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## **Introduction**

An interview could possibly be described as a meeting involving two or more persons where information is exchanged. Salespersons and customers interview each other to share facts and collect data used in making “informed” purchases. Students and landlords interview each other to make the best possible arrangements for housing at the best possible price. We interview others who have the ability to provide us with a product or service. Therefore, the purpose of the interview is to determine who can best provide the product or service we want or need and maximize the benefits received for each party involved.

The job interview is one of the most difficult steps in getting hired because the candidate has 15, 30, or 60 minutes to sell themselves to a total stranger. “Job interviews are show biz”. Interviewing skills are learnable and like acting “require solid preparation with the goal of delivering a flawless performance”. (Kennedy 11-12)

The purpose of this booklet is to provide students at West Virginia University Institute of Technology with information regarding the steps in preparing for and conducting successful job interviews. While not exhaustive by any means, basic concepts and ideas on which to base additional study, research, and experience have been presented.

## **Where Will the Interview Take Place?**

“Not every interview takes place across a desk”. You may interview on the telephone, on campus, at a job fair, via videoconference, at an employer’s site, during mealtime, in a hotel room or lobby, or even at home. (Kennedy 35) Screening interviews will be as cost effective as the employer can arrange; and as the process becomes more selective, interview locations will be close to or at the employer’s site.

## **Kinds of Interviews**

Imagine an employer seeking candidates for two position openings who, following a classified ad posting, has 200 resumes to read and consider. The first item of business is to reduce a large stack of candidates into a smaller stack that can be properly managed. *Screening Interviews* are conducted to “weed out all of the candidates except the best qualified”. (Kennedy 26) *Selection Interviews* are conducted by persons within the company who have the authority to hire.

Candidates who survive the screening process will be asked for second, third, or even more interviews. The higher the number of interviews the more selective the process will become and the more specific applicable skills will be discussed. An interviewer's "decision about whether or not you'll be invited back for additional interviews will probably be influenced by your attitude and personality as much as your qualifications". (Adams 42)

Employers are searching for experience, trainability, soft skills and emotional intelligence. In addition to regular pre-employment testing, some employers evaluate candidates using *Assessment Centers* where groups of candidates are evaluated as they are presented work-related, role-play projects.

### **Arranging The Interview – Who? What? When? Where?**

Congratulations, your resume worked! Employers interested in your qualifications will more than likely use the telephone to arrange an interview with you. While being a quick and easy method for the employer, it can be a nightmare for the candidate. Telephone calls come early in the morning before that first cup of coffee, late at night during the party of the week, when you are in class and the answering machine is on the fritz, or even worse, when your telephone is "temporarily out of service".

**WARNING:** *Employers will trash the resumes of candidates who will not return calls or whose contact information is not in working order.*

When the call comes, be prepared to put on your best manners as you write down the following information: company name; name of the contact person; name of the person to whom you are to report; their telephone number(s); their email address; and the day, date, time, and location of the interview. During the telephone conversation, you will want to confirm the title of the position for which you will be interviewing, and, for research purposes, ask the contact person to send you copies of company literature and don't forget to obtain a corporate website address. If the interview is scheduled for out-of-town, inquire about travel arrangements.

### **Prepare, Prepare, Prepare, Prepare**

*Prepare your look* - "First impressions make a statement". (Dahlstrom 32) Impeccable personal grooming, dress as if you belong in the environment, avoid excess jewelry and makeup, and skip the cologne and perfume. "Dress the best you are ever going to look in the job you want". (Kennedy 73)

*Prepare your materials* – Carry a folder or briefcase stocked with items that will back up what you say about yourself. Present a fresh resume and copy of your academic transcript to the interviewer as soon as you are seated. Prepare a list of questions to ask and refer to them when the time comes. Be prepared to offer a list of references, letters of recommendation, performance evaluations, or any other materials on which an interviewer could use to favorably predict your future success on past experiences.

