.

An employer usually takes 7-14 seconds to form an impression that will remain for the rest of the interview.

Getting noticed, liked and remembered can win more jobs than qualifications and skills can."

-*High Impact Interviews*

COMMUNICATION

Interviewers are highly tuned in to your non-verbal communication as well as your verbal communication. Therefore, it is important to polish both your interview responses and your body language.

- ✓ Don't drink coffee or chew gum.
- ✓ Don't smoke.
- ✓ Don't sit until invited - *Choose a seat close to the interviewer and face him/her.*
- ✓ Maintain eye contact.
- ✓ Shut the Door on your troubles - *Avoid statements that imply need such as "I need this job". Convey what you can do for the employer.*

- ✓ Listen to the interviewer - *Consider the question and make sure you understand it. If necessary, ask the interviewer to repeat it.*
- ✓ Be calm and poised - *Avoid nervous habits.*
- ✓ Thank the employer - *Reassure the interviewer of your interest and your desire to hear a response. Be sure to shake the interviewer's hand firmly.*
- ✓ Be attentive to body language
- ✓ Dress for success

BODY LANGUAGE

Interviewers rely on every piece of information available to assess the candidate, including body language. Listed below are some of the more common types of body posturing and how they might be interpreted in an interview situation.



POSITIVE BODY LANGUAGE YOU SHOULD PORTRAY

ACTION:

Standing Tall

Smiling

Note-taking in the interview

Direct eye contact

Sitting forward in the chair

Offer a firm handshake

Speak clearly

POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION:

Shows confidence

Conveys enthusiasm, and a friendly, pleasant attitude

You are interested, professional and on top of things

You are interested and telling the truth

You are enthusiastic and interested

Shows warmth and confidence

Shows intelligence, calculated answers



NEGATIVE BODY LANGUAGE YOU SHOULD AVOID

ACTION:

Crossing arms on chest

Playing with hands or fidgeting with an object

Often looking away from the interview's eyes

Coughing, laughing nervously, shifting in chair

POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION:

You are defensive
You disagree with what was just said

You are nervous

You are hiding something; You lack confidence - You are not interested

You are uncomfortable with the present subject

You are unmotivated and disinterested

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

LOOK YOUR BEST - *This is very important. Like it or not, the way you look means a lot to someone who's thinking about hiring you. During your job search always be dressed in proper interview attire - when applying for jobs and for interviews.*

For business, the professionals, public contact, and customer service, wear a suit or matching sport coat and pants, tie, socks and shirt; no extreme styles or loud colours.

Other jobs are not as formal: wear sports jackets, sports shirts and slacks (dress pants, cords or cotton twill pants), or if appropriate, the type of work clothes worn on the job.

The following suggestions apply to all types of jobs:

- Clothes: neat and tidy, and pressed if necessary
- After shave/cologne/perfume - none at all or only a bit, lightly applied
- Neat, becoming hair style, but not extreme
- Fresh shave recent haircut and/or neatly styled, mustache and beard neatly trimmed
- Avoid fads in appearance and dress. Dress conservatively, skirts and suits are best for professional, office, sales, public contact and customer service jobs
- When using skirts, be sure your skirt length is not too short when sitting. A skirt just above or just below the knee is flattering to most women and looks professional
- Ensure pantyhose are worn if wearing a skirt or dress - avoid bare legs and feet
- Go easy on makeup and fingernail polish - avoid unusual colours, or extremely long nails
- Check your handbag – Is it in good repair?
- Avoid too much or too flashy jewellery. Keep it simple
- Be aware of how people dress at the place of employment before the interview
- Clean shoes which match attire
- Matching socks

Clothing and accessories do not have to be expensive to make a good impression, but they should always be in good taste and clean.

Remember! Neatness and cleanliness are important whether applying in casual or more formal clothes.

**"Attention Job Seekers -
Denim is a definite "No-No" to wear during your job search."**

WHAT TO TAKE WITH YOU TO THE INTERVIEW

WHAT IS A PORTFOLIO?

- ◆ An attractive, professional looking case, binder, duo tang, or folder containing examples of your skills, accomplishments and experience. You may wish to consider placing your documents in plastic sleeves to keep them neat and clean.
- ◆ Your portfolio should be taken with you on all job interviews.

