LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

Your Interview Roadmap

THE MUST-HAVE GUIDE FOR NAILING YOUR NEXT INTERVIEW

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Table of Contents

Getting Ready	4
The Initial Screen	5
Dealing With Questions About Salary Expectations	5
Too Much, Too Little, About Right	6
Arranging For The Interview	8
Preparing For The Interview	9
Who Are You?	10
Some Big No-No's	11
On The Day Of The Interview	12
Encountering The Receptionist	13
Completing Their Application	14
Let The Games Begin	14
The Interview Itself	15
Other Types of Interviews	16
Group Interviews	19
Illegal or Inappropriate Questions You Might Be Asked	20
Curve Ball Questions	23
Positions Of Those Who Interview	24
The Sad Reality	24
Never Do The Following	25
Note-Taking	25
Your Turn To Ask Away	25
Show And Tell	26
Getting Clear On Next Steps	26
The Aftermath	27
A Final World	28
Appendices	29-34

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By Ara Norwood
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Thank you for purchasing the fourth and final eBook in my series on effective career management.

Hopefully you have already read the previous three eBooks in the series:

- Figuring It Out: What Do You Want to do When You Grow Up?
- Crafting A Winning Résumé
- The Hunt: How to Network Your Way To Your Next Job

If not, you may do well by obtaining them as they contain critical information which this last report builds on. So let's get started.

I am going to make some assumptions. I am going to assume you know your skills and interests to a high degree, that you have developed a solid résumé, and that you have been successful in networking and in locating job openings. As you get your résumé out there, you will eventually get called for an interview. Will you be ready? Regardless of whether the interview is conducted over the phone or in person, can you go in there confident that your performance will be as impressive as, say, your résumé was that got you the interview in the first place?

If you're unsure of how you will perform, this Interview Guide is for you. Read it carefully, internalize its principles, and you'll find that you will perform admirably in most any interview. I have taken the time to consider virtually every scenario you are likely to face in a job interview.

And why should you care about what I think? You should care because this report is written by an expert. I have years of experience both conducting interviews and being interviewed. I have even gone through interviews solely for the purpose of analyzing how good and bad interviews are done. Because I have had an insatiable curiosity as to what goes into the wide variety of interviews that take place, I have culled much information you simply won't find anywhere else.

* * * * *

The implications are clear: present a compelling résumé and perform brilliantly in the interview, and your odds of receiving a job offer skyrocket.

But note: just because you receive a job offer does not mean you should automatically accept it. Why not?

The offer may not be in line with your expectations. The comp plan may be a little too light. The benefits may be too Spartan. You may discover (during the course of the interview or through other means) that the company is not as stable as you were led to believe. Or, if you are interviewing with the person who will be your boss, you may find you do not like his or her style.

None of that is relevant, however, when it comes to performing brilliantly in the job interview. You must learn how to hit a home run every time you interview. Doing so will put you in a position of receiving job offers – yes, I am using the plural deliberately – which then enables you to make a choice based on the best offer you receive. Imagine the euphoria you'll feel being in such a position!

Getting Ready

Let's start with the basics.

Someone contacts you following your having sent in a résumé for a job opening. They want to schedule an interview. Chances may be very high that you are not 100% certain which company this is. You may have sent out many résumés to all sorts of organizations and simply can't recall immediately which company is now calling you. (For an additional tip on how to lessen the confusion regarding the various jobs you send résumés to, see **Appendix A**.) If you happen to know precisely which company is calling you, and you are familiar with which job they are calling about, then go ahead and take the call right then and there.

Otherwise, read on:

You don't want to sound confused. So when someone calls to discuss scheduling an interview or discussing your interest in a particular job and you're not absolutely sure about the job or the company, I recommend you ask them to wait just a moment so you can get situated. Then, get to a desk or at least get a pen and some paper and start out by obtaining the following information from the caller:

- Name of the caller
- Their title
- Their direct phone number
- Name of the company
- Location of the company
- Job Title they are calling about

You want their name for obvious reasons. For instance, when the call ends and you say goodbye, it's good form to use their name, as in, "Goodbye, Jennifer."

Knowing their title is also important as it's good to know if you are speaking to an internal recruiter, an external recruiter, or a hiring manager.

Obtaining their phone number is smart in the event that the call drops, and you should state that as the reason you are asking for it: "May I please get your direct number in the event that we get disconnected or the call drops?"

Knowing the name and location of the company will also be useful, because you might be in a position to pull up their web site on your computer, either immediately, or as soon as the call ends.

And, of course, the job title is important to know, if for no other reason to see if it's something that sounds like you are capable of performing the tasks associated with it. On occasion a recruiter will contact you for a job you never even applied for, and the job is a sales job and you are not cut out for sales – or something along those lines.

Obtaining that information as a bare minimum will put you in an informed state. You'll be a bit more confident than if you did not obtain it. So obtain it.

OK, let's continue our journey. . .

The Initial Screen

While it is possible they may be calling to schedule an interview for the near future, there is a more likely chance they wish to do a type of interview known as a phone screen. A phone screen, as the term implies, is a short, informal phone conversation that is meant to separate the desirable candidates from the undesirable ones. The recruiter in question will usually want to ask you about some basic things such as whether you are still employed, what you know about their company or about the job in question, ways in which your background enables you to do the job, and whether the commute is too long. They may also want to know if you have reliable transportation to work. And they may also try to screen for one troubling issue – compensation. So let's address that now.

