

**TOOLS TO MOVE UP
THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**



II. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Higher Vision's guide to the interview process

Congratulations! Your resume stood out and you have been invited to a job interview where you will have the opportunity to convey your interest in the position and company, and to present the skills you could bring to the company. The resume tells the employer what you have done; the interview enables you to tell the employer what you have achieved with your responsibilities. Now it's your turn. It is your opportunity to interview the company as well. It is a chance for both to assess the "fit."

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Know your resume and prepare yourself

- Think about your skills, interests, and values
- Understand your strengths & practice articulating them
- Be able to discuss your weaknesses & what you and the company can do to strengthen them
- Identify accomplishments you are proud of and things you might have done differently
- Speak to examples that demonstrate your strengths and accomplishments
- Articulate why you are interested in this field/company/position
- Define your short and long term goals

Research the employer and the field

- Research the company, the position, and the industry using your recruiter, the Internet, and various media
- Match your skills and experience to the responsibilities of the position
- Read current periodicals and trade journals to learn about current trends in the employer's industry & relevant company news
- Be familiar with the company's competitors
- Understand the company's organizational structure and where the position fits into that structure

Practice for the interview

- Meet with your Executive Recruiter to review your interview strategy
- Cite examples of your achievements and successes and how they transfer to this opportunity
- Confirm date, time, place and directions of the interview; consider parking and traffic conditions; leave plenty of time

Behavior-based interviews

More employers are now conducting job interviews that focus on experiences, behaviors and dimensions that are job related. Behavior-based interviewing rests on the premise that past behavior (performance) is the best indicator for future behavior (performance). Your answer to a behavior-based question must tell a story by giving a specific example of a situation you handled. To prepare for a behavior-based interview, analyze both your skills and those sought by the employer, and identify from your previous employment where you have successfully demonstrated those skills.



Sample behavior-based questions the employer might ask

- What are the most important qualities you look for in a company, position and/or manager? And why are they important to you?
- Tell me about the short and long term goals you have set for yourself.
- Do you trust people until they prove otherwise or do people have to earn your trust?
- Tell me about a time you out performed others at work and how you did it?
- Do you prefer to work from a plan or go with the flow? And why?
- How do you organize your typical day?
- Do you prefer a slow, medium or fast paced environment? And why?
- Do you usually make decisions based on facts or intuition?
- All things being equal would you rather be part of a group or lead it?
- When is it acceptable not to follow up?
- Provide me an example of a time when you had to deal with conflict or opposition.

Sample work related questions the employer might ask

- Why are you currently seeking a change in employment?
- Describe one of your greatest accomplishments in a previous position.
- How would previous co-workers describe your strengths and weaknesses?
- In your current/previous position, describe how you rank among your peers?
- Describe a time when you were in a rapidly changing work environment.
- What professional skills are you currently working to improve?
- Describe your management style.
- Describe how you organize yourself to meet deadlines & goals.
- What are the key ingredients to maintaining successful business relationships?
- What has been your biggest challenge in a previous position?
- What is missing from your current employer?

Sample questions you might ask the employer

COMPANY FOCUSED

- How would you describe the culture of the company?
- Please share with me what the company is doing to stay ahead of the competition? (new products, technology, training, etc...)
- What was it about this company that made you want to work here?
- What are the pros and cons of this company?

DEPARTMENT FOCUSED

- Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
- What concerns are facing this department currently?
- Whom would this position interact with most and what are those individuals like?
- What is the culture of the department and what types of personalities work well with in it?
- How would you describe your management style?



POSITION FOCUSED

- What should I expect during a typical day?
- What characteristics would the ideal candidate for this position possess?
- What performance goals have been set for the first year?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the person who held the position most recently?
- Who has been the best at this position and why?
- How is performance measured in this position?
- What areas of my background can I further clarify for you?
- How do you feel my experience and personality would fit for this position?
- What is the next step going forward?

THE INTERVIEW

Interview etiquette

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- Turn off your cell phone, or better yet, leave your phone in your car along with your briefcase or purse
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist
- Obtain a business card from each interviewer and clarify names that are difficult to pronounce
- Carry only your portfolio with copies of your resume and the prepared interview questions you want to ask, along with your list of references

Non-verbal communication skills

- First impressions matter; dress professionally yet conservatively, avoid flashy accessories, and keep make-up, cologne & perfume to a minimum
- Greet the interviewer with a firm hand shake
- Maintain eye contact but avoid staring
- Use positive vocal qualities and facial expressions
- Sit still, lean slightly forward and demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm
- Be prepared to take notes on the most important information

Verbal communication skills

- Correctly pronounce the name of the interviewers
- Listen carefully to what is being asked and answer in a clear and concise manner – usually a direct answer followed by a brief example of your answer
- Pay attention to clues the interviewer may give you and adjust accordingly as to not appear overly confident or too reserved
- Use proper grammar, avoid using slang
- Be specific and refer to concrete experiences that illustrate your skills
- Be the solution – uncover the company “pain” and position yourself as a possible solution
- Never bad-mouth former employers or co-workers
- Thank each interviewer for their time and express your interest in the company and this opportunity