*Prepare your thoughts –*

What do I have to offer that will match what the employer needs? Critically self-assess your job-related skills as well as those that demonstrate your oral and written communication, team activity, presentation, and flexibility skills. Make lists and develop several specific examples of experiences that will support what you say about yourself. “Six out of ten people don’t get the job they want because they don’t sell themselves”. (Dahlstrom 39)

What will I say when they ask me all of those questions? “Preparing for a job interview is like preparing for a speech”, so Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse. Polish and personalize your sales pitch as you focus on how your skills can benefit the employer. (Kennedy 62) Develop a list of three to five items you would like the recruiter to know about you and work them in as you storytell your way through the interview. (See page 13)

*Prepare By Researching The Company –* “Employers consider company research a reflection of your interest, enthusiasm, intelligence, and commitment”. Research also provides you with the ability “to demonstrate a splendid fit between your qualifications and the job’s requirements”. (Kennedy 60, 51)

Read company literature, talk with employees, visit product showrooms, and visit online sites that are potential “tattle tales” for your job interview. Search for sites that will provide you with information regarding size and growth patterns, direction, products or services, competitive profile, culture and reputation, company history, and net worth.

## **COMPONENTS OF A JOB INTERVIEW**

**IMPORTANT!!** – Turn off your cell phone and pager. Leave them in the car or at home.

**Arrival** - In advance, plan your activities so that you will arrive between 10 to 15 minutes before the interview is scheduled to begin. Make a trial run to the site and allow for plenty of traffic and parking time, inspect your clothing, and organize the materials in your folder or briefcase. If anything can go wrong, it probably will, so plan accordingly.

**Greeting** - Show Time! Be nice to everyone, especially secretaries, security personnel, and custodians. You never can tell how close these people are to the hiring manager(s). Put on a smile, be confident, carry materials in your left hand, offer firm hand shakes with your right hand, maintain eye contact, greet those to whom you are introduced by repeating their last names, and be seated when asked. NOTE: Body language speaks volumes about you as a person, “even before you and the interviewer speak a word”. (Adams 44)

**Ice Breaker** - Generally, during the first few moments of the interview, there will be some incidental conversation in order to break the ice and allow the participants to feel at ease. Regardless of the topic, including that you have had a terrible day – Be Positive! One candidate commented to an interviewer that his secretary “made awful coffee”.

### **Company/Position Sales Presentation**

The interviewer will, sometime during the interview, tell you about the company: its divisions; departments; and products. “Because of your detailed research, information about the company should already be familiar to you”. (Adams 45) Maintain eye contact, give positive feedback, pay attention, and act interested. Plan to include some of the information being presented to you in your answers to questions a little later in the interview.

### **Ask You Questions**

The interviewer will begin asking you questions for the purpose of finding out more about your background and aspirations. Questions can be presented in several formats but are generally designed to allow you to give longer responses “and reveal as much as possible about yourself”. (Adams 46) The interviewer wants to know both what is right and wrong about you, therefore, be prepared with short commercials to showcase why you are the best person for the job. “Don’t make employers guess what makes you star stuff – be your own press agent”. (Kennedy 139)

(See pages 6 – 10)

### **You Ask Questions**

Now it’s your turn! Sometime during the interview you will be given the opportunity to ask questions. “Never ask questions about salary, benefits, holidays with pay, or sick leave policy. You’re looking for a job, not a vacation”. (Dahlstrom 42)

Turn to your folder or briefcase and take out your prepared list of questions. A basic technique is to refer to the source of the information and then ask the question. “While reviewing your webpage, I saw that your company is developing....., can you tell me more?” Take a possibly negative question and turn it into a positive one such as “Would I have an opportunity to work overtime?”

“Sell yourself by asking questions that are work, task, and function focused”. (Kennedy 114)

(See page 11)

## **Closing**

The interview seems to be winding down, the interviewer starts shuffling papers, looking at the clock or stands up. “Don’t go away from the interview empty-handed”. Never leave an interview “without restating your qualifications and the benefits you’ll bring to the job, without knowing what happens next (and the approximate time table), and without propping open the door for your follow-up”. (Kennedy 199, 200)

In the final moments express your appreciation for the time spent with you, seek the interviewer’s permission to call back, and then make a strategic exit. Remember, you will remain a candidate as long as you are on site, or even in town, so watch your manners!