Dealing with Questions About Salary Expectations

Many times an initial phone interview is done, perhaps even most times, one of the key questions that is on the mind of the caller is whether your salary expectations are in line with the range they have set for that particular job.

And there are several possibilities:

- Your expectations may possibly (though not likely) be *lower* than what they have in mind.

- Your expectations may be roughly in harmony with the range they have in mind.
- Your expectations may be higher than what they are able or willing to pay for the job in question.

There are also two other scenarios that are possible, both of which pertain to you, the job seeker, about your own compensation expectations:

- You have firm expectations that you are either *somewhat* locked into, or *very* locked into them (meaning you are inflexible on the salary range you are expecting.)
- You do not have firm expectations at all, and you are extremely flexible and willing to take most any reasonable amount the employer is offering.

Let's drill down a bit on these matters so you can effectively finesse your way through that part of the conversation.

Too much, too little, about right. . .

Let's start with the possibility that your salary expectations are wide open and that you have no particular range in mind you must earn. Perhaps your primary concern isn't about money. Perhaps most of your income needs are taken care of because you are single and living at home with your parents. Or perhaps you are married to a working spouse who earns enough income. If that is your situation, then you shouldn't have much difficulty when a recruiter asks you, during a screening interview, what your salary requirements are. You might deflect the question by asking, *"Well, what does your company offer as a range for this job?"* and see if the recruiter is willing to disclose that information. If so, and presuming the range is truly acceptable to you, simply inform the recruiter that you can work within that range. However, bear in mind that many times a recruiter is not willing to lay those cards down on the table for you just yet, as they first want to hear from your own mouth what your salary expectations really are.

If that is the case, you could simply respond with something along the lines of:

> *"Oh, don't worry about my salary requirements. I'm sure that won't be an issue. I'm content with whatever the normal market value is for the job. I'm primarily interested in doing good work for you and whatever the actual salary is will probably not be an issue."*

Either way, if this is your situation, it's an easy situation to navigate. Even if the salary range ended up being more than you were expecting, that would simply be a happy accident that you should accept with graciousness and class. (I would not advise, in such a situation, that you protest the salary as being too high. Doing so

could sell yourself short, and perhaps eliminate you from being considered a serious candidate.)

Conversely, let's take the situation wherein the salary range for the job is on par with your comfort zone. Again, that's a great thing. But you won't usually know if that's the case initially. So when the recruiter asks you for your salary requirements, try to put the ball back in their court. Simply ask, "Well, why don't you tell me what the salary range is for this job?" And phrase it just like that; don't phrase it with the timid-sounding, "Uhm, are you at liberty to tell me what the salary range is for this job?"

They may refuse to tell you the salary range.

On the other hand, they may go ahead and disclose it at that point. If they do, you can quickly determine if the salary range is a fit for you.

But what if they won't disclose such information?

In that case, you are at the point where you will have to lay some cards down on the table and give some indications as to your salary expectations. Here is what I have found works best:

- Tell them what you believe your actual market-worth is
- Tell them what your most recent salary earned was
- Tell them what you would hope to earn in your next job

Your most recent salary will be stated as a specific annual figure. The other two items will be given within a range. Here's an example:

"As far as my own salary requirements go, let me begin by telling you honestly what I believe my market value is. Given my background, education, and experience, I should be earning somewhere in the vicinity of $X to $Y. [PAUSE] *In my most recent job, I was actually earning a salary of $Z.* [PAUSE] *I could, however, find a way to make it work if the salary offered was somewhere around $A to $B."* (Obviously, I have used A, B, X, Y, and Z as fillers, which you would substitute your actual numbers for.)

Why have I placed a "pause" between each of the three statements? I have done this because your "market value" figure is usually going to be the highest figure of the three, and when you have a slight pause after revealing that number, the recruiter may jump in with the favorable news that such a figure is workable for them. If so, you don't need to state the other two figures. But if no such assurances come from the recruiter, you have another slight pause after revealing your most recent salary, and perhaps the recruiter will chime in then and let you know that your salary expectations are within range. Again, if that happens, you may not have to reveal the third and final figure, which is usually the lowest of the three.

Let's get you involved now. I am going to have you practice scripting this for yourself by filling in the blanks below, then rehearse it until it becomes natural to you.

"As far as my own salary requirements go, let me begin by telling you honestly what I believe my market value is.

Given my background, education, and experience, I should be earning somewhere in the vicinity of $_____ to $_____.

In my most recent job, I was actually earning a salary of $_____.

I could, however, find a way to make it work if the salary offered was somewhere around $_____to $_____."

Ultimately, the salary discussion either will be an insurmountable hurdle or it won't be. If it is a hurdle, . . . in other words, if you are firm in your salary expectations, and those same expectations are beyond the range of what the employer is willing to pay, the job is simply not a fit. Let it go. It's not going to work. Move on.

If, on the other hand, you are not inflexible and can find a way to make it work, then you are on your way to landing that interview.

