



Interviews & Thank You Letters: Improving Your Odds for Career Success

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What you need to get the job you want.

Part 2



More skills that become the tools for your toolbox, continued:

6. Preparing for the interview
7. Remembering to write thank you letters

6. Interviews: The Key to Success



It All Starts with a Handshake



Introductions: Exercise

- Take a few minutes to think about the following:
 - ✓ What type of job you are interested in?
 - ✓ How would you introduce yourself to a recruiter or a member of a selection committee?
 - ✓ How would you tie your introduction into your career interest?
- Pair up with someone you do not know very well and each of you introduce yourself to each other, one at a time.
- Discussion.

Preparation



- Identify types of positions that
 - ✓ Interest you
 - ✓ For which you are qualified
- Review skill-sets derived from education and work experience.
- Develop specific résumé for each type of position
- Review job announcements at placement center
- Research organizations on the Web
- Develop strategy to match education/experience with each organization's needs
- Get a good night's sleep

Prepare Answers to Important Questions

- Why are you a good choice for this position?
 - ✓ Tell me about yourself.
 - ✓ Why should we choose you?
- What is your major strength/weakness?
- Tell me about a success/problem you've had in the workplace and how you handled it.
- Tell me about your work ethic.
- Tell me how you work with others.

* For additional ideas, refer to the list of questions in the handout.

Practical Exercise



1. Write down the following on the index card:
 - a. Your Name
 - b. The type of job that interests you
 - c. The type of employer that will have the job opening
 - d. Pass what you've written to me
2. Develop a response to the question: "What makes you a good choice for this position?"
3. In-class response to questions
4. Discussion

Prepare Questions* to Ask the Interviewer

- Who will evaluate my performance, how will the performance be evaluated, and how often are evaluations conducted?
- Is there a probationary period for new employees?
- What can I expect to do during my first day/week on the job?
- What is the next step in the hiring practice? Will I hear from you or should I contact you?
- What are the major challenges of this position as you see them?

* Refer to the handout for additional ideas for questions to ask.

Exercise

- For the type of job you are interested in, develop four questions that you feel are important to ask when you go to an interview.
- Discussion



If You Smoke



- Do NOT smoke in your interview outfit.
- A non-smoker can smell the tobacco smoke on you and your clothes when you walk into the room!
- Use chewing gum, but take it out prior to the interview.

What to Do

- Get plenty of rest.
- Review position announcements thoroughly in advance (online or print).
- Be punctual - be at the placement center for your appointments - on time.
- Check your messages at the placement center frequently.
- Respond to messages promptly, including positions you choose not to interview for.
- Dress professionally

What to Do

(Continued)

- Remember: Etiquette and manners do count.
- Maintain an energetic, enthusiastic, flexible attitude.
- Prepare for interview questions - organize your thoughts.
- Listen - You have to hear the question to answer it.
- Have a written list of questions to ask.
- Focus on “what you can do for them.”
- Get the name/address of everyone you interview with.

Appearance Women

- Suit or business dress (conservative color)
- Matching accessories
- Natural color hose
- Polished shoes
- Limited jewelry
- Traditional colors for lipstick & nail polish (no black, purple, etc.)
- Conservatively styled hair
- Mild fragrance (if worn)



Appearance: Men



- Suit preferred (gray or dark blue)
- White shirt - starched and pressed
- Conservative tie
- Limited jewelry - no ear rings, nose rings, etc.
- Polished shoes
- Fresh haircut, shave or trimmed facial hair

Appearance



“If you’re in college right now and it’s real important for you to express yourself with body art, then you have to think about the industry you’re going to work in.”

Amy Glass, Brody Communications, Ltd, in
Young Money, Spring 2003

Do Not:

- Look like a refugee from the street.
- Arrive late or fail to show-up for appointments.
- Fail to look at your interviewer.
- Forget about your relevant student jobs, internships, and class/student projects.
- Forget to talk about your non-library experience that may have given you valuable skill-sets.
- Downplay your past experience.
- Fail to be able to explain what you've done in previous jobs.
- Monopolize the conversation - OR - fail to talk.
- Discuss specific salary requirements – if at all possible.

