

# SO YOU THINK YOU CAN INTERVIEW?



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# DEFINITION

**In-ter-view (in' ter-vyoo') n.**

A formal face-to-face meeting, especially one arranged for evaluating the qualifications of an applicant, as for employment.

*While this is a very formal definition, try and think of an interview as a conversation with someone about a job opportunity.*

# INTERVIEW PREPARATION



# DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Review the Job Description thoroughly.
- Research the company's website. Learn about their mission, values, culture, community interests, annual report, stockholders report, press releases, etc.
- Review your resume and be prepared to link your skills & accomplishments to the requirements of the position.
- Prepare your own questions to ask the interviewer.
- **PRACTICE!** Rehearse interview questions with someone who will give you good feedback.

# DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Do you need directions to the interview?
- How will you get to the interview? Do you need to take public transportation? If so, plan accordingly.
- How long will it take you to get there?
- Is there parking? Do you need to pay for parking?
- Should you do a transportation “dry run”? (a drive to the interview in advance so you know where you’re going)
- Do you need to arrange for childcare or pet care?

# DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Be sure that the voicemail greeting on your phone (cell & home) and email address are professional. You may need to create separate accounts for your personal use and your job search.
- Google yourself. What will employers see when they Google you?
- Does your Facebook page (or other social media) have any questionable photos that need deleted?

# WHAT TO WEAR?

## Dress the part.

- Dress for success.
- Have your interview outfit properly cleaned.
- Business-like attire. Conservative is best.
- Limit your accessories, jewelry and cologne. You do not want anything to detract from your face-to-face interview.
- Proper grooming is important.
- Cover up tattoos and remove body piercings.



## MEN'S ATTIRE

- Solid Color Suit (Black, Gray or Navy)
- Solid Color Dress Shirt
- Ties should coordinate with the color of your shirt - small designs are best
- Dark Color Shoes & Socks





## WOMEN'S ATTIRE

- Matching Suit (skirt or pants)
- Solid Color Collared Blouse
- Low to Mid Heel Shoes & Proper Hosiery
- Limit Your Accessories

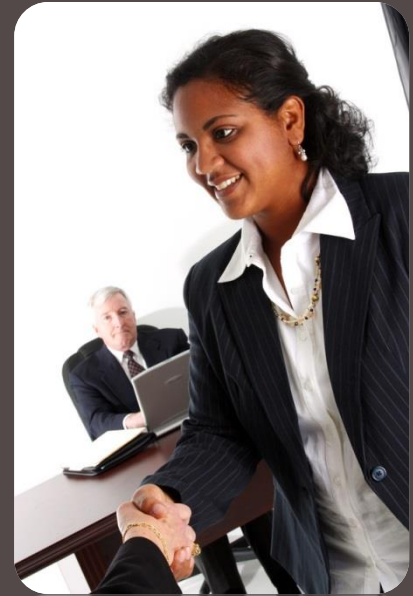
# WHAT TO TAKE?

- Enough copies of your resume for the number of people you will be speaking with—and then several more
- Your list of References on a separate sheet of paper
- Job posting and any other notes you have related to the position and company
- Note pad and 2 pens
- Your list of questions

# WHAT TO TAKE?

- A Letter of Reference (if you have one)
- Put all your paperwork in a Portfolio or a dark folder
- Mints to freshen your breath
- Bottled water in case you get a dry throat

# AT THE INTERVIEW



# AT THE INTERVIEW

- Arrive at least, but no more than, 15 minutes early to where the interview will occur to give yourself enough time to relax once you get there.
- Make note of the names and positions of the people you interact with, including the receptionist or greeter so that you can send them *Thank You* notes after the interview.

# BODY LANGUAGE

- Greet your interviewer with a smile, a firm handshake, and direct eye contact. This shows confidence.
- Do your best to maintain direct eye contact throughout the interview.
- Sit up straight and relax your shoulders to give an appearance of confidence.
- Avoid fidgeting and tapping your finger or foot, playing with your hair, etc. This shows nervousness and can be distracting to the interviewer.
- Show enthusiasm by smiling & using positive facial expressions, nodding appropriately.

# VOICE

Speak clearly, in a controlled voice. Vary your tone & pitch—speaking in a monotone voice does not show enthusiasm.

- Use clear diction & pronunciation
- Sound sincere and enthusiastic
- Use a pleasant volume; reasonable pitch level
- Do not use slang words (i.e. “Yea” instead of “Yes”)

# DURING THE INTERVIEW





# DURING THE INTERVIEW

## Do's

- Go into the interview alone. Do not take a friend or your children with you.
- Show that you are actively listening to the interviewer by giving direct eye contact, nodding at what he/she says, rephrasing what the interviewer said in your own words.
- Avoid “non” words such as “Aahh”, “Uhh”, “Umm”.
- Stress your related skills, accomplishments, education and the results achieved.