Arranging for the Interview

Here are some things you want to make sure you are clear on in the event that you get past the phone screen and receive an invitation for the interview. Try to find out the following while you are speaking to the person who is scheduling the interview with you:

- What is the structure of this interview:
    - Will it be conducted at a distance (i.e., over the phone, via Skype, etc) or will it be conducted in-person?
    - If a live, in-person interview, is this going to be a single one-on-one interview, or
    - Will there be multiple interviews during the day, all of them one-on-one, or
    - Will there be multiple people interviewing me simultaneously in a group setting?
- What is the name and title of the person(s) conducting the interview?
- Is the person conducting the interview the actual hiring manager? In other words, if I were hired, would the person interviewing me be my boss?
- How long will the interview take place?

    - Is there a hard stop at that time?
- Should I bring samples of my work?
- Should I bring copies of my résumé, or will the interviewer have my résumé on hand? (Bring copies regardless of what they tell you.)
- Where will the interview be held? (Get the address, cross streets, and confirm parking information.)

Make sure you even clarify which door you should enter, or whether the lobby has an obvious entrance. Verify you are to check in with the receptionist. It's a good idea to the name of the receptionist in advance, if possible, so you can greet the receptionist by name when you approach her (I say "her" as most of the time the receptionist is a female.) Any time you can make a positive impression with the receptionist, it's a positive thing, as oftentimes the receptionist is asked by the interviewer if she had any impressions of you after you have left the building.

In addition, you may casually ask the person how many other candidates are they interviewing. You might frame the question along these lines:

"So, I wonder what the current job market is out there. . . Have you had a lot of applicants for this position? [They respond.] *How many of the candidates were lucky enough to get invited for an initial interview?"*

Hopefully, the person you are speaking to won't be so guarded and will tell you how many applicants are in the running. Knowing this may be useful.

Preparing for the interview

Once the interview is scheduled, here is what you must do prior to the interview:

- Try to locate the person who is interviewing you on LinkedIn. You want to find out as much about that person as you can. You want to know where they've worked, where they went to school and what degrees they earned, what LinkedIn Groups they are a part of, etc. The reason this might be helpful to know is that you may be able to use some of that information during the course of the interview to help break the ice and/or build rapport. For instance, if they attended the University of Notre Dame, and you noticed that Notre Dame's football team won (or lost) over the weekend just prior to the interview, you could bring that up:

  I noticed you attended Notre Dame. Great win by your football team last weekend! Did you watch the game?

  I noticed you attended Notre Dame. That was a tough loss last weekend with the football team; a real nail-biter, though.

Bottom line: just being in possession of more information about the person you are interviewing with can give you an advantage over other candidates who did not take the time to do such intelligence gathering. (Truth be told, I also try to find the person's Facebook profile, which occasionally reveals some additional information on the person, such as their taste in books, films, and music. I also do a general Google search on the person to see if I can glean any additional information on them out in Cyberspace.)

- Scour their company website. You want to know who all the senior leaders are that make up their management team. You want to read their bios if they are posted. You also want to understand as much about their core business and their business model as you can. If the web site contains any news items or press releases, absolutely read them very carefully. Take notes on some of the main highlights that you read so you can rattle off facts and figures quickly if you get the chance to. Watch any videos they may have about their products, services, or customer testimonials. Bottom line: be informed about the company. (See **Appendix B** for a useful form you may wish to fill out as you gather intelligence on the company.)

- Do a Google search on the company. Although the top spot from the search results will likely be their company website (which you should have already analyzed thoroughly) other search results may yield some useful data, such as news stories about the company, law suits they may have been involved in, or news stories about their products or senior management team. You should bone up on anything that strikes you as potentially useful.

The result of all three assignments above will be to make you about as informed a candidate as possible, and this will likely become apparent to the interviewer during the interview. Trust me: it's staggering how many people show up for the interview largely clueless as to who they are meeting with, what the company does, etc. Complete those three assignments carefully and you'll go into the interview way ahead of the game.

Who Are You?

Now, in addition to all of the above, there is some other preparation you must do. It has to do with your background and how to tell your story. And it also has to do with the questions you will ask if given the opportunity. Let's take the issue of telling your own story first.

Take a look at your résumé. I mean literally, get a copy of it in front of you right now before continuing to read this publication.

What are you doing reading this?! I was serious: get your résumé before continuing!

Once you have your résumé in front of you, review all of the various accomplishments you have claimed for yourself and then imagine that for each one, the interviewer asks you to elaborate on them. Imagine you ask invited to "tell your story" for each and every accomplishment you have claimed. Could you do it? Could you do it effortlessly and without hesitation or confusion?

Our memories are sometimes short, and the last thing you want to have happen is for the interviewer to ask you to tell them the details of how you lowered turnover by 17% at a job you held 9 years ago, and you appear unfamiliar with that claim. So take the time to review your own résumé and have it crystal clear in your mind the context and the details behind each accomplishment you claim on your résumé. Be able to "tell your story" with a conversational fluency that will captivate and dazzle.

In addition, you have to recognize something that is missed by most candidates: an interview is a two-way street. While the lion's share of the questions, understandably, will be asked of you by the interviewer, you should also be prepared to fire off some questions as well. In fact, most good interviewers will, at some point in the interview, ask you if you have any questions for them. It will be rather unimpressive if you do not. It will be even worse if the questions you ask are inane or inappropriate.

