

Step 1:
Getting Started:

"How To" Tips
to Prepare for
Your Job Interview



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GETTING STARTED: AN OVERVIEW OF JOB SEARCH AND NETWORKING TIPS

SELF-ASSESSMENT: YOUR SKILLS INVENTORY

- ✓ Because our jobs and technology are changing so rapidly, we need to acquire new technical and professional skills to be prepared to meet new challenges in the workplace. **Doing a self-assessment is like doing an inventory of those acquired skills.**
- ✓ Self-assessment is a means of identifying and understanding the skills, strengths, and abilities you've developed over the years. With that understanding, you'll be better "equipped" for the interview.
- ✓ Each time you update your resume, you're doing a mini self-assessment.
- ✓ Complete the informal exercise called **"GETTING STARTED: A SELF-ASSESSMENT SNAPSHOT."**
- ✓ If you're interested in a formal self-assessment tool, pick up a copy of ***"WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE WORKBOOK"*** by Richard Bolles. This workbook is an excellent self-assessment tool. Cost: \$9.95.
- ✓ Identify your department's **"ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE"** - the way they "do things" in the department - see if your skills and work style – and your department's culture – are compatible or mismatched.



NETWORKING OVERVIEW

- ✓ Exploring new career options should be an on going process.
- ✓ People love to talk about themselves - ask successful people to tell you about their jobs and career histories. You'll gain a better understanding of what it takes to succeed in the City.
- ✓ Tell people you're interested in a new job or career change; ask about, vacancies or new positions.



GETTING STARTED: AN OVERVIEW OF JOB SEARCH AND NETWORKING TIPS

RESUME OVERVIEW

- ✓ The best time to revise your resume is **ALL THE TIME** - this should be an on-going activity!
- ✓ You should always have a current resume on a CD or thumb drive because you never know when a perfect job opportunity may come along. (If your resume is routinely updated, you won't have to produce one under pressure to meet an application deadline.)
- ✓ Update your resume at least once a year, or add new information when you have gained a new skill or met a significant milestone.
- ✓ On a computer disk, have several versions of your resume that emphasize different skill areas.



CHARTING YOUR CAREER GOALS

- ✓ Make a list of career goals that are reasonable and measurable within a specific timetable.
- ✓ Identify strategies to reach goals and implement them.
- ✓ Identify barriers and obstacles and how you plan to eliminate them.



UNDERSTANDING THE “BIG PICTURE”

Q: How can I learn to do well in interviews?

A: **Do self-assessments, research, homework, and practice sessions.**

Q: How can I prepare?

A: **Look at what is stressed in the Job Bulletin; anticipate what types of questions they’ll ask based on the Bulletin and your research; and find out what’s been asked in past interviews.**

Q: What is luck when interviewing?

A: **Luck is when preparation meets opportunity.**

FOUR QUALITIES EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR WHEN HIRING OR PROMOTING

- **Technical Skills & Subject Areas of Expertise**, such as computer language, graphic design, or accounting, Master Gardener skills, Master Electrician skills.
- **Functional / Transferable Skills & Competencies** are skills you use in all areas of your life, such as good communication skills, leadership skills, good writing skills, good interpersonal skills or ability to perform under pressure.
- **Strengths** are “intrinsic and hardwired” – something you’re born with. For example, some people are born artistic, musical, or detail oriented.
- **Traits** are words that describe your work style and who you are as a person – the words people use to describe you, like patient, dependable, generous, enthusiastic, flexible or independent.

BOTTOM LINE

City Departments aren’t just looking for people with just Technical Skills; they’re looking for people who have Technical Skills and Functional / Transferable Skills.

**The so-called “Soft Skills” aren’t soft anymore!
They are now “equal partners” with Technical Skills.**

GETTING STARTED: A QUICK SELF-ASSESSMENT SNAPSHOT

Complete this exercise to give you a “thumb-nail” self-assessment and to help you prepare for interview questions.

In the spaces below, look at your answers from the previous page and make a list of your Top Ten Skills, Strength, and/or Traits:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Next, ask your friends and/or co-workers to list your skills, strengths, and attributes. Write down their answers below:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Now, go back and rank these words on a scale of 1-10, based on how you feel your co-workers and friends would rank you. #1 is the word that best describes you; #10 is the word that least describes you.

Pick the six best from both lists to describe yourself:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW: THE BASICS

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ **Research!!** Read documents such as Annual Reports. You can find these on the Web. Know something about the history and accomplishments of the department or business



- ✓ **Dress Code:** appropriate to the type of job
 - Dress up a notch or two above the normal work attire
 - No casual clothes like jeans, t-shirts, or sport shoes, unless you are going to take a working test during the interview.
 - No colorful stockings or wild shoes
 - Fingernails should be well groomed – no claws, patterns or wild colors.
 - Don't wear aftershave or perfume – someone on the panel may be allergic.
 - Avoid wearing yellow & black together – they're the standard colors of danger



- ✓ **Rehearse and Rest:** Rehearse for the interview and get enough rest



- ✓ **Location:** Know of the location & time of the interview



- ✓ **Make Sure You Have Supplies:** Take pen, pencil, and a notebook. This way you can jot down keywords while the questions are being asked.