## **Follow-Up**

“I don’t care what the thank you letter says, just so I get one” said one on-campus recruiter. “Write a thank-you letter for the interview within 24 hours to strengthen the good impression you made in the interview”. (Kennedy 204) “Surprisingly, fewer than half the people have the smarts to send the manager a note thanking him or her for their time”. (Dahlstrom 44)

On the way home, think about the manager, company, and the potential job. Were you impressed? In your note explain that you definitely want the job and then follow-up with a telephone call. Later, if you have been left dangling waiting for a hiring decision, send a second or third letter (mail, e-mail or fax) to keep your name in front of the decision maker. New facts about yourself should be included in each letter.

## **Waiting**

Now comes the hard part, waiting for those involved in the hiring decision to make up their minds. In the meantime you are to continue your job search by networking, submitting letters and resumes, and taking interviews with other potential employers.

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| Dahlstrom & Company | <u>The Job Hunting Handbook</u>   | 1997              |
| Kennedy, Joyce      | <u>Job Interviews for Dummies</u> | IDG Books, 1996   |

**QUESTIONS TO EXPECT  
(Dahlstrom 40, 41)**

- 1. Relax and tell me a little about yourself.**  
Talk about your experience, qualifications, and accomplishments – not your childhood, family, or hobbies.
- 2. Why do you want to work as a...?**  
Talk about the interesting details of the job and why they fascinate you.
- 3. What qualifications do you have?**  
Name a skill, cite your qualifications. Move to the next skill.
- 5. Tell me about my company.**  
Call the Chamber of Commerce. Get information on the company size, its key products or services, the markets where it competes, and its overall reputation.
- 6. Why do you want to work for us?**  
You're on your own.
- 7. How did you learn about us?**  
Friend, relative, newspaper story, advertisements – anything to show this employer is not a random choice.
- 8. How many other companies have you approached?**  
“Several for backup, but this is where I really want to work, this is where my hopes are.”
- 9. How many employers have you worked for during the last five years?**  
Tell the truth.
- 10. You seem to switch jobs a lot. Why?**  
Job stagnation, demotions due to downsizing, career exploration, a short-lived personal problem or simply having made a bad choice are all good reasons.
- 11. How long do you plan to work here?**  
“A long time. This is the job I've been hoping for.”
- 12. Tell me about your current (or last) job.**  
List your duties and responsibilities. Explain your accomplishments.
- 13. Why are you leaving that job?**  
Job stagnation, demotions due to downsizing, career exploration, or simply having made a bad choice are all good reasons.

- 14. Are you planning to give notice that you're leaving for another job?**  
Explain that you don't want to leave them short-handed. A two-week notice is customary.
- 15. What did you like most about the job?**  
Talk about your responsibilities, challenges, accomplishments, and the people.
- 16. What would you change about that job?**  
Don't badmouth the job. Explain that you'd want more responsibilities. It shows initiative.
- 17. Did you ever have a disagreement with a boss? Why? Why not?**  
Answer, "yes" and you're a troublemaker, "no" and you're a wimp. Find the middle ground: "Sure we disagreed. But we worked well together. For example..."
- 18. Tell me about your education and training?**  
Explain your education or training and tell how it helped prepare you for this job.
- 19. Did you enjoy school? Why?**  
The manager may want to know if you enjoy learning and whether you might benefit from a training program.
- 20. Which course did you find most difficult? Why?**  
The manager wants to know if you have perseverance: "I got a D in my first term in algebra. My study skills were all wrong. I joined a study group. By third term I pulled it up to a B and kept it there.
- 21. Did you join any school activities? Why?**  
School activities show that you're sociable; that you enjoy being part of a group, and that you can work with other people. This is important in the work place.
- 22. How were your grades in math?**  
The job may require basic math skills like additions, subtraction, multiplication, division, and percentages. "I had a problem with calculus, but my basic math skills are good."
- 23. How were your grades in English?**  
The job may require reading. It may also require you to write reports.
- 24. Do you plan to continue your education?**  
Continuing education courses suggest growth, ambition, promotability - and may qualify for tuition assistance.

