

**Frontenac
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Resource
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**INTERVIEW
READINESS**



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INTERVIEW POINTERS

Did you know...

that “the interview is a mutual exchange of information between an employer and a candidate for a position”.

(Cited from www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocecs/CRC/manual.html)

It is as important for you to determine if the prospective employer is whom you want to be employed with as it is for the prospective employer to determine if you are the right person for the position.

Intent:

- To develop a rapport and establish a good sense of character between you and interviewers.
- To determine if you are the “right match” for the position.
- To provide additional information to the prospective employer about your skills, experience and accomplishments.
- To reveal how you articulate your knowledge about the position and how your skills will meet the needs of the employer.
- To permit the employer an opportunity to assess your attitudes in terms of the company’s philosophy, goals, objectives and needs.
- To give you an opportunity to assess the employer and position by obtaining information about the position.

Style:

- **Telephone Interview**
 - o An interview conducted over the telephone. It may be one on one or it could be much like a conference call with two or three interviewers asking questions. If this is a surprise, ask the person to call back in 15 minutes. This will allow you to update yourself on certain aspects of the position.
- **One-on-One Interview**
 - o This is where there is one interviewer speaking with one candidate.
- **Panel or Board Interview**
 - o This is done with two or more persons. Keep good eye contact with the person asking questions but remember to look at the others as well.
- **Structured Interview**
 - o Every person is asked the same questions. The interviewers write down the answers given and then compare each answer when the interviews are finished.
- **Behavior-Based Interview**
 - o Behavior-based interviewing consists of asking questions which enable the interviewer to know how you have actually reacted or behaved in certain types of situations. What makes behavior-based interviews unique is that

each question must be answered with a specific example (Cited from “Interview Power - Tom Washington”).

- ***Second Interview***

- Sometimes after the first interview, the interviewers short-list candidates for the position. They then bring back “x” number of candidates for a more in depth interview and/or perhaps to have the candidate perform tasks that will prove their competence for the position.

Content:

- **Be Prepared!**

- Know your worth and value and relate how you would benefit the employer.
- Review your resume and cover letter to keep abreast of how you communicated the information that got you the interview.
- Express your accomplishments, desire and commitment to working.
- Be clear about how you have updated your skills and acquired experience in the field of work whether it be through success or challenging efforts.
- Be familiar with the organization that you have applied to and what they are all about. This way you will be better informed as to how to answer their questions.
- Be prepared for all types of questions, the purpose behind them and how you will answer them.

Neatness:

- Dress appropriately. Wear what people wear “on the job” to “fit” the position.
- Be clean and neat.
- Use the motto “**BE PREPARED**”
 - **Be on Time**
 - About 10 – 15 minutes early
 - It reduces anxiety
 - **Be Friendly and Courteous**
 - Be friendly and courteous to everyone
 - **Be Prepared for Questions**
 - Review and develop questions that may be asked and prepare answers for them so that you are ready to answer in a comfortable confident manner.
 - **Be Positive**
 - Demonstrate a positive attitude.
 - **Be Believable**
 - The tone in which you answer questions is as important as what you say.
 - Be sure not to talk too much. 50% is a good rule.

INTERVIEW PERKS AND PITFALLS

DO

- 👍 Do be prepared
- 👍 Do research the company
- 👍 Do bring extra resumes
- 👍 Do be on time
- 👍 Do dress appropriately
- 👍 Do maintain eye contact
- 👍 Do show you are a team player
- 👍 Do develop the right isms
(optimism, positivism, enthusiasm)
- 👍 Do be aware of your abilities,
knowledge and accomplishments

DON'T

- 👎 Don't emphasize money
- 👎 Don't be indecisive
- 👎 Don't criticize anyone
- 👎 Don't name drop
- 👎 Don't make excuses
- 👎 Don't be too aggressive
- 👎 Don't talk too much
- 👎 Don't wear perfume/cologne
- 👎 Don't dwell on a weakness. Explain
on a positive note how you recovered
from it.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND THEIR PURPOSE

Employers are interested in hiring you for your potential as much as for the skills you already have. Be honest, and stress your good qualities – employers can't guess if you don't tell them. Here are some questions employers often ask and the reasons why they ask them:

? Tell me about yourself?