Some Big No-No's

In fact, while I'm at it, allow me to comment on some of the questions you ought *not* to ask in the initial interview. Do not ask any of the following:

- How much vacation time do I get?
- How much money will I be paid?
- Can I work from home?
- How quickly can I get promoted?
- Do I get paid overtime if I work more than 8 hours in a day?
- What are the benefits like around here?

Notice that all of those questions are self-serving. You do not want to come across as self-serving. You want to come across as wanting to make a contribution to their organization.

Also, don't ask any questions that you could have easily found the answer to on their website, such as:

- How long has this company been in business?
- What is the company's mission statement?
- Who is the current CEO?
- What products or services does your company specialize in?

If you ask such questions, you are telegraphing to the interviewer that you didn't do your homework and you almost certainly won't get invited back for a second interview. (For a list of sample questions you might consider asking, see **Appendix C**.)

On the day of the interview:

You need to be alerted to what is probably the single worst thing that can happen on the day of the interview: arriving late.

It is imperative that you not allow anything to prevent you from arriving on time. The old adage, "It is better to be an hour early than a minute late" applies here. If you are late to your first in-person interview (or to any interview) your tardiness will effectively eliminate you from consideration. Showing up late – regardless of the reason – tells the interviewer that you simply do not have your act together. I doubt that one candidate in 7800 who showed up late were ever invited back to a subsequent interview, let alone offered the job.

Thus, you have to know how you are going to get there. You have to make sure you are not confused about the directions to follow in getting from Point A to Point B. You have to know you won't likely blow a tire on the way, or run out of gas, etc. Obviously, you can get directions to the location of the interview by looking it up online (MapQuest is a good bet) or you may have a GPS app on your smart phone. Either way, whatever the duration of time is indicated by your GPS or MapQuest, I would urge you not to assume that amount of time is sufficient. Such data does not always take into account traffic jams or accidents that may take place. Thus, if MapQuest tells you it is a 30-minute drive, allow for an hour at least. If it's an hour drive, assume you need to allow two hours. It's a pretty safe bet to double the amount of time MapQuest or your GPS system claims for your journey.

Of course, one of the worst feelings – and one that will wreak havoc on your confidence – is to show up for the interview having left something behind. So do yourself a favor: make a checklist of all the things you will need. (See **Appendix D** for a sample of items to consider, which you can customize for your own needs.) Certainly you should bring additional copies of your résumé, even if you are told the interviewer will have a copy. They often misplace them. Plus, there are times that additional individuals get pulled into the interview process at the last moment and may not have had any previous access to your résumé. So bring a half-dozen additional copies of your résumé.

Do you have any letters of recommendation by past employers or clients or anyone else? If so, bring copies.

You also may find it smart to bring samples of past work you've done if possible.

What else should you bring? Breath mints. Make sure you have good oral hygiene by flossing, using mouth wash, and brushing your teeth prior to heading to the interview. And pop a few breath mints in your mouth when you get there.
They may offer you water, and if so, accept it. But just in case they don't, it would be wise to have a bottle of water in your computer bag or satchel.

Dress appropriately for the interview. Regardless of the dress code of the company, men should wear a tie at minimum, a full suit at maximum. Women should dress professionally, wearing a smart, presentable blouse and skirt, or perhaps an attractive pants suit.

While I'm on the subject, let me address piercings and tattoos.

First, tattoos: if you have tattoos that are located on a part of your body that can be reasonably concealed by your clothing, then I strongly suggest you conceal them. If the tattoos are on your feet or around your ankle area, wear the appropriate footwear that will effectively cover them up. Why? Because although tattoos have gained in popularity in recent years, they *still* are not considered mainstream. The person interviewing you may not find them appropriate, and you may be seen as a bit too eccentric or too radical to work at that place of business. If you cannot conceal them, I suggest you only apply at tattoo parlors.

Regarding piercings: again, moderation and normalcy will give you an advantage. If you show up with a pierced lip, or nose, or eyelid, or if you've mutilated your own ear lobes by putting in "gauges" – those giant-sized metal rings that fill a hole in your ear lobes the size of a half-dollar – then you are basically saying to the interviewer that you are not in the mainstream, and that you are probably a bit too radical for their tastes. So consider taking them out.

<u>Encountering the receptionist</u>
You should walk into the lobby about ten minutes prior to your scheduled interview. Greet the receptionist in a friendly but professional manner.

If your interview is scheduled for, say, 3:30, and it's with Joan Zancanato, state the following to the receptionist: *"Hello. My name is [your name] and I am here for a 3:30 job interview with Joan Zancanato."* Better yet, if you followed my earlier advice and obtained the name of the receptionist, you could address her by name: "*"Hello, Bethany. My name is [your name] and I am here for a 3:30 job interview with Joan Zancanato."* That will probably impress Bethany.

At that point, you will likely be asked to take a seat, but try to pay attention to whether the receptionist actually places a phone call to "Joan" alerting her to the fact that you are here. If after ten minutes (i.e., at your appointed interview time) you

don't see any obvious signs that the receptionist has contacted "Joan," casually approach her and ask her if Joan is aware you have arrived. You want to be nonchalant when you do this because you never know if the receptionist informed Joan of your arrival via email.

