

## **Interview Preparation:**

Employers are continually amazed at the lack of an applicant's preparation regarding the company and the position for which they are interviewing. Remember that the amount of preparation you have done is the first key to showing a sincere interest in the position.

Gain the competitive edge in the first interview so that you can increase the probability of getting the job that you want.

Just as you have prepared for presentations and meetings, keep in mind that "winging it" almost never works and can destroy your one opportunity for a better career opportunity.

To prepare our candidates for a forthcoming interview, CK Mahoning has prepared the following information compiled from many years of successful interviewing. Please take time to review this material before your interview. Remember, a successful interview begins with preparation and practice.

## **Preparation:**

The goal of any interview is to show an employer that you have the skills, background, and ability to do the job and that you can successfully fit into the organization and its culture. The interview is also your opportunity to gather information about the job, the organization, and future career opportunities to determine if the position and work environment are right for you.

It is a mistake to assume that most employers make their selection on merit alone. Personality, confidence, enthusiasm, a positive outlook, and excellent interpersonal and communication skills count heavily in the selection process. To receive an offer of employment, the skilled and well-rounded person that you are needs to be conveyed through the entire interview.

## **What You Should Know About an Employer:**

You as the applicant should know the answers to the following questions prior to the first meeting with the potential employer: (Your CK Mahoning recruiter can help you to obtain this information if you are unable to locate it.)

**First, CK Mahoning recommends you visit the company's corporate (or division) website to obtain the following information:**

1. What products or services does the company offer?
2. When was the company established?
3. What is the approximate sales volume?
4. What has been their growth in volume and market share?
5. What is their marketplace? Who is their competition? Who are their customers?
6. Is the company a centralized or decentralized organization?

Additionally, there are a variety of informative publications from which you can compile information to answer the above questions. Those of most benefit are (but not exclusively):

- Dun & Bradstreet
- Hoover's
- The Corporation's Annual Report
- Thomas Register of American Manufacturers
- Wall Street Journal
- Standard Industrial Classification Manual (SIC Codes)

## The Interview:

You have two main goals during your interview:

1. Impress upon the employer that you can make a positive contribution to their organization.
2. Impress upon the employer that you will be a compatible member of their team. Keep in mind that both you and the employer are selling and evaluating each other.

### INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

1. Always arrive on time. If you are going to be late or cannot make the appointment, call your CK Mahoning recruiter or the employer directly... Immediately.
2. Dress in business attire (we recommend a suit for both male and female candidates). Most people do best by dressing conservatively.
3. In the presentation, the employer will ask questions to determine if your qualifications fit the company. This is the opportunity to relate qualifications as they fit the position, and ask questions about the company.
4. When asked a question, you should be brief, but positive. Elaborate on points of mutual interest or where they directly relate to your fit for the position.
5. The easiest way to help the interview flow is to ask strategic questions about the company and the position. Have questions ready from your research.
6. Be cautious in explanations for leaving past jobs. (Don't bad mouth employers)
7. You should always be positive and enthusiastic (even if you think the interview is not going well.) Show enthusiasm about the company and the position.
8. **Honesty is always the best policy.**
9. It is your responsibility to establish an immediate level of rapport so that you may communicate comfortably. Your goal is to get the interviewer to identify with you. (Remember, people like people who are like themselves.) Uncover the real needs of the interviewer.
10. If you are invited to lunch or dinner, it is recommended that you do not select hard to manage foods, or sloppy dishes. (CKM recommends avoiding alcoholic beverages.
11. Listen for "buzz words." Every company has them. Present these buzz words back to your interviewer. (This gives the impression of a working knowledge of the company's system.)
12. Be aware of your posture and body language - they communicate attitude and impressions.
13. Manage the interview but do not take charge. Instead, establish an equal status - neither subordinate nor dominant.