# DURING THE INTERVIEW

## Do's

- When necessary, ask for clarification or to have the interviewer repeat the question.
- Think before you respond—ask for a moment if you need time to think.
- Turn your cell phone OFF.
- Give examples of particular situations to illustrate you have the skills the interviewer is asking about.

# DURING THE INTERVIEW

## Do's

- Have a positive attitude
- Stress your qualifications
- Stress your readiness to the interviewer that you are ready to undertake the job duties
- Respond clearly & concisely

# DURING THE INTERVIEW

## Don'ts

- Ramble—take two minutes or less to answer an interview question
- Exaggerate—only state the truth
- Use slang
- Dwell on past negative work situations or speak negatively about co-workers or supervisors

# DURING THE INTERVIEW

## Don'ts

- Volunteer negative information
- Discuss personal problems
- Express strong or controversial opinions (i.e. political or religious)
- Interrupt the interviewer

# DURING THE INTERVIEW

## Don'ts

- Be evasive or dishonest
- Call the interviewer(s) by first name, unless he/she invites you to do so
- Smoke or chew anything before or during the interview
- Ask about salary, benefits or days off—this could show that you are more interested in those versus the actual position and company

# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

CAN YOU ANSWER THESE?



# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## “Tell me about yourself.”

- Use this opportunity to explain why you are the best match for the job. State your:
  - Capabilities
  - Accomplishments
  - Interests
  - Talents
  - Goals



# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why do you want to work here?
- Why should I hire you?
- What makes you qualified for this position?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What jobs have you enjoyed in the past?

# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What kind of work environment do you prefer?
- What are your short/long term goals?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Why did you leave your previous job?
- Why are you seeking to leave your current position?

## Interviewers ask Behavioral Questions

Behavioral questions give the interviewer an indication of how you would handle a particular situation...

### ***Because:***

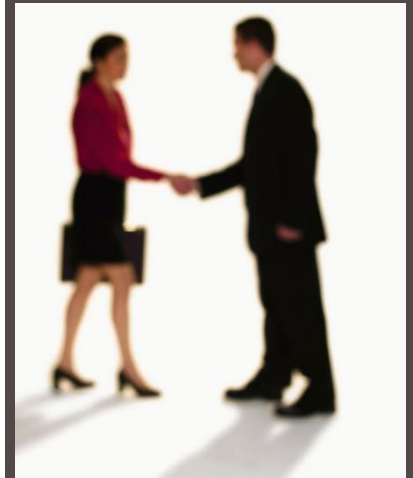
Your past behavior is the best indicator of how you will respond in the future to any given specific situation.

COMMON  
INTERVIEW  
QUESTIONS

# BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

- How do you approach solving a problem?
- Describe your ability to work under pressure.
- Tell me about a time when you had to influence someone else's opinion.
- Give me an example of when you set a goal and were able to meet or exceed it.
- Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.

# CLOSING THE INTERVIEW



# WRAPPING IT UP

## Ask Your Own Prepared Questions

### *Why?*

- It shows your interest in working at the company
- It shows you did your research

# QUESTIONS YOU CAN ASK

- Why is the position open?
- What challenges would you anticipate for someone in this position?
- How would you describe the company culture?
- What would be some initial projects of someone in this position?
- What qualities will make someone successful in this position?
- How does this position contribute to the organization?

# AT THE END OF THE INTERVIEW

- If given the opportunity, summarize the key points of the interview and your qualifications for the job.
- Ask about next steps in the interview process.
- Ask when a hiring decision will be made.
- Who might you hear from and when?
- Ask for business cards so you have contact information.
  - Or names/titles of your interviewer(s)
- Thank the interviewers by name & for their time.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

- Make sure the interviewer(s) have your phone number and email.



# FOLLOW UP AFTER THE INTERVIEW



# REFLECT

- Take a moment to reflect on how the interview went. Ask yourself some questions:
  - What went well?
  - Was there a question you stumbled over?
  - What was the overall “feeling” of the interview?
  - What are the Pros/Cons of the position/company?
  - Is there anything you forgot to mention?



# THANK YOU LETTER

- Send every interviewer you spoke with a Thank You letter within 48 hours.
- Emailing is OK.



# REFERENCES

- Notify your references that they may receive a call from someone at the company you interviewed with.
- Ask your references to mention something specific about your work (i.e. team player, ability to multi-task, cooperation, organizational skills).
- Give your resume to your references so that they are familiar with your work history.

# FOLLOW THROUGH

- If you do not hear from the interviewer by the specified time frame you were told you would know about next steps in the interview process, call.

# PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

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[www.loudoun.gov/wrc](http://www.loudoun.gov/wrc)

1. On the left sidebar menu, click Workshops & Career Development.
2. Click on the option, “Resource Materials”.
3. Select “Tough Interview Questions” to open & print the interview questions to practice.

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**LOUDOUN WORKFORCE RESOURCE CENTER  
705 EAST MARKET STREET, SUITE E  
LEESBURG, VA 20177-7400**

**9:00 – 4:30 MON, TUES, THURS, FRI  
9:00 – 12:00 WED**

**703-777-0150**

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