WHAT SHOULD YOU HAVE IN YOUR PORTFOLIO?

- ◆ *A Sample Application Form*
- ◆ *Diplomas, Certificates, or Licenses*
- ◆ *Resume*
- ◆ *Phone References*
- ◆ *Letters of Reference*
- ◆ *Written Examples*
- ◆ *A Pad of Paper and a Pen*
- ◆ Anything else which you think is an appropriate example of your accomplishments.
- ◆ In addition, for your own benefit bring along:
 - A copy of cover letter sent to the company
 - A copy of the Advertisement/Posting
 - Self evaluation/Interview Checklist
 - Day planner (calendar)
 - Company Information (from research)
 - Calling Card (30 second summary)
 - Interview Questions

WHEN SHOULD YOU PRESENT YOUR PORTFOLIO TO EMPLOYERS?

- ◆ Offer the employer a copy of your resume as soon as you meet him/her.
- ◆ During the interview, use any available opportunity to show the employer your accomplishments.

Hot Tips:

- Present your portfolio at any available opportunity - be assertive but not too pushy!
- Take in something the interviewer can review long after the interview is over. It provides the interviewer with tangible proof of your abilities and assists them in remembering you!!

Being Prepared

KNOW YOUR RESUME

Knowing the content of your resume and skills and abilities you have acquired provides you with confidence going into the interview and conveys that you are well prepared.

You must be able to:

- ✓ Describe your experience in detail
- ✓ Use the content to provide examples
- ✓ Expand on your training and education
- ✓ Expand on descriptive or qualitative phrases

RESEARCH THE COMPANY

“If you demonstrate a genuine interest in the company, the company will demonstrate a genuine interest in you.”

-High Impact Interviews

Types of Information

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ product or service✓ number of employees✓ history✓ reputation✓ salary range✓ media attention | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ current plans and focus✓ future plans✓ whether they export✓ other locations✓ company environment |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

RESEARCH THE JOB

Understanding the responsibilities of the job will assist you to match your skills and abilities appropriately.

Sources of Information

- ✓ Job profiles in Lutherwood's Career Action Centre
- ✓ Newspaper advertisement
- ✓ Job description
- ✓ Discussions with interviewer when notified of interview
- ✓ Human Resource Development Canada for salary ranges
- ✓ Employees in company
- ✓ National Occupational Classifications

Types of Information

- ✓ responsibilities and duties
- ✓ training offered

- ✓ qualifications
- ✓ personal traits desired
- ✓ physical requirements
- ✓ computer knowledge required
- ✓ salary
- ✓ equipment operated
- ✓ skill/effort required
- ✓ level of responsibility
- ✓ role in relation to other staff
- ✓ results expected
- ✓ length of position

STYLES OF INTERVIEWS

No two interviews will be the same. However, understanding the various interview styles and how you can prepare for them will improve your chance at achieving success.

1. Telephone Screening Interviews

- ✓ Being used with increased frequency to select appropriate candidates for in-person interviews
- ✓ Used for two purposes
 - Screening to gather a pool of candidates for current vacancy or
 - To narrow down a pool of candidates to a few finalists

example questions: ® Similar questions to in-person screening interviews.

Hot Tips:

- ✓ Keep essential interview materials near your phone: resume, list of specific skills and achievements that you wish to mention, day planner, file for each company you have applied to, note paper and pen
- ✓ Use correct grammar and complete sentences
- ✓ Gather caller's name, title, company, address and telephone number
- ✓ Give clear, concise responses to questions
- ✓ Gather your thoughts before responding and speak exactly as you would in an interviewer's office
- ✓ Thank the interviewer for the time spent and express your sincere interest in further discussing your qualifications in person
- ✓ Write a Thank You letter

3. Structured Interviews

- ✓ Each candidate is asked similar questions in a predetermined format
- ✓ Emphasis is on your past experience and assets you can bring to company rather than your personality
- ✓ Interviewer records answers, which are potentially scored

example questions:

- ® What was your greatest accomplishment in your last job?
- ® Tell me about your education/training?