The “Hated” Salary Question

- If possible avoid until you have an offer
- If pressed and:
 - ✓ No salary information available
 - “I believe we will be able to come to agreement on salary on salary once we’ve discussed how my qualifications match the requirements of the job.”
 - “Based upon my qualifications and the job requirements, I believe we will be able to come to an agreement once you’ve decided I’m the right person for the job.”

The “Hated” Salary Question

Continued

- ✓ If there is a published salary range:
 - “I believe we can come to an agreement within the salary range published.”

- ✓ If really pressed for a dollar figure:
 - “I believe my qualifications for this position should equate to a salary somewhere between \$XX,000 and \$XX,000, depending upon the total benefits package.”
 - “I noticed that similar positions in the latest (insert survey) salary survey indicate someone with similar qualifications should qualify for a salary somewhere between \$XX,000 and \$XX,000.”

Exercise



- One-at-a-time, respond to a question about your salary requirements.
- Discussion

The Telephone Interview

- Preparation same as for personal interview
- Schedule when you will not be interrupted or hurried.
- Have workspace with plenty of room so you can spread out:
 - ✓ Job announcement
 - ✓ Cover letter
 - ✓ References
 - ✓ Personal Background History (PBH)
 - ✓ Glass of water, or other drink without caffeine
 - ✓ Paper and pen/pencil for notes

The Telephone Interview

Continued

- Dress for the interview.
- Get name and correct spelling for each person involved in the telephone interview.
- Do not address salary issues if at all possible.
- Follow-up with thank you letters
 - ✓ Essential step in completing the interview process
 - ✓ Send every interviewer a personal thank you letter
 - ✓ Follow-up with a call when appropriate.

Interviewing at Career Fairs

10 Tips for Preparing for the Interview

1. Research organizations you will interview with.
2. Develop target list of organizations you want to interview with.
3. Know what you want to do.
4. Have a rehearsed introduction.
5. Prepare responses to questions like, “Tell me about yourself.” or “Why should we hire you?”
6. Target resumes and references to type of job you want.
7. Remember, the first few seconds create the impression.
8. Prepare a list of questions to ask potential employers
9. Have portfolio or folder for resumes, references, writing pad, and pens.
10. Prepare folders for items you collect from employers to keep them organized.

Interviewing at Career Fairs

13 Tips for While Your Are at the Career Fair

1. Dress professionally – you only get one chance.
2. Walk around and look at all exhibits before talking to their recruiters.
3. Greet recruiters with a firm handshake and eye contact.
4. Listen how and what is said by the recruiter as he/she talks to others.
5. Relate your experience, education, and skills as related to your enthusiasm for the position.
6. Focus on what you can do for the employer, not what you want from the employer.
7. Listen to questions carefully and provide a response to what is asked, clarifying question if necessary.

Interviewing at Career Fairs

13 Tips for While You Are at the Career Fair - Continued

8. Remember to ask questions related to the position and the organization.
9. Get the business card of each person you talk to – or write down their contact information on your note pad.
10. Place business cards and company information in folder you prepared.
11. If a long line, go to next employer rather than waste time.
12. Write down impressions about each employer after talking with them.
13. If there is time, explore opportunities with organizations you did not intend to target initially.

Actions after an Interview

- Review each interview you had and record what went well and what needed to be improved
- Write a thank you letter to each individual you talked to.
- Follow-up as needed to maintain lines of communication.
- Restructure your interviewing approaches and your resumes based on feedback from recruiters, using good judgment.

7. Thank You Letters: The Follow-Up

- Send every interviewer a personal thank you letter.
- Follow-up with a call (Don't be abusive about this, but let them know you are interested.).



Exercise

- Write a short thank you letter for an interview for the position you have used in the exercises today.
- Each student read his/her letter
- Discussion