Completing Their Application

You may be asked to complete a job application while you are there. Sometimes they send it to you in advance of the interview via email, and ask you to bring it with you. But many times you will be handed a hard copy of the application. One key thing to remember is that unlike a résumé, a job application is a legal document once you sign it. So remember that you must not misrepresent the facts when you complete it or it could lead to trouble. (No one should infer from this comment that it is OK to misrepresent your qualifications on your résumé.)

One thing you should have with you every time you complete an interview is a document containing information about your previous places of employment going back ten years. The key data points you want to have include the following:

- Name of company
- Address of company
- Phone number of company
- Job Title
- Name of supervisor
- Starting and ending salary
- Starting and ending dates of employment

Sometimes a company you worked at previously has relocated their offices. If so, it is best if you have the current address. If a company you worked at in the past has closed down, it is acceptable to have the address where they were located at the time you worked there. If your former supervisor has very good things to say about you, but no longer works there, put down their direct number if you have it (perhaps a cell phone number.) Having this information will be indispensible on those occasions when you have to complete a job application. (See **Appendix E** for a sample of how this should look)

Let The Games Begin

At some point you will be escorted into an office or conference room to begin the interview. Although there are several interview formats which we will cover shortly, the most typical interview is a one-on-one interview between yourself (the candidate) and either a screener (usually from the HR Department) or the hiring manager.

Want to show some class? Here's a sure-fire way to do so. Don't sit down until either the interviewer sits, or until the interviewer motions for you to sit. Sitting down first, before the interviewer does, shows a lack of deference, and while it would be a subtle mistake, it would be a mistake.

Want another smart tip? Thank the interviewer, right off the bat, for agreeing to interview you. That simple gesture – saying thank you – is a gracious move and speaks well of you.

Also, right after you offer your thanks, confirm the time frame allocated for this interview. You might say something along these lines:

"I'm sure you've got a busy schedule and I certainly don't want to overstay my welcome. How much time has been allocated for this interview?"

If the interviewer gives you a time frame, say, sixty minutes, make a mental note of that so you are aware of when the "stop-time" is. Thus, if you are beginning at 3:30 PM, be mindful of the fact that the interview is scheduled to end at 4:30 PM. The reason this is important is because if 4:30 PM rolls around and you are still in the process of asking questions yourself, you want to be able to show the interviewer that you've been listening. Thus, in that situation, you may have been asking some questions, but before you ask another one, you would do well to say something like the following:

"Well, I do have a few more questions, however I notice it's 4:30 PM now which is when this interview was scheduled to end. I'm happy to stop now if that is your preference. I can always email you my remaining questions."

Doing that shows several things:

- You are paying attention to detail;
- You are respectful of the time commitments of the interviewer;
- It's also smart because if the interviewer does need to end the interview then and there, but agrees with your idea of emailing some additional questions, you will probably walk away with the interviewer's business card, which is a really great thing.

The Interview Itself

The interviewer will have a number of questions to ask you. They may be well thought through and planned out in an organized fashion, or they might be off-the-cuff and somewhat informal. And, I am sad to say, many an interviewer comes into the interview ill-prepared.

Either way, listen carefully to each question and make sure you do the opposite of what the typical politician does when being interviewed by the media – make sure *you answer the actual question being asked*.

While your answers should not be too brief, they should not be long-winded, either. Try to be succinct with your answers, but at the same time, try offering answers that are complete, not partial.

On a one-to-ten scale, with 1 representing a one-word answer and 10 representing a rambling monologue, the answer you provide should fall somewhere in the 4 to 6 range in terms of duration. But above all, it must answer the question being asked, not some question you wish was being asked. Try to keep your answers to less than two minutes in length. Many of the questions you will receive can be answered in 20 seconds or less.

There are some typical questions that get asked in many (though not all) interviews, so be prepared for variations on any of the following:

- So, why don't you tell me about yourself?
- What brought about your wanting to come on board with us?
- Why would you want to work for our company?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why did you leave your last company?
- Tell me about your favorite boss?
- Tell me about your least favorite boss?
- What were your major responsibilities and accomplishments in your last job?
- Are you currently employed?

Then there are some questions that are sometimes asked by a shrewd interviewer that you also should be prepared for. They are unusual questions, but your answers could make or break the outcome:

- What did you do today?
- What have you been criticized for in a previous job?
- Where would you like to be in 3 to 5 years?
- How would you describe yourself using only a few adjectives?
- If you had a choice, would you rather draw up plans, or implement them?
- Tell me about a situation in which you failed. What happened and what did you learn from it?

Other Types of Interviews

You should also be keenly aware of a few other approaches to interviewing candidates. One is called behavioral interviewing. The premise in this approach to

interviewing is that the interviewer wants to know of specific examples from your past where you have successfully done the kinds of tasks that this job calls for.

For example, let's say you are applying for a job as a manager over the Graphic Design department of a PR firm. And let's imagine that one of the major skills required by this job is project management. In such a scenario, it would not be surprising to have the interviewer throw the following your way:

Tell me about how you approach project management in general, and also, tell me about a specific project you managed that was successful.