Hot Tips:

- ✓ **PRACTICE!**
- ✓ Know your resume, skills and abilities - *everything* you say and do is evaluated

4. Unstructured Interviews

- ✓ Casual, unrehearsed free flowing conversation vs. prepared questions
- ✓ Put more emphasis on what people are like rather than skills and abilities
- ✓ Minimal note taking by interviewer

Hot Tips:

- ✓ **SMILE!** - the emphasis is on you and the impression you leave
- ✓ Establish common areas of interest with the interviewer - familiar subjects improve chances of success
- ✓ Look for opportunities to appropriately talk about your skills and abilities
- ✓ Be careful not to feel totally at ease or you may volunteer negative information about yourself

5. Group / Panel Interviews

- ✓ Includes two or more interviewers
- ✓ Designed to get multiple perspectives from peers or supervisors that the vacant position will relate to
- ✓ Objective is to collect information in an efficient time saving manner. It is not to intimidate you
- ✓ Purpose of a group interview is often to see what behaviours and skills you display in a group setting

Hot Tips:

- ✓ Relax
- ✓ Respond to whoever asks the question, not the entire group
- ✓ Practice
- ✓ Know your resume, skills and abilities

6. The Working Interview

- ✓ A working interview is the time for a job candidate to show an employer what s/he can do
- ✓ It gives the employer a chance to see the applicant's skills in action
- ✓ Candidates get to see if they like the job
- ✓ In a working interview, the candidate typically works for about four hours and is paid for their time

7. Behavioral Interviews

- ✓ Designed to predict applicant's future behaviour on the job
- ✓ Solicit answers to questions that seek examples of past work related behaviours
- ✓ Interviewer has a structured interview guide with a list of prepared questions designed to measure predetermined skill areas that are critical for the current vacancy.
- ✓ Questions are straightforward and open ended. There are no hypothetical or trick questions.
- ✓ Interviewer usually rates your answers to determine whether you are suitable for the next step in the hiring process
- ✓ Interviewer will often confirm some of your examples when doing a reference check

example questions:

® Give me an example of a time that you showed consideration for a fellow co-worker.
(determining interpersonal skills)

® Tell me about the most frustrating time you faced in trying to get a difficult concept across. *(determining sales experience)*

Hot Tips:



- ✓ Provide a **S.T.A.R.** response:

Situation: indicate who was involved, what happened, and when and where it occurred

Task

Action you took

Result

- ✓ Give specific time and examples, not how you typically handled the situation
- ✓ Simple responses to the questions are often the best.
- ✓ Gather your thoughts prior to responding to a question

APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

On the following pages, some of the most typical questions will be listed with a description of how you should answer each one incorporating your own skills and qualifications. For each of the following questions, what the employer is trying to determine is in *italics* below each question.

1. Tell Me About Yourself.

"What are your skills? What kind of person are you? Are you lazy? Motivated?"

Your answer should be a combination of information. Mention the following factors:

- a) Skills related to the job and past work experience
- b) Your training or education
- c) Your strong interest and enjoyment of your work
- d) Common contact - if you know someone who works in the company or who knows the interviewer
- e) Activities, special Interests or hobbies

2. Have You Ever Done This Kind of Work Before?

"Can you learn to do the job in a reasonable amount of time?"

Tell the interviewer about:

- a) Your past work experience
- b) Your education and training related to the job
- c) Non-paid experience related to the job
- d) How quickly you have learned that type of work in the past

3. Why Should We Hire You Instead of Someone Else?

"What can you do for our company?" "How can you contribute to our company?"

If you have to hesitate or can think of only one or two reasons, then he/she will feel that the reasons are not too obvious or are not sufficient. You should quickly list your key skills, qualifications and positive characteristics and how you can benefit the company.

Benefits companies desire:

- ✓ Maintain a high level of customer satisfaction
- ✓ Efficient organizational abilities
- ✓ Expedite work flow
- ✓ Get faster delivery
- ✓ Maintain high quality
- ✓ Save money/cut costs
- ✓ Increase sales

4. How Often Were You Absent From Work In Your Last Job?

"Are you reliable? Can I depend on you to be at work?"

If you were absent a good deal because of some reason, tell the interviewer what the reason was and why you feel that it will no longer be a problem. "I'm in great health and don't expect to be taking any days off." In answering this question, stress what your past reliability has been and give assurance of your future reliability.