- 25. What do you do to relax after work?**  
Don't brag about car racing, sky diving, or any other sport that might be dangerous. They suggest a likelihood of injury and absence from work.
- 26. What do you plan to be doing for work five years from today?**  
Figure promotion you should get if you work hard for this company over the next five years. Tell the manager you plan to be working for him or her in that position.
- 27. What salary do you expect to be earning five years from today?**  
Avoid salary questions by stating, "A fair salary. A salary equal to my work."
- 28. Give an example of any major problem you faced and how you solved it.**  
Think of something related to work, school, civic, or leisure activities. Tell it as a story. Give details. The manager wants to see how you define problems, identify options, decide on a solution, handle obstacles, and solve the problem.
- 31. In your lifetime, what was your greatest accomplishment? What did you learn from it?**  
A personal touch works well here, such as your marriage, birth of a child, or helping someone in need.
- 32. What was your greatest failure? What did you learn from it?**  
Fessing up a failure shows maturity. Avoid examples that might reflect on your ability to do the job.
- 33. What is your greatest weakness?**  
Focus on work, not character weakness. Turn into a positive, "I'm accused of being a workaholic. I like to stay and get caught up on the odds and ends before I go home.
- 34. Last year, how many days of work (or school) did you miss? How many days were you late?**  
This will tell the manager whether you're going to show up for work on time every day. If you've missed more than two days, have some good explanations ready.
- 35. What motivates you to do a good job?**  
Money is not a good answer. A good answer is something like, having responsibilities and being acknowledged when the job is done right."
- 36. Are you at your best when working alone or in a group?**  
"Both. I enjoy working as part of a team and I can work independently to get my share of the work done."

- 37. Would you rather be in charge of a project or work as part of the team? Why?**  
“Either. I’m not afraid to take responsibility and I’m not afraid to roll up my sleeves and pitch in.”
- 38. As a youngster, what did you do to earn your own spending money?**  
Baby-sitting, lemonade stand, newspaper route, shoveling snow, mowing lawns, and other jobs show early signs of ambition and respect for work.
- 39. What would you do if one supervisor told you to do something now and another supervisor told you to do it later?**  
The manager wants to see how you handle conflict. How would you handle it?
- 40. Give me two reasons I should NOT hire you?**  
You’re on your own.
- 41. Who are your heroes? Why?**  
Think about it!
- 42. What do you like most about yourself? Least?**  
See #33. Stress positives.
- 43. If you were told to report to a supervisor who was a woman, a minority, or handicapped, what problems would this cause for you?**  
You’re on your own.
- 44. What salary were you paid on your last job?**  
Tell the truth.
- 45. What kind of salary are you looking for today?**  
“I have no set salary. What salary is usually offered to someone with my qualifications? If the manager persists, give a general answer like, “somewhere in the twenties,” or “somewhere in the thirties.”
- 46. In your last job, how much overtime did you average each week?**  
The manager wants to know if you can be counted on to help out when the work mounts. Explain that you can be counted on to work late whenever the need arises.
- 47. Have you ever been fired from a job? Why?**  
Explain that you usually get along really well with everyone. But, you and your ex-manager just couldn’t seem to make things work.
- 48. Do you have any questions for me?**  
“Yes, thank you, I do have a few questions.”

## **MORE POSSIBLE QUESTIONS.....**

1. How long have you been looking for a job?
2. Is there anything that would keep you from performing the duties associated with this position?
3. What does the word “success” (or “failure”) mean to you?
4. How would your classmates describe you?
5. If you were to start college all over again tomorrow, what major would you select?
6. Do you manage your time well?
7. In what courses did you receive your worst grades? Why?
8. What was the last book you read?
9. Describe a supervisor you would not like to work for.
10. Are you willing to relocate?
11. What are your strengths? (weaknesses?)
12. What do you do in your free time?

## **BEHAVIOR BASED INTERVIEWING**

Recruiters are asking behavior-based questions during interviews. Answers candidates give yields information on which the recruiter can predict future behavior. Behavior-based questions require the candidate to “story tell” through a series of past problem solving, interpersonal or real life events. Here is a brief list of potential questions, the job competencies these questions are designed to measure are in parentheses.