What the interviewer is looking for is a precise accounting of an actual project you managed in the past, as well as some of your views about the topic. If you have successfully managed projects in the past, you should have no difficulty in coming up with an example from memory and telling that story without hesitation. There should be conversational fluency in the retelling, not stammering or stalling. Conversely, if you have no real experience in the area being questioned, you will very likely be perceived to be "making it up" if you do, in fact, attempt to make it up. It would be more honorable and honest to come clean and admit that your skills in this area are limited, but that you have a plan to refine your skills in this area.

To provide a similar example, if you were applying for a position as an Analyst of some sort, and if competency in working with spreadsheets were important to this role, you may get a question along these lines:

What kinds of projects have you done in Excel using pivot tables?

If you are not experienced with Excel, you may not even know what a pivot table is. It would be foolish to try to fake your way through this question and claim that you've done a lot of work on moveable tables that pivot on a fulcrum enabling you to review documents from lots of different angles, or something equally inane. The interviewer might laugh out loud, or might instead simply escort you out of the building on the assumption that you are a nincompoop.

Conversely, if you have experience with Excel and have utilized pivot tables, you should be able to adroitly answer such a question by describing in some detail your past work with such tools. You might even opt to impress the interviewer by offering to set up a spreadsheet on the spot and work with pivot tables right before their very eyes. The interviewer won't likely accept your offer but will certainly be of the opinion that you very probably know plenty about spreadsheets in general and pivot tables in particular.

Oh, and before I forget, one of the most interesting interviews I ever experienced in my career was similar to the behavioral interviewing I described above. But it was a bit different and a bit more challenging.

Whereas a behavioral interview asks the candidate to explain the details of when they have done specific types of work, the kind of interviewing I am alerting you to here has the interviewer spell out a realistic and plausible scenario that could take place on the job that you are applying for. It's presented almost as a sort of mini-case study. Then the interviewer asks how you would likely perform in such conditions.

Perhaps an example would be helpful.

If you were applying for a job as a medical assistant at a busy medical practice, the scenario might be presented along these lines:

So let's imagine you show up for work at 8:00 AM Monday morning after a restful weekend. The head physician seems to be in a bit of a testy mood and barely acknowledges your greeting when you say hello to him upon arriving at the office. There are two medical assistants on the schedule for today, but the other one called in sick at the last minute and there are no other staff members to replace her; you are going to be on your own today and you are going to be doing double-duty. What's more, the receptionist is a bit too chatty towards you, wanting to find out how your weekend was but also wanting to tell you all about her weekend. The waiting room is already packed with three patients (and their spouses) waiting to be seen. And just as you are about to start summoning patients for their 8:00 AM appointment, a single mother comes in with a toddler who is crying and is clearly sick. She indicates she has no insurance as she was laid off from her job two days ago and the insurance lapsed on that day. She needs to get her toddler in front of the doctor right now, so she says. And to top it off, one of the three patients says, out loud, that it's now 8:05 AM and he's got a full schedule today and doesn't want to be kept waiting since he booked his appointment at the start of the shift so he wouldn't have to wait.

What would you do in such a situation?

What the interviewer is looking for is two-fold:

- Does the candidate seem comfortable or uncomfortable, familiar or unfamiliar with such a situation? Can they answer clearly, confidently, and concisely, or do they have a deer-in-the-headlights look on their face, suggesting they are in over their heads with this one?
- What is the candidates overall thought process when answering a question such as this? What sort of rationale does the candidate utilize when responding?

Both of those areas spell out for the interviewer the maturity, savvy, and level of experience, because the scenario the interviewer is describing is plausible for this job.

And bear in mind that when the interviewer employs this type of interview, they usually will throw out about 5 or 6 scenarios, all of which are plausible for that job. It's kind of like being in graduate school and navigating or analyzing a case study, except in this situation you have to do it on the fly with virtually no advance warning of what's coming. You either have a coherent, intelligent answer or you don't – not an easy situation to be in. But if you are good at thinking quickly, if you are "fast on your feet," you should do reasonably well. And just remember, all of the candidates are going to have to face such intensity. Also be advised that while these types of interviews are rare, they are starting to be utilized a bit more frequently than in the past. I'd guess there is a 20% chance your interviewer will employ this method.

Group Interviews

There are other types of interviews, aside from the traditional one-on-one interview.

There are times that you will be invited to participate in a group interview, where you are in a room with more than one person, all of whom have the opportunity to ask you whatever job-related questions they wish. It can be intimidating and some candidates feel they are being ganged up on, or in some sort of inquisition. But it need not be that way. Always remember that even when facing multiple interviewers at once, they can only ask one question at a time, so in a way it's not all that different from a one-on-one interview. Plus, without coming across as cocky, there should be in the back of your mind a sort of "Bring-It-On!" mentality. You should be confident in the knowledge that you know your strengths and capabilities better than they do, therefore, you are the most knowledgeable person in the room on the subject of *you*! Don't let them intimidate you. Be thankful that they are being efficient with your time.

Sometimes you *will* have a *series* of one-on-one interviews that last perhaps a half-day or even an entire day. You might spend about an hour with, say, 5 different individuals within the company over a 5-hour window of time. It becomes a rather intense block of time for you personally as a candidate, whereas each of the interviewers only spends an hour with you. They then huddle afterwards, either day same day, or a day or two later, just to compare notes and discuss their various perceptions of you as a candidate. Chances are high that if any one of them has a negative outlook towards you, your odds of getting an offer are low. Thus, it's critical that you do all you can to make a positive impression.