5. When Are You Available For Work?

"How soon can you start work?"

Tell the interviewer as soon as possible.

You may not be sure you want the job, but if you express your hesitation now, you may not receive the offer. Reasons for hesitation and what to do:

1. You're not sure how soon you can leave your other job.

- Do not disclose your hesitation right away.
- Once the job is offered, try to make the necessary arrangements
- Only if you can't should you call the employer and tell him/her you need the extra day or week before starting.

2. If you find your current employer requires a week or two of notice:

- Do not disclose your hesitation right away.
- Once the job is offered, try to make the necessary arrangements.
- Only if you can't should you call the employer and tell him/her you need extra time before starting

3. If you are waiting to hear about another position you applied for

- Do not disclose your hesitation right away.
- Once you receive a job offer, you can contact the other companies you are waiting to hear back from
- Explain to them that you have received a job offer, however would rather work at their company.
- You can ask them politely to make a decision before you have to reply to the former offer.

6. What Was Your Last Employer's Opinion Of You?

"What kind of an employee are you?"

The best answer to the general question about your last employer's opinion of you is to have a **letter of reference from your last employer**, which you can show to the interviewer.

If you don't have a letter of reference, suggest to the interviewer that he/she contact your employer, and express your assurance that you would receive favourable comments.

If you didn't get along very well with your previous supervisor, you might consider getting a letter of reference from someone else in the company, such as another supervisor, manager or co-worker.

7. Can You Work Under Pressure Or Under Tight Deadlines?

"Can you handle pressure?" "Do you fall apart in pressure situations?"

This question indicates that your job will involve working under pressure and meeting deadlines. So reassure the interviewer by giving examples from paid or unpaid activities that involved meeting deadlines and working under pressure. If possible mention several examples, stressing how capable you were and how you did not mind the stress and possibly enjoyed it.

8. Do You Have Plans To Further Your Education?

"Are you committed to lifelong learning?"

- ◆ Employers are interested in hiring individuals who are committed to lifelong learning.

- ◆ Employers wish to hire individuals who keep their skills up to date and who are expanding their abilities.
- ◆ If employees are ‘growing’ their abilities then they are able to help the organization ‘grow’.
- ◆ You need to let the employer know that you are interested in maintaining a high skill level and would be willing to take the appropriate courses to keep your skills up to date.
- ◆ Mention that you would be interested in any in-house training that the company may sponsor.
- ◆ Ensure that the training you talk about is job related to the type of work you are currently applying for or the company is involved with.
- ◆ Reassure the employer that the training courses you will be taking will be on your own time and will not interfere with your work.

9. Are you married? / How old are you? / How is your health? / Do you have children?

These questions are often asked by inexperienced interviewers. However, according to Canadian Human Rights legislation, **the interviewer has no right to ask these or any questions that involve your affiliations, number of children, height and weight etc.**

It is critical to know your rights, but not “put off” the interviewer by an impolite response. Instead, you may tactfully turn the question back to the interviewer and reply “**Could you tell me how my marital status, etc., might have any bearing on the job I am applying for?**” This sort of response puts the responsibility on the interviewer to show that he/she is not attempting to discriminate on a basis of criteria prohibited by Human Rights Legislation.

If you are troubled by the interviewer’s line of questions, you may contact any CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION office (in the government pages in the phone book or on a government website). You can report the employer, and they will advise the employer of questions which they should not ask.

It is your choice whether to answer these questions. If you do, consider what the employer is trying to determine.

For example, **Interviewer: Are you married?**
Will your marital status affect your performance?

Assure the interviewer your marital status will not affect your job performance. Depending on your situation, highlight the following:

You are single:

- ◆ You can travel easily or work overtime, since you are single
- ◆ You intend to stay in the area, because of family and friends
- ◆ If you marry, you do not plan on leaving the area

You are married:

- ◆ You are established and your family likes the area

- ◆ You can travel and work overtime, and your family understands and accepts it
- ◆ You have made arrangements for the care of your children, and will not need time off work
 - when they are sick
- ◆ Your spouse has a job, and wants to remain in the area

10. Why Did You Leave Your Last Job?

“Were you fired or did you quit?” “Did you have difficulties in your last position which may affect your ability to do the job here?”