- Describe a situation when you discovered afterward you were mistaken and had to apologize to another person. (How you handle conflict resolution)
- Give me a specific example of a time when a classmate criticized your work in front of others. How did you respond? How has that event shaped the way you communicate with others? (How do you communicate)
- Describe the system you use for keeping track of multiple projects. How do you track your progress so that you can meet deadlines? (Can you complete tasks)
- Tell me about a time you got classmates who dislike each other to work together. How did you accomplish this? What was the outcome? (Teamwork)
- What, in your opinion, are the key ingredients in building and maintaining successful professional relationships? Give some examples how this has worked for you. (How do you establish relationships)
- Describe a situation in which you recognized a potential problem as an opportunity. What did you do? (Do you have initiative)

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. If hired, would I be filling a newly created position, or replacing someone?
2. Was my predecessor promoted?
3. Would you describe a typical work day and the things I would be doing?
4. Which duties are most important for this job? Least important?
5. How would I be trained or introduced to the job?
6. How long should it take me to get my feet on the ground and become productive?
7. How is the job important to the company – how does it contribute?
8. What are the department's goals for the year?
9. How many people work in your department – company?
10. Who are the people I would be working with and what do they do?
11. Can someone in this job be promoted? If so, to what position?
12. How would I get feedback on my job performance, if hired?
13. If hired, would I report directly to you, or to someone else?
14. Has the company had a layoff in the last three years? If so, how long was the layoff and was everyone recalled?
15. If you were to offer me this job, where could I expect to be in five years?
16. What do you consider to be my weaknesses? Strengths?
17. Could you give me a brief tour? I'd enjoy seeing where your people work.
18. What could I say to convince you to offer me this job?
19. I want this job. Would you consider hiring me on a 30-day trial period to prove that I could do the job?

(Dahlstrom 42)

1. What would my key responsibilities be?
2. How many and who would I supervise? To whom would I report?
3. Does the staff maintain a team spirit?
4. Will on-job training be required for a new product?
5. Can you describe a typical day?
6. Was the last person in this job promoted? What is the potential for promotion?
7. How would you describe the atmosphere here? Formal and traditional?  
Energetically informal?
8. Where is the company headed? Merger? Growth?
9. What would my first project be?
10. What type of training would I receive?
11. What resources would I have to do the job?
12. How much travel, if any, is required?
13. (If a contract job) Do you anticipate extensive overtime to finish the project on schedule?
14. Where does this position fit into the company's organizational structure?
15. What results would you expect from my efforts and on what timetable? What improvements need to be made on how the job has been done until now?

(Kennedy 115)

## INTERVIEWERS LOOK FOR ...

**A lot of facts in a short time.** The interviewer needs enough information to make a decision about referring you for future interviews.

**Your personality.** First impressions are important. They tell a lot about your poise, ability to communicate and social skills.

**Your interests.** What you want to do and why you want to do it. Your career goals, interest in continuing education, geographic preference and willingness to relocate.

**Your qualifications.** Grade point average is important. So are work experience, extracurricular activities, leadership role and hobbies. Examples of past behaviors and performance in these areas is the best indicator of your future success.

**How to help your chances.** Take the time to ask one or two questions. At the end of the interview, offer relevant information that you may not have had an opportunity to bring up earlier – be brief.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

**Don't expect instant action.** Normally, interviewers are not on campus to hire anybody on the spot. Their job is to screen candidates for future interviews. Expect to have to wait and then be pleased when an immediate response comes.

**What happens next?** Even when interviewers are impressed with students, they will rarely make promises. That's because they must review your qualifications with the hiring managers before making commitments. If they agree, you will get an invitation to an interview at a company location.

**What if the answer is no?** Sometimes it's obvious from the interview that the student's qualifications and the company's opportunities don't match. In such a case the interviewer will tell you candidly and courteously that there will be no further action.

## WHAT TO WEAR AND WHAT NOT TO WEAR

### MEN

Suit and tie is still your best bet. Blazer, shirt, dress pants (no jeans) with tie is also acceptable. Do not wear tennis shoes or white socks with either of the above. The clean-cut and shaven look is usually fail-safe. If the company allows, you can always grow your beard or hair back after you have gotten the job. If your ears are pierced, do not wear earrings to an interview. If you have any doubts as to appropriate dress, contact the employer and ask.