Purpose: To find out your skills “fit” with the position in question.

? Why do you think you would like to work for our company?

Purpose: To see what you know about the company.

? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

Purpose: To see how well you know yourself.

? Where do you see yourself in five years?

Purpose: This is your opportunity to highlight your ambition and drive and commitment.

? What do you bring to this position?

Purpose: This is your chance to emphasize your unique qualities.

? This position requires initiative, time, management, multi-tasking and teamwork, give me an example in your last job where you demonstrated this quality.

Purpose: To find out how you work. Know your transferable skills!

BE PREPARED TO ASK THE EMPLOYER QUESTIONS TOO!!

MORE TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Take time to prepare and practice your answers. This gives you a competitive edge over others who have not done their homework.

EDUCATION

1. What were your most rewarding experiences in school?
2. What were your grades?
3. What were your outside activities?
4. What were your favourite classes? Why?

WORK EXPERIENCE

5. What did you like most about your previous job?
6. What did you accomplish in your last job?
7. What are some job disappointments you have had?
8. How much did you make in your last job?
9. Describe your previous boss.
10. Why did you leave your last job?
11. What's your most rewarding job so far?
12. Why have you changed jobs so often?

JOB RELATED QUESTIONS

13. What do you know about the type of work we do here?
14. How long would it take you to learn what we do?
15. How did you become interested in our industry?
16. How much money would you like to make, long term?
17. What would you like to know about us?
18. Why should we hire you?
19. How long would you stay with us?
20. Who can we contact as references?

PERSONAL QUALITIES

21. What do you see as your greatest strength?
22. What are areas in which you need to grow?
23. What do you see yourself doing in the next five years?
24. What things have you done on your job that makes you proud?
25. Describe your ideal job?
26. Do you prefer to work alone or in a group?
27. How is your health?

HOBBIES/OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

28. What are your hobbies and outside interests?
29. Outside of work, what experiences have impacted what you do?
30. Describe your lifestyle.

DRESSING APPROPRIATELY

Example: CRAFTS WAREHOUSE MANUFACTURING:

For Women:

- ‡ Basic dress
- ‡ Blouse & skirt
- ‡ Blouse & slacks
- ‡ Unsnagged hosiery
- ‡ Tailored shoes

For Men:

- ‡ Workmen's clothes
- ‡ Slacks/casual shirt
- ‡ Trimmed facial hair
- ‡ Clean work shoes

Example: CLERICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE

For Women:

- ‡ A conservative, skirted suit in a subdued color
- ‡ A solid colour shirt-waist dress with a blazer
- ‡ Neutral coloured hose
- ‡ Shined, closed-toe pumps

For Men:

- ‡ A conservative, two piece blue or gray
- ‡ Over-the-calf socks that are darker than the suit
- ‡ White/blue shirt
- ‡ A subdued silk tie of medium width
- ‡ Shined, conservative tie shoes

DEFINITE YES'S ARE:

- ☺ Clothes clean and pressed
- ☺ Bathed and use deodorant
- ☺ Brushed teeth & clean breath
- ☺ Polished shoes
- ☺ Clean and groomed hair
undone

ABSOLUTE NO'S ARE:

- ☹ Excessive jewelry
- ☹ Immodest hem or necklines
- ☹ String or bow tie
- ☹ Perfume or cologne
- ☹ Men's shirt with top two buttons

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK

(Always Use Discretion)

Winning Questions

Here are some questions that may be appropriate to ask. Review these questions before each interview and decide which ones apply to your situation.