- ◆ Discuss the reasons honestly, but in a light that is favourable to you.
- ◆ Avoid saying anything negative or critical about past supervisors or places of employment.
- ◆ If you are critical of past employers the interviewer will see you as someone who is likely to do the same to him/her.
- ◆ Avoid disclosing that you were fired.
- ◆ If you were fired, stress any reasons that are not personal
- ◆ Emphasize that you feel the job you are being interviewed for differs in these problem areas.
- ◆ If you were fired because you were having interpersonal conflicts with management, it is legitimate to make statements such as: “I didn’t feel my skill areas were being properly utilized.”

11. Why Do You Want To Work Here?

“Will you be satisfied with your job? “Will you stay?” “What have you heard about this company?”

- ◆ Discuss the good reputation that the company has, any positive information you have obtained through your research about the company products, philosophy, fair policies, etc.
- ◆ Also discuss your confidence in your ability to do the particular job in question and how much you enjoy that type of work.

12. What Are Your Greatest Strengths?

“How confident are you?” “What do you see as your skills?”

- ◆ Market your skills and your accomplishments including both job-related and interpersonal skills.
- ◆ Mention such things as:
 - your number of years of experience in the field,
 - your job related skills and qualifications,
 - your reliability, enthusiasm, efficiency, good organizational abilities,

13. What Are Your Weaknesses?

“Can you be honest about your short-comings?” “How much training are you going to need?” “What are your problem areas going to be?”

- ◆ Be honest and open
- ◆ Turn this question around so that you are responding with weaknesses that will not interfere with your ability to do the job.
Examples: being a perfectionist, taking things too seriously, etc.
- ◆ Elaborate on your response and **explain what you do to overcome the weaknesses**
- ◆ Never describe anything which would imply that you are not able to do aspects of the job.
- ◆ You could also respond to this question by telling the interviewer that you have no weaknesses that would prevent you from being an effective employee.

14. What Are Your Long-range Goals?

"Are you somebody that is career oriented?" "How important will this job be to you?" "Is this a stepping stone to something else or will you make a commitment to this position?"

- ◆ Respond with your intention to stay with the company and grow in your career within the company.
- ◆ If you know before hand that this company has many opportunities for advancement and encourages it, tell the interviewer that you "Hope to become valuable to the company and to be promoted as you earn it".
- ◆ Be careful not to show dissatisfaction with the job at which you will be starting.
- ◆ Stress that you like the company's style, and that you hope to become a valuable employee there.
- ◆ Stress that you do not plan on leaving the city or returning to school full time, therefore, you do not see any reason why your term with the company would not be a long one.
- ◆ It is appropriate to be open about long-range career goals, such as returning to school or getting a degree, if they are in the same field as the company and/or they are far enough in the future that they will not interfere with your stay at the company.

15. What Kind of Salary Do You Need?

"Are your salary expectations too high?" "Do your salary expectations fit in with what the company is offering?"

It is best not to give an actual figure or range unless you are absolutely positive what the employer is offering. If you mention a higher salary than the interviewer has in mind, he/she may well end the interview deciding he/she can't afford you. Some suggestions on how to handle salary related questions.

- a) The word "Negotiable" can be used. "My salary is negotiable at this time".
- b) Tell the interviewer that you would work for whatever he/she feels is fair based on your qualifications and the company's standard salary level for that position.
- c) If the salary issue emerges before the actual job offer is discussed, ask that your answer be postponed until you know more about the job.
- d) If the employer pressures you for your present salary requirements there are two possible responses. You could provide a salary range responding with dollar figures in the appropriate range of the job you are applying for e.g. "I am hoping to secure a salary in the range of \$25,000 to \$30,000." Or you could use bracketing responding with

appropriate dollar figures, e.g. "I am hoping to secure a salary in the high \$20,000's to low \$30,000's.