## WOMEN

As with men, a suit is your best bet. A suit is always a more powerful statement. A dress and jacket are fine but are softer. Choose a “conservative business suit or dress with a jacket. The hemline should be mid-knee or below. Complement your outfit with medium-heeled pumps and nontextured hosiery. Avoid open-toed, mule, or sling-back shoes. Remember...an interview is not the place to show your flair for fashion. You’re there to get a job, not make a fashion statement.

## **STORYTELLING YOUR WAY TO A JOB (Kennedy 33)**

Prepare for all your interviews – not just *Behavior-Based Interviews* – by recalling incidents from your past experience that back up your claims of skills and other qualifications. Work on these stories as though you’re going to present them in a speech before hundreds of people. Make them fun, interesting – even exciting! Few of us are natural-born storytellers, but do your best to tell a good story.

Experts claim the way to ace behavior-based interviews is to prepare, rehearse, and deliver one- to two-minute stories about your skills, experience, and accomplishments that relate directly to the job.

## **DO Make Your Job Interviews Real ShowStoppers (Kennedy-Quick Reference Card)**

- Do your research. Demonstrate your interest in the company by showing your knowledge of it – and of the skills it wants.
- Find out what role they want you to play. Ask, as soon as possible, about the scope of the job and ideal person’s qualifications for it. Then use specifics to describe your matching skills.
- Focus on your skills and other factors that will make you immediately productive. Employers no longer wait for you to practice for six months before delivering benefits to them.
- Present the appropriate image for the part you seek. Walk it, talk it, and look it – and you have a better chance to be it.
- Master a 1- or 2-minute commercial in response to “tell me about yourself” requests.
- Rehearse answers to likely (and unlikely) questions.
- Prepare a list of job-related (not self-interest) questions – and ask them.

- Concentrate on what you can do for the company, not on what the company can do for you.
- Present any potentially damaging information in the most favorable light.
- Act confident and friendly – establish eye contact, smile, and address the interviewer by title and name (Ms. Smith or Dr. Harrison, for example – don't use first names).

**DON'T Close Your Show  
In The First Act  
(Kennedy – Quick Reference Card)**

- Don't be late. And don't sit down before you're asked to – or put anything in your mouth – gum, cigarettes, toothpicks, or breath mints.
- Don't audition without having researched the company and rehearsed your script.
- Don't try to dazzle an interviewer who screens (like a human resource specialist); behave conservatively. Save your sparkle for the manager to whom you will report.
- Don't chatter to fill a silence – you may nervously blurt out harmful information. Ask a question: “Would you rather hear about my skills in A or B?”
- Don't stray from the point with nonmarketing talk; for instance, if a company's agenda is a six-month contract offer, don't blather on about your loyalty.
- Don't bring up negatives or bad-mouth previous employers.
- Don't fail to develop a storytelling knack – true stories that support your claims of relevant skills.
- Don't ask about salary, benefits, and perks too soon. Wait until you're offered a job or you're “talking deal”.
- Don't leave without asking when a decision will be made and if you can call back to check progress on the decisions.

**SOME FINAL ADVICE  
(Dahlstrom 46)**

**Don't be lazy.**

Looking for a job is a full-time occupation. It's not something you do a little today and some more next week. If you want a good job, you have to work at getting that job.

**Don't ignore any job leads.**

Nearly half the people who find jobs get them through referrals. If your mother, your buddy, your guidance counselor, or an old work chum tells you where there's a job opening – put that company on your hit list and go after the job.

**Don't interview your favorite companies first.**

When you first begin to interview, you're going to be nervous, unprepared, and you're going to make a lot of mistakes.

**Don't get caught unprepared.**

Most people who go for an interview have done their homework. They are prepared. They know which questions the manager is apt to ask. They have intelligent answers.

**Don't bad-mouth anybody.**

Don't bad-mouth your old boss during the interview. The manager will see this as a sign of trouble. It says you're a complainer.

**Don't be a know-it-all.**

This is the kind of person who says, “yeah, but on my old job we did it this way —“To a manager, this is a person who's saying, “I do things my way.”

**Don't be a motor mouth.**

This is a person who never stops talking.

**Don't be pushy and don't beg for the job.**

Someone who's pushy is someone who's overly aggressive, bossy, or won't let go. To the manager, this is a sign that they'll have trouble working with you.