Want to know a sure way to sink your own ship in this sort of interview? Here's how: If the first interviewer asks you a question, *any question*, and you answer it brilliantly, and then a subsequent interviewer later in the cycle asks you the same question, just say something snide like, "Well I was already asked that very question by John in the first interview. So I'll repeat what I told him. . ."

Bad form! The person you are now in front of has every right to ask you whatever he or she wants to ask you (provided it's job-related.) If you say something along the lines I described above, you may come across as annoyed or put-off by the question, or worse, even dismissive of the question. You won't score any points that way – even if your intentions were not bad. So always, always, always be respectful and deferential to those who interview you. Never say or do anything that might make them think you are haughty, or annoyed, or irritated by anything they might ask you.

Illegal or Inappropriate Questions You Might Be Asked

However, . . .

There are exceptions, although such exceptions are the exception. They are rare. What I am talking about is situations where the interview asks you something inappropriate. Sometimes an inexperienced interviewer will ask something that is technically illegal and none of their business, but it's asked inadvertently. Other times, an interviewer with bad motives will ask something that is blatantly inappropriate. Here are some examples, along with some of my commentary:

Do you rent or own your home?

While it is perfectly legal to be asked about where you live and how long you've resided there, asking if you rent or own your home is illegal and is none of their business. If you were asked such a question, my suggestion is that you respond with a question along these lines: "That's a curious question; is knowing that somehow relevant to the job?" Hopefully the interviewer will take the hint and withdraw the question. If not, you might have to educate him or her by offering a disarming smile, and saying in a friendly tone, *"You know, I've heard that asking a question like that is actually illegal. I'm only telling you that so you won't get into any trouble."* If the interviewer continues to press the point, you have 3 choices: you can answer them honestly; you can simply refuse to answer them (knowing that the interview is probably not going to end well); or you can end the interview yourself, knowing that you probably don't want to work in such an environment. That last option would be my own choice.

How old are you?

Totally illegal and totally inappropriate. A person who asks this question is either inexperienced or acting in bad faith. Don't answer it. Just say, *"Well, if you're wondering whether I am 18 or older, the answer is yes."*

Is English your first language?

The person who asks this may just be naïve as to the illegality of such a question. They may just be authentically interested in your cultural background. Still, the question is not supposed to be asked. But I leave it to you as to whether you are comfortable answering it. If you are, I might say something like this: "Well, although I understand such questions are technically illegal to ask, I am comfortable answering it. . ." and then answering it candidly. The interviewer may stop you as soon as you point out it's not legal to ask and withdraw the question just to cover their own fanny.

In what country were you born?

Much like the previous question, the interviewer may simply be curious if you seem to be a foreigner. But I would advise answering it as stated above.

Can you tell me your credit score?

This one is clearly over the line. It's illegal to ask. There is no variation on this question – ever! The person asking it is probably asking in bad faith. I would respond as follows: *"Well, I could tell you that, but if I did, I would be aiding you in asking me an illegal question, and I don't want to do anything that could harm you for having asked."*

Are you married?

This question can legally be asked, but only *after* being hired – not before. So if you are asked such a question, just politely but professionally remind the interviewer that such a question is a bit premature and that you'd be happy to answer it when it is legally appropriate to do so – once hired.

Is your spouse employed?

They can legally ask you if your spouse is employed at that company you are applying for, but not an open question as to where your spouse is employed. So if they ask, you should answer, *"Well, if you meant to ask, as I'm sure you did, if my spouse is employed here at this company, the answer is [yes or no.]"*

Do you have any handicaps of which I should be aware?

They are legally allowed to ask whether you have any physical, mental, or sensory handicaps which might affect work performance. But they cannot ask a broad, open-ended question such as framed above.

What church do you go to?

Totally illegal. They simply are not allowed to ask that. And believe it or not, some inexperienced interviewers do. The only time I could imagine such a question coming up would be if you were applying to a religious-based institution such as a faith-based college, or, say, a Christian bookstore, or something that is, by its very nature, a religious institution of some kind. But even then, they cannot specifically ask about your Church affiliation. Now they can advise you about normal hours and days of work required by a specific job to avoid possible conflicts with religious or other personal convictions and obligations. But they cannot pry into which church you have affiliation with. So if they ask, I would be bold and ask in response: "Does knowing my church affiliation really matter as far as this job is concerned?" If they say yes, unless you are comfortable disclosing such information, I would come back with, *"Are you aware that such a question is actually illegal?"*

Are you straight?

Now we are getting into the totally inappropriate. Anyone who asks you about your sexual orientation is either a colossal imbecile, or they are simply of bad character – regardless of whatever their motive is. So don't ever answer a question like this. If you are asked, tell the interviewer that you are shocked at such an inappropriate question, and end the interview. You don't want anything to do with them. Then report them to the Labor Board. If the violation takes place in the state of California, click here for details on how to do this. If in any other state, click here for tips and information, or do a Google search.

Are you in a serious relationship right now? Would you consider going out to dinner with me?