- e) If the interviewer insists on knowing your present and previous salary, there are several possible responses. "I feel that at this point in my career I wish to earn a salary level which is related to my skills and experience, and my previous salary did not reflect those".
- f) If the interviewer asks you how much money you need, remember that this is irrelevant, e.g. you want to be paid what you are worth, not what you need.
- g) If the interviewer mentions a figure that is too low, the best response is a thoughtful silence. This shows that you are considering the offer, and also shows that you are not satisfied with it. Many times the interviewer will offer a higher figure without further discussion as a response to your silence. If, however, you are asked for a reaction, you may respond by saying, "Although I am enthusiastic about the job and the organisation, I feel that the salary offer does not completely reflect the responsibilities nor the contributions that I am prepared to make."

If it is clear that the interviewer cannot raise the initial offer, and you would still like to accept the job, you may suggest a six-month review based on your demonstrated value, or you may ask for additional benefits or perks.

- h) If you are making a career change and are concerned that the employer feels your previous salaries are much higher than you'll be earning now, stress that you're very excited about your career move and how career satisfaction opportunity is much more important to you than salary itself.

16. **What Kind of Machines or Equipment Have You worked With? What Kind of Equipment Can You Operate?**

"Is your technical knowledge up-to-date?"

- ◆ Be specific in mentioning the types of machines and equipment you have operated and any similar ones that you could operate if you transferred your skills.
- ◆ Stress that even though you may not have operated a particular machine in the company, or used a particular data system, that there are similarities to other systems you have used.
- ◆ State that you are enthusiastic, and that the skills you have in the system you know will be easily transferable.
- ◆ Stress that you are a quick learner, and give specific examples.

17. **Are there any questions that you have?**

- ◆ Remember that the interview is a two-way street.
- ◆ You need to determine if the job is right for you.
- ◆ The questions should be geared to the company that you are interviewing with.
- ◆ The questions should be thought out in advance and be serious.

- ◆ Questions about salary or benefits should not be asked at the first interview.
- ◆ The information is important in assisting you to make your decision about the job, but should only be asked at a second interview or when you have received the job offer.

Asking questions shows enthusiasm for the position/company and also shows your initiative.

Listed below is a sampling of questions you may want to ask at the interview. You should also ask other questions which are tailored to the specific job opening.

- ◆ What characteristics do you most like to find in people in this position?
- ◆ What have been some of the best results produced by people in this job?
- ◆ Could you tell me about the primary people I would be dealing with?
- ◆ Would you describe the duties of the job for me, please?
- ◆ How do you appraise the performance of your employees?
- ◆ What is the size of the company?
- ◆ Is there a formal training program?
- ◆ How does the company support and encourage professional growth?
- ◆ When can I expect to hear back from you regarding this position?

After your interview, take a few minutes to rate your interview. The following checklist can be helpful in curbing inappropriate habits and becoming an expert at job interviewing.

YOUR AFTER-INTERVIEW CHECKLIST/SELF EVALUATION

- o Were you on time?
- o Was your personal grooming immaculate? Were you dressed like company employees?
- o Did the opening of the interview go smoothly? Did you introduce yourself to the interviewer, with a firm handshake?
- o Did you offer a copy of your resume?
- o Did you smile? Did you make eye contact? Did you maintain good posture and avoid nervous mannerisms?
- o Did you use examples, results, and measurement of achievements to back up your claims and convince the interviewer that you have the skills to do the job?
- o Did you display high energy? Flexibility? Interest in learning new things?
- o Did you frequently make a strong connection between the job's requirements and your

qualifications?

- o Did you make clear your understanding of the work involved in the job?
- o Did you use enthusiasm and motivation to indicate that you're willing to do the job?
- o Did you find some common ground to establish that you'll fit well into the company?
- o Were you polite to all staff and customers?
- o Did you find out the next step and leave the door open for your follow-up?
- o Did you thank the interviewer at the close of the interview and shake hands firmly?
- o Did you forget any important selling points that you can put in the thank you letter or callback?

FOLLOW-UP

What you do after the interview plays an important role in whether you receive a second interview or job offer. Follow-up is one more way of marketing yourself. It sets you apart from other applicants.

- ◆ Follow-up can be a tiebreaker in the employer's decision making. Even if an employer has already chosen you for the job, follow-up confirms their decision. If you are not accepted for the position follow-up may create an impression that will influence a decision for future positions.
- ◆ Follow-up reminds the employer who you are and the position you applied for.
- ◆ It reinforces your genuine interest in the job.
- ◆ It restates your most important skills and how you can contribute to the organisation.
- ◆ It acts as a courtesy to the employer, which they will appreciate.