1. Why was this position created?
2. What are the primary duties for the first six months?
3. What is the most urgent or difficult part of the job?
4. Why did the previous person in this position leave?
5. What are the expectations of the supervisor?
6. What freedom would I have in getting the job done?
7. Will you be notifying everyone when you have made your final decision?
8. Can you tell me about your performance appraisal system?
9. What do you see as my greatest strengths and weaknesses in terms of this position?
10. When will you be making your decision to fill this job?

Losing Questions

Poor questions deal with salary, benefits, vacation, or security. These self-centered questions indicate that you are more concerned about what's in it for you than what you can offer the company.

1. What about benefits?
2. When could I expect a promotion?
3. What happens after my probationary period?
4. How much money does the job pay?
5. How many holidays do I get?
6. Are you unionized?
7. Do you expect me to work overtime?
8. After the first day, can I wear what I want to work?
9. Who would I report to if I don't like my supervisor?
10. Where is the closest restaurant and how long would I get for lunch?

INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

Turn the interviewer's indecision to your advantage by doing these things:

1. REVIEW THE INTERVIEW

Take the employer's perspective. Ask questions like these: Did I show that I can solve their problem? Do they see me fitting into their organization? Am I compatible with the supervisor? What contributions can I make? What concerns do they have? What should we have discussed, but didn't?

2. DRAFT A BRIEF FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Forward a brief follow-up letter. Include some of these points in your letter: a) Express your interest. b) Show positive "matches" between what they want and what you have to offer. c) Refer to previous related experiences.

3. MAIL THE LETTER TWO DAYS AFTER INTERVIEW

Mailing it on the same day makes you appear too anxious. Later than two days, you lose impact.

4. MAKE A FOLLOW-UP CALL

Two days after the person gets your letter, call to express your interest in the job, introduce a new point about why you qualify, and arrange a second meeting.

Effective follow-up may help you get a job offer. Follow-up may even result in the position being tailored to your strengths. If nothing more, the interviewer may refer you to someone else.

OVERVIEW: PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Helpful Tips on Interview Skills
July 1998

Interview Tips that Help Get You A Job

Remember...

You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

During the interview, you are judged on your appearance and how you present yourself. The employer has seen your resume, so they are already aware of your experience and education. Now they are looking for a personality to go along with your qualifications.



the job may depend on the dynamics between you and the interviewer



spend time on your grooming and dress appropriately



update your resume regularly and know yourself well



be yourself, uncover your personality and your character



clearly express your skills and your attributes



don't worry about having limited experience; let them know that you learn quickly and will grow in the job



be it your 1st or your 50th interview, interviews make most people nervous



expect to make mistakes and correct yourself when you do



get there a little early, so you can sit down and relax. Besides, it looks great!

Advance...

Preparation can give you the edge



dress for the interview – when in doubt, dress on the conservative side



take time to find out about the business and its services or product before an interview



be on time or a few minutes early



know the interviewer's name; greet him/her politely with a handshake



maintain eye contact appropriately throughout the interview



have something to offer his/her company



let the interviewer take the initiative, but elaborate where possible



refrain from using slang expressions, jargons or attempts at being funny



feel free to ask questions



leave promptly when the interviewer indicates that the meeting is over – be sure to thank her/him for her/his time



shake hands firmly and with confidence

The Questions...

Forewarned is forearmed

Employers are interested in hiring you for your potential as such as for the skills you already have. Be honest but stress your good qualities – employers can't guess if you don't tell them.



Why do you think you would like to work for our company? To see what you know about the company and if you can see fit



What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? To see how well you know yourself



Where do you see yourself in five years? This is your opportunity to highlight your ambition and drive



What do you feel you would bring to this position? This is your chance to emphasize your unique qualities



This position requires [initiative, time, management, multi-tasking...insert something relevant to the position.] give me an example in your last job where you demonstrated this quality. Know your transferable skills!

Be prepared to ask the employer questions too!!