OK, this has to be about the worst of the worst. In most cases, this will be asked by a man who's abilities at self-control are non-existent, and it will be asked of some woman whom he finds attractive. This means war. If you are a woman being asked this by a man (or a woman, for that matter) in a job interview, I would decisively terminate the interview on the spot, stand up, and walk out. I would further not only report them to the Labor Board, but I would attempt to file a formal complaint with that person's boss. That person should be terminated for asking such an inappropriate question.

There are many types of illegal and inappropriate questions that could be asked in a job interview, and I cannot possibly outline them all here. You can always do a thorough search on the internet by opening up your web browser and typing in search terms such as "interview questions you cannot legally ask." Google will give you over one million hits.

Curve Ball questions

Truth be told, I have conducted hundreds of interviews myself over the years. But I have also been interviewed many, many times as well. And over the course of my career, as a candidate, I have been on the receiving end of some rather odd questions. They are not illegal and not even inappropriate. But I do think of them as "Curve Ball" questions in that they do catch you off-guard. You won't get them very often but for what it's worth, here are a few of the more memorable Curve Balls you could be thrown:

- What songs best describe your work ethic?
- Have you ever stolen a pen from work?
- How many cows are in Canada?
- What do you think about when you are alone in your car?
- A penguin walks though that door right now wearing a sombrero. What does he say and why is he here?
- My wife and I are going on vacation. Where would you recommend?
- If you were to get rid of one state in the US, which would it be and why?
- How do you make a tuna sandwich?
- Which two celebrities would you pick to be your parents?
- On a scale from one to ten, how would you rate me as an interviewer?

And although I have never encountered any of the above questions myself, here are two Curve Ball questions I personally was thrown in previous interviews:

- Once, while applying for a position as a sales representative for a company, the sales manager who was interviewing me pulled a fine pen from his pocket and handed it to me and said, "Here. Sell me this pen." What he was trying to do was see if I would launch into obvious features and benefits of the pen, or if I would probe a bit to uncover his needs as a potential customer of fine pens. Needless to say I passed that test.
- In another interview with a different firm, when the interview was officially over and we had shaken hands and said our goodbyes, I was walking out of the office of a hiring manager. The moment my hand grasped the doorknob of his office door, he surprised me by saying, "Oh, just a minute. One last question." I stopped, let go of the door, and turned around to face him. He went on, "If we end up not hiring you, what will we have missed out on?" Of course, none of that was an afterthought; the whole thing was carefully orchestrated. And I spewed out some gibberish about them losing out on a

person of great drive and integrity, or something like that. Perhaps the interviewer's purpose was to see how well I thought on my feet. If so, it was not my finest hour. I didn't get the job.

Positions of those who interview

If you are not familiar with interviewing, you should know that most of the time the initial interview is with a recruiter. That recruiter may be part of the internal HR team of the company in question, or that recruiter may be someone outside that organization but who is retained by the organization to send qualified candidates their way. Recruiters sole job is to screen candidates and separate the good candidates from the not-so-good. They are the gatekeepers of the hiring process, and while they do not have any authority to make a decision on whether to hire you, they certainly do have the power to eliminate you from consideration right from the outset.

Another person who would likely interview you at some point would be the hiring manager. This is usually the same person who would be your boss, if hired.

Other possible persons who might be involved in the interview process would be other individuals who are already on the team you will be on. They are part of the department you would be working in. They may be higher on the organization chart than you will be, or they may be roughly co-equal to you, making them counterparts or colleagues, but they are often relied upon for their perspective on your candidacy to see if they sense that your personality or skills would be a good fit for their department.

A final person who might interview you, if you are the final candidate (or one of the final candidates) would either be the head of Human Resources, or perhaps a senior executive. Their job is mostly to place the stamp of approval on the recommendation they have already received from the hiring manager that you be hired. Their job is to simply make sure there are no obvious flaws with your candidacy that were missed earlier. They serve as the final source of checks and balances. Usually when you get to that part of the interview process, the job is yours to lose by doing something blatantly careless. In other words, if everything goes reasonably well at this stage, you should be getting a job offer shortly.

The Sad Reality. . .

Interviewing is a skill, and, unless the person is in Human Resources and spends much of their time interviewing candidates, they are probably mediocre at best at the skill of interviewing. It's sad but true: most interviews and interviewers are ill-conceived and ill-prepared. Most interviewers have much room for improvement. Many come into interviews barely ready with their questions, many times they've lost your résumé, or they are late to the interview, or they get interrupted by

someone during the interview who pulls them away for a time. These are all bad signs of disorganization in a company. They may not be a reason to steer clear of the organization in question, but it requires great patience to maintain one's composure when such "bad form" manifests itself.

Never do the following. . .

Just because the interviewer may show bad form, however, does not give you license to follow suit. Here are ten things that you, as a candidate, should *never ever* do during the course of the live, face-to-face interview:

- Look at your watch.
- Play with your smart phone, or worse, taking a call that comes in on it.
- Blow your nose.
- Show up sick. (Better to reschedule.)
- Give long-winded answers that chew up too much of the allotted interview time.
- Dress inappropriately or unprofessionally.
- Use profanity or vulgarity.
- Fail to bring additional copies of your résumé.
- Chew gum