FOLLOW-UP STEPS

Follow-up or Thank you letter:

- ◆ Should be sent or dropped off immediately after your interview.
- ◆ Shows your appreciation for the opportunity to meet with the employer.
- ◆ Include any details that you forgot to mention in the interview.
- ◆ Include any points that you want to highlight.
- ◆ Show your interest in the company.
- ◆ Be Brief

TELEPHONE FOLLOW-UP

A thank you telephone call is appropriate if the employer will be making their decision immediately - before you can drop off a thank you letter. If the employer is not available when

you call, leave a message thanking the interviewer and expressing your interest in the position.

Follow-up call:

- ◆ The appropriate time for this call will have been determined in the interview.
- ◆ Allows you to check on the progress of the hiring process.
- ◆ It allows you to remind the interviewer of your key skills and abilities and how they relate to the current vacancy.

Notify your references:

- ◆ Your references can make or break you. What they say about you is often more convincing and important than what you say about yourself. It is crucial that you spend considerable time in selecting and preparing the people who will vouch for your creditability.
- ◆ Immediately following the interview, call your references and fill them in on your interview.
- ◆ Clearly give them the company and interviewer's name.
- ◆ Give them a list of the key requirements for the job.
- ◆ Match the key requirements of this position with your key qualifications to ensure your reference person understands the appropriate skills to express if called for a reference check.
- ◆ Thank reference person for all their help and support.

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER FORMAT

Your Address

City, Province

Postal Code

Telephone Number

Date

Company Name

Address

City, Province

Postal Code

Attention: Name of Employer (If you don't know, **phone and get it**)

Position

Dear Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss (Name Of Employer):

INTRODUCTION - TELL WHY YOU ARE WRITING

Thank the employer for the opportunity to discuss the position of

_____ on _____ (date). Mention something
that you found interesting or informative in the interview.

BODY OF THE LETTER - BRIEFLY REMIND THE EMPLOYER WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR HIM/HER.

Refer to **your** most important **skills** and how they **match** the **requirements** of the **job** as discussed in the interview. **Important:** You may want to express any skills you forgot to mention in the interview. You may also want to include a revised resume highlighting these skills. State once again your genuine interest in working for their company. (Interested and involved employees usually do a good job).

CLOSING

State that you look forward to hearing the results of their decision and thank them again for considering the application.

Yours truly,

(signature) followed by your name typed

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

35 Dickson Street
Cambridge, Ontario
N1R 7A6

(519) 623-9380

November 7, 2001

ABC Company
123 Duncan Drive
Cambridge, Ontario
N1R 7G6

ATTENTION: Jane Doe
 Plant Manager

Dear Ms. Doe:

I enjoyed meeting with you on Wednesday, November 7, 2001 to discuss the position of Production Labourer. Both our conversation and the company tour made it evident that ABC Company is becoming a leader in the production of sporting equipment. It was impressive to hear about ABC's five new product lines and the efficiency in which they will be introduced to both production and the market.

As mentioned in our conversation, I am confident that my extensive machine operation experience, as well as my WHMIS and SPC training have provided me with a solid background for the Production Labourer position. In addition, I have just completed St. John Ambulance CPR, and First Aid training. I am committed to maintaining a safe work environment and to producing high quality products.

I would like to re-express my sincere interest in the position of Production Labourer with ABC Company. I look forward to hearing from you soon regarding your decision. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

Janet Smith

EVALUATING A JOB OFFER

It is flattering to be offered a job. However, it is not always easy to decide whether to accept it.

When offered a position:

- Always respond with enthusiasm and ask for time to think over the offer.
- Weigh the pros and cons of the job offer before making such a major decision.
- It is reasonable to ask the employer for a few days to contemplate the offer.
- Consider accepting positions which are not necessarily your “ideal job”.
- In order to earn a living you may have to do what you can do rather than what you’d love to do.
- Accepting part time hours or contract work may be something worth considering to allow you to get your foot in the door, keep your skills current and shorten your length of time out of.
- Accepting a position which allows you to develop and utilize your transferable skills, which you can use in your next job, is a practical choice in today’s labour market.

