

# THAT OTHERS MAY RISE

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## Interview Tips

The goal is to represent yourself as well and as completely as you can, as most interviewers want to know you, what you did, results, and see your attitude. This is your chance, it's up to you. Also, this is your chance to ask questions to see if they are a fit for you.

### **Before the Interview:**

- Know the job you are interviewing for. Yes, people do walk into interviews unsure of what they exactly applied for, go back and look at the job announcement.
- Research the company or agency you are applying to, even a simple lookup on the web. Take the time, know why your skills, knowledge's and abilities fit the agency / job / company.
- Research if the agency / company has any policies on interviews.

### **I. When the Call or Email Comes for the Interview**

- a. **Ask Questions:** Get the info, what, where, when, who and how if possible. Ensure to write it down, repeat the info, and ask if there are any special reporting instructions.
- b. **Ask Who or How Many:** How many people will sit on the board and who (positions). Look anybody up on the internet as this can help you set the stage in your mind to prepare properly. If you don't get the info, it is no biggie, you can still prep well for the interview.
- c. **Ask about the Interview:** How will the interview will be conducted?

**Note:** The person calling may have limited information, so don't get frustrated if they don't have all the answers.

### **II. Prepping for the Interview:** It is the same as writing a resume your prep should be as specific to the job as you can get it.

- a. **Reuse Your List:** Remember the job accomplishment list you accomplished for the resume? Now is a good time to pull it out for review, many of the items on the list should apply.
- b. **Break Down Each Accomplishment:** Use a format like **Situation / Scene, Task, Action** (yours), **Result (STAR)**. Also, good to use this format for your resume.
  - i. **Situation / Scene:** What is happening, what is the problem that needs to be fixed?
  - ii. **Task:** What needs to be done by you?
  - iii. **Action:** What did you do?
  - iv. **Results:** What was the end result?
  - v. **Example:**
    1. Situation: Clinic Clerks underperforming and unsure of duties (What did you see or what was occurring?)
    2. Task: Determine the issues behind the symptoms. (What needed to be done?)
    3. Action: Conducted an analysis, facilitated work groups, and compiled a survey to determine end results.... (what you did?)
    4. Result: Resulted in a focused increased training program with 60% of clerks demonstrating higher level knowledge and skills with 95% Service Chief satisfaction in only two weeks
  - vi. You can use the **STAR** format for any question and never be surprised. All you have to do is come up with approximately 6-8 different scenarios, construct STAR around each one, and you are ready for questions. However, you must rehearse, rehearse, rehearse, and you MUST say it OUT LOUD don't just think it in your head. If you don't you are fooling yourself, practice, it's worth the time as it's your career, impacts every aspect of your life, and it is your future... **TAKE THE TIME** and If I didn't say it Before, **Say it OUT LOUD** to yourself or anyone who will listen!!!
  - vii. Answers don't need to be long-winded, be precise answer the question, one to two (1-2) minutes answers are usually good.
  - viii. Bring your notes with you or use them on the phone.

- c. **Location:** Know the interview location and if feasible, do a dry run by driving to the area and find the exact location / office. Check parking, entry procedures, etc. a day early.
- d. **Prepare a Mini-Portfolio:** Nothing stops you from bringing along, emailing, faxing, etc. a letter / paper / etc. covering your unique talents and desire for the position. Your cover letter may not have covered it all. Here is your chance to provide the interview team with lasting thoughts on paper. Think of it as, an abridged version of a portfolio, highlighting “why they should hire YOU over the other candidates.” (some folks create a “*spiral bound*” copy to give to each interviewer). List accomplishments, highlight unique points about you.

- i. **Things to Consider Including:**

- 1. **Introduction:** Recent position, Motivation for the position.
- 2. **Letters of Recommendation.**
- 3. **Examples of Work Products.**
- 4. **List Honors and Recognitions.**
- 5. **Pictures:** Pictures of you doing the work you are applying for.
- 6. **Presentation:** Put it all in a nice folder / binder with your name on the front.  
**Note:** The amount of material will vary on the job you are applying for and the level of the position **but bring something that makes you stand out.**

### III. The Day of the Interview

- a. **Dress the Part:** No matter the job, pressed and clean clothes, appropriate clean shoes. Dress should be specific to the work being performed, but it is better to dress up for the interview vice dress down. Even if over the phone, dress the part, feel the part.
- b. **Don't Over Do It:** Easy on the cologne / perfume, and jewelry. No headphones.
- c. **Be Early:** Ensure you know where (see above), check traffic, be early even if you have to wait in the parking lot or coffee shop for a little bit. It is a good time to go over your notes.
- d. **Arrival:** Show up to the actual interview location approximately 15 minutes early, be polite and ask where you can wait.  
**Note: If by Phone / Video:** Confirm the number and ensure you know how the video / media equipment operates a day before the interview.
- e. **Materials:** Bring a neat tablet and pen for jotting down any notes.

### IV. Meeting the Interviewers

- a. **Interviewers:** When first meeting the interviewer(s) introduce yourself, always be respectful and courteous. Write down names if you didn't get them earlier. Look everyone in the eye, but don't stare them down, its not that type of event.
- b. **Mini-Portfolio / Letter:** Now is a good time to hand out your portfolio / letter / paper to each interviewer, tell them what it is and what is in it (keep it short).
- c. **Intro / Questions:** Most likely the interviewers will explain the process and ask if you have any clarification questions. If you do, then ASK! But also, this is not the time for twenty questions, keep it short and concise. Also, ask if it is OK to jot down notes as they ask questions and if you may refer to any notes you brought along.

### V. Interview Questions:

- i. Since you already practiced **OUT LOUD** this is the easy part.
- ii. Listen to the question, ask any clarification questions or ask to repeat the question if needed. Many of the questions could be performance based, as in how you have handled a certain situation in the past, provide an example.
- iii. Remember short, concise and to the point answers. Always use the **STAR format**, as applicable. One to two (1-2) minutes usually works for an answer.
- iv. Look at the interviewers as you answer, divide your time equally amongst them.
- v. What happens if they ask you a question you don't know? Don't BS, pause, think then tell them up front that you don't know that answer, BUT provide a best answer that

might fit. Example: I'm not sure of that specific technique or action, but what it means to me is this...Again, short and concise, rambling doesn't improve a bad answer. But an answer is better than total silence.

vi. Different Type of Interviews Emphasis Points:

1. In-Person: Look sharp, good eye contact, good posture, read their visual cues.
2. Video: Same as In-person, but also remember there may be a delay in sound; know where the camera is so you can look at the camera, and also reading body language may be a little harder.
3. Telephone: This can be harder in that you can't read any body language. Also ensure they know when you are finished answering a question. The good part is that you can keep as many notes around you to make sure you answer questions in totality.

**VI. Ending the Interview**

- a. **Finally.** Let the interviewers wrap it up. More than likely they will ask if you have any questions for them. Ask your questions and provide a closing statement.
  - i. Now is the time to show them your interest in the position. Consider asking what some of the initial priorities of the position are that they see you would need to tackle first.
  - ii. It is OK to ask when and how they would notify you of selection for the position.
- b. Wrap it in a bow. Have a wrap-up statement about your interest and talents and why you are the good choice for their team!

**VII. Follow-up After**

- a. Send a Thank You Note or email to those you came in contact with during the interview.
- b. Remember, even if you aren't selected, many times an initial selection doesn't work out. Don't let your ego get in the way, if you want the job, then want the job.