**Don't be a zombie.**

A zombie is someone who sits perfectly still watches, listens, hardly ever asks a question, and answers in the fewest words possible – usually “yes” or “no”. To the manager, this is a sign that you have no motivation or get up and go. It's also a warning sign that you'll have to be told what to do and when to do it, that you'll have to be watched, and your work might have to be checked.

**Don't be afraid to sell yourself.**

Sell yourself—muster a friendly outgoing personality. Explain how your skills and accomplishments have prepared you for this job.

**Don't forget to follow-up**

Make those follow-up telephone calls after you mail or email your resume and after you go on an interview. Follow-up works. It will give you the edge you need to outmaneuver the competition.

## **EXTRA TIPS**

*National Association of Colleges and Employers*

Learn as much as you can about the company beforehand – know its products and services, its profit margin, its management, its culture, its dress code, and anything else you can think of. Good sources are your career services office, a college or public library, the Internet, company literature, and even an informational interview with a current employee who could also be a WVU Tech alum.

Do practice interviews with a career services counselor, department faculty member, friend, and family members – even with yourself, in front of a mirror. Campus workshops are sponsored for these purposes and some even make videos of mock interviews to help improve your skills.

Think about how your experience in work, classes, and activities can relate to the position you are seeking.

Allow plenty of time to get to the interview and, if possible, visit the site in advance and time how long it takes you to get there.

Plan your interview attire in advance and make sure your clothing is pressed, your shoes shined, and your hair and nails are well groomed.

Bring extra copies of your resume, academic transcripts and a list of references.

Speak slowly and clearly while maintaining eye contact and don't be afraid to pause for a moment to collect your thoughts before answering questions.

Be honest. Don't try to cover up mistakes. Instead, focus on how you learned from them.

Be assertive. Remember that the interview is a way to learn if the position is right for you.

Ask the interviewer(s) for a business card. Send a thank-you note or email message as soon as possible.

Don't forget to ask about next steps in the hiring process.

**Be Positive!!!!**

## **THE GROUP INTERVIEW**

*National Association of Colleges and Employers*

In addition to individual interviews, some employers arrange for candidates to meet with several staff members simultaneously. Success in this situation often hinges on the same strategies as used in individual interviews. In a group interview, a candidate must be able to:

- Demonstrate awareness of the company and its goals
- Elaborate effortlessly on his or her resume
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Make good eye contact (first with the panelist who asks a question and then with the other panelists)

## **INTERVIEW CHECKLIST**

*National Association of Colleges and Employers*

### **BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**

*Research:* Employers are interested in candidates who ask intelligent questions and are able to engage in conversation based on what they know about the organization.

*Practice:* Do practice interviews. Employers prize communication skills in job candidates, and the interview is your opportunity to showcase your verbal skills, so be prepared.

*Be prompt and prepared:* Arrive 10 minutes early. Bring extra copies of your resume, academic transcripts, your list of references, your list of questions for the interviewer and samples of your work (portfolio) if applicable.

*IMPORTANT NOTE:* If for any reason you cannot make the interview, notify the employer as far in advance as possible. Don't be a no-show. The recruitment industry is smaller than you think, especially in specialized fields.

### **DURING THE INTERVIEW**

*Act professionally:* Dress, grooming and a firm handshake count. Make a good first impression!

*Converse:* Don't have the interview turn into an interrogation. Answer the interviewers questions thoroughly but ask questions throughout the process. Remember, the purpose of the interview is for each of you to learn about the other.

*Be enthusiastic:* A positive attitude goes a long way. Let the interviewer know you are a go-getter and are excited about the possibility of working for their company.

## **AFTER THE INTERVIEW**

*Follow-up:* Collect business cards and promptly send thank-you notes. Keep the note brief, but reiterate your interest in the position if you are, in fact, interested.

*Review your performance:* Immediately following the interview jot down key components – Record the names of interviewers and other persons you met – Write down what (and when) the next agreed step will be – List important details you want to remember. Finally, assess your own performance and note ways to improve.

*Evaluate:* Determine if this position is right for you. Did the job description match your interests and abilities? Did employees seem enthusiastic about their work? Did you like the management style? Did this seem like a good place to work? Did the organization's culture and values match your own? A good fit will lead to a more successful, fulfilling career for both you and the employer.