Holding out for the perfect job which fits into your long-term career goals is desirable but could keep you in the unemployment line for a long, long time.

YOUR JOB OFFER CHECKLIST

The following checklist can help you decide whether or not this job offer is right for you at this point in your career.

- o Does this job use my skills and abilities?
- o Does this job allow me to strengthen my marketable skills?
- o Does this job take me in the direction that I want to go?
- o Does this job have any opportunity for advancement?
- o In the case of part-time work, is it possible that the hours may be increased over time?
- o In the case of contract work , is it possible that the contract my be extended or turn into more permanent work?
- o Will this work give me a sense of enjoyment? Does it fit with my interests and temperaments?
- o Will this job allow me to add to my personal network?
- o Could this job be a stepping-stone to something better?

- o Will I get along with my supervisor? Make sure that you meet your supervisor and are able to get along with him/her.
- o Will I have to travel? Is that okay with me?
- o Will I be visible to people who make decisions?
- o Does the company culture fit with my personality?
- o Are the company policies in writing?
- o Is the company in a good position to survive and grow in a competitive market?
- o Is the company's industry growing?
- o Does the company have a good reputation for consideration of its employees?
- o Is the company's performance evaluation process okay with me?
- o Is the base pay being offered fair?
- o How valuable to me are any of the additional pay opportunities - bonuses, commissions, stock options?
- o Are the benefits okay with me? Health insurance? Retirement plans? Company vehicle? Vacation time? Sick time?
- o Can I expect a better offer? This is difficult to assess. Consider carefully what the job is offering and relate it to your current situation.
- o What happens if the job doesn't work out? Determine how you will be affected financially and on your resume.

INTERVIEW BLOOPERS / COMIC BLUNDERS

As Robert Half, the company's founder, observed, "*Based on some of the responses, it would be an extreme understatement to point out that job applicants do not always act in their own best interests.*"

Here are some highlights from the survey:

- * "He dozed off and started snoring during the interview."
- * "The candidate told me that her long-term career goal was to replace me."
- * "Said he was so well-qualified, if he didn't get the job it would prove that the company's management was incompetent."
- * "Brought her large dog to the interview."
- * "Chewed bubble gum and constantly blew bubbles."
- * "Candidate kept giggling throughout serious interview."
- * "She wore headphones and said she could listen to me and the music at the same time."

- * “Balding candidate abruptly excused himself. Returned to office a few minutes later, wearing a hairpiece.”
- * “Job applicant challenged the interviewer to arm wrestle.”
- * “Asked to see the interviewer’s resume to see if the personnel executive was qualified to judge the candidate.”
- * “Without saying a word, candidate stood up and walked out during the middle of the conversation.”
- * “Man wore jogging suit to interview for position as financial vice president.”
- * “Said if he were hired he would demonstrate his loyalty by having the corporate logo tattooed on his forearm.”
- * “Interrupted to phone his therapist on answering specific interview questions.”

MORE INTERVIEW BLOOPERS

“What is the most unusual thing you have ever witnessed or heard of happening in a job interview?” In a recent survey by Accountemps, a temporary-personnel service, executives from 200 companies throughout the United States answer that question. Some of their responses may -- or may not -- astound you.

- * “Apologized for being late, said he accidentally locked his clothes in his closet.”
- * “Arrived with a snake around her neck. Said she took her pet everywhere.”
- * “Wanted to borrow the fax machine to send out some personal letters.”
- * “After a difficult question, she wanted to leave the room momentarily to meditate.”
- * “Left his dry cleaner tag on his jacket and said he wanted to show he was a clean individual.”
- * “She returned that afternoon asking if we could redo the entire interview.”
- * “Said if he was hired, he’d teach me ballroom dancing at no charge, and started demonstrating.”
- * “Candidate was told to take his time answering, so he began writing down each of his answers before speaking.”
- * “She sat in my chair and insisted that I sit in the interviewee’s chair.”
- * “Shortly after sitting down, she brought out a line of cosmetics and started a strong sales pitch.”
- * “After a very long interview, he casually said he had already accepted another position.”
- * “When asked about loyalty, showed a tattoo of his girlfriend’s name.”