BEFORE THE INTERVIEW: THE BASICS

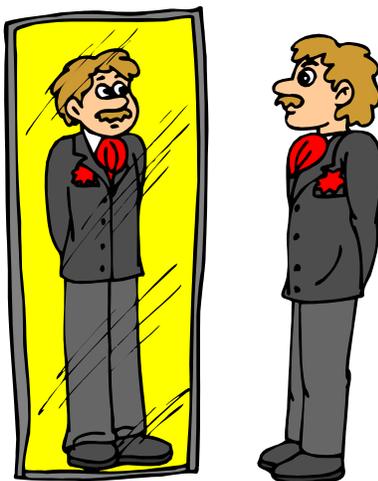
CREATE SKILL CARDS – OR “GROWN-UP FLASH CARDS”

- ✓ On 3 x 5 cards, write down each of your skills and a situational example using the skill.
- ✓ This is your “prompt” to remember all your best skills and demonstrated expertise and mastery of the skill.
- ✓ **Before each interview, go over your cards. Get comfortable describing your skills. PRACTICE - PRACTICE – PRACTICE!!**
- ✓ Update your “FLASH CARDS” every time you upgrade or learn new skills. And, you'll use your “FLASH CARDS” when you update your resume, too.



PRACTICE DOING MOCK INTERVIEWS

- ✓ Get friends and/or family to help you
- ✓ Devise a set of interview questions based on your research.
- ✓ If you can get through a Mock Interview with spouses, children, and friends without breaking into the giggles, you're doing well!
- ✓ Use a video camera to tape your Mock Interview. You'll learn a lot about how you interview.
- ✓ If all else fails, answer interview questions while looking into a mirror.



“TOP TEN” BEFORE-THE-INTERVIEW TIPS IN A NUTSHELL

- 1. Research the company or department.**
- 2. Know what skills you can offer the employer.**
- 3. Do your research, homework, and mock interviews.**
- 4. Prepare your skills “Flash Cards”.**
- 5. Have ready a pen and notebook paper to take with you.**
- 6. Proper business attire – whatever is appropriate to the job.**
- 7. Know the time and place of the interview appointment.**
- 8. Set your alarm extra early.**
- 9. Get enough sleep the night before.**
- 10. The day before, eat protein, veggies, and good carbs – this is the food that will fuel you during the interview. On the morning of the Interview, have a balanced breakfast (something nourishing - NOT a triple latte and a muffin) and don't eat right before the interview.**

AS YOU GET TO THE INTERVIEW: THE DOS

AS YOU GET TO THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ When does the Interview start? The moment you get off the elevator. **Why?**

An Interview is just like an audition – and like any good actor, you have to get “in character”.



- ✓ As you walk in, greet reception staff, be courteous and make sure you don't look nervous in front of the receptionist. **Why?**

courteous and make sure

Sometimes the Reception Staff are asked how candidates behaved while waiting.



- ✓ Before you get called into the Interview, act respectfully and with confidence. **Why?**

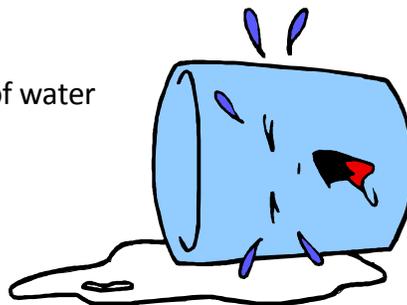
Same as above – you never know who is watching you



- ✓ Stay focused (use your Flash Cards!) and don't engage in chit chat with other job candidates. **Why?**

Your competition may try to psyche you out and play mind games with you.

- ✓ Take your own water bottle!! Avoid accepting a **glass** of water to avoid unnecessary and embarrassing spills.



DURING THE INTERVIEW

1. DRESS APPROPRIATELY

Dress conservatively, neatly, and tastefully. Remember to go slightly dressier than is the normal working attire for the workplace. No grubbies! No perfume or cologne!

2. ARRIVE ON TIME

Nothing is more damaging to you than being late for your appointment. Allow yourself at least an additional half hour of travel time.

3. LISTEN

Show an interest in what the interviewer is saying. Be attentive, thoughtful and look directly at the interviewer.

4. BE SPECIFIC

It is not enough to say you like people or like to work with your hands. Give examples of how you have **used** your skills. The interviewer wants to know the details.

5. BE PREPARED!!

KNOW YOUR STRONGEST ASSETS. SHOW HOW YOUR SKILLS & ABILITIES RELATE TO THE JOB AND HOW THEY WILL BENEFIT THE WORKPLACE.

BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS WHAT YOU'VE DONE IN THE PAST. THIS IS A STRONG INDICATION OF HOW YOU'LL PERFORM IN THE FUTURE.

GIVE EXAMPLES THAT SHOW YOUR VALUE.

MAKE THEM BELIEVE YOU'RE "THE ANSWER" TO THEIR PROBLEM.

6. BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT YOUR:

Key Accomplishments

Technical and Transferable Skills

Management Style

Unique Selling Points

Personal and Professional Strengths & Traits

DURING THE INTERVIEW: TIPS

- ↪ The average Interview Answer can run from 1 – 3 minutes. Try not to rush too fast – you’ll forget some important details.
- ↪ It’s OK to say, “I’m going to take a moment to fully organize my thoughts” and then to jot down some keywords before you answer.
- ↪ If you “choke” – you KNOW you know the answer but can’t remember, say “Can we return to this question at the end of the interview?”

The panel knows you’re choking, and sympathize because they’ve been there. They will be impressed how professionally you’re handling it.



- ↪ If they haven’t asked the one question you wanted to be asked, or feel you haven’t “given your best stuff”, ask the panel if you can make a closing statement.
- ↪ Always remember that the interview session consists of two way communication
- ↪ Know what you want and what you can offer - remember to stress your skills and strengths and “connect the dots” between your strengths and the employer’s needs.

And Once More with Feeling:

Make Sure You Can Talk about Yourself in these Terms:

Technical and Transferable Skills

Personal and Professional Strengths & Traits

Key Accomplishments

Management Style

Unique Selling Points



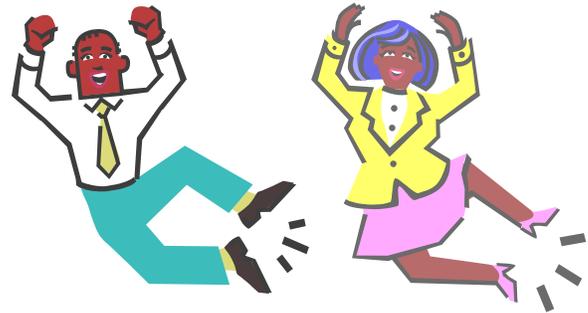
AFTER THE INTERVIEW: TIPS

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ Make sure to thank the interviewer(s)



- ✓ Remember to congratulate yourself for having the courage to go to the interview!



- ✓ Send a thank you note to the interviewer(s). Say words to the effect of:

“Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my skills in _____
 _____ and _____.”

Merci



Diky

Köszönettel

Obrigado!



MORE INTERVIEWING DO'S AND DON'TS

<u>Do's:</u>	<u>DON'TS</u>
✓ Look your interviewer in the eye when you answer. Look alert and attentive. You'll appear focused and sharp.	✓ If interviewing for a job in your current department, don't assume you won't have to answer questions in detail because they already know you.
✓ Do some research ahead of time for information on the employer, their goods and services.	✓ Don't schedule more than one interview per morning or afternoon.
✓ To help answer interview questions, jot down notes to use as "reminder prompts."	✓ Don't interview the interviewer. You won't get the job if you dominate the interview.
✓ Be aware of your body language. DO sit straight, but comfortable and relaxed.	✓ Don't let your body language work against you. Don't slump or sit too straight
✓ Be well-groomed and appropriately dressed - appear poised and alert	✓ Don't be vague. Your answers should be clear and concise.
✓ It's natural to be nervous; the interviewer is nervous, too. Also, remember to BREATHE .	✓ Don't talk about personal, financial, religious, political, or domestic affairs
✓ Be prompt -- arrive 5 minutes early. If you're delayed, call to reschedule	✓ Don't volunteer negative information about yourself.
✓ Be truthful -- provide honest and positive answers to interview questions.	✓ Don't stress your need for the job -- stress why they need you. It is the employer's need that is relevant here, not yours.
✓ Stress your qualifications and abilities as you answer each question. Emphasize your stability, attendance record, safety consciousness and experience.	✓ Don't act arrogant or know-it-all. If you don't get the job, you still want to make a good impression. Their first choice may not work out, or they could refer you to others.
✓ Emphasize positive qualities; don't volunteer negative ones. If asked to "ID" a weakness, tell them how you overcame a PAST weakness, such as learning how to use the computer.	✓ Don't call interviewers by their first name. Address them as "Mr." or "Ms." – unless instructed to by the interviewer(s).
✓ Be prepared to ask questions - do some homework to know what to ask. A smart question will make a good impression.	✓ Don't act egotistical or over-confident; stress your qualifications in a professional and respectful manner.
✓ Be professional at all times -- even if the interviewer isn't.	✓ Don't get downhearted if you don't get the 1st job you interviewed for. It doesn't mean you're a failure. There'll be other interviews.
✓ Consider writing a thank you letter or note after an interview, and BE ORIGINAL	✓ Don't act like the world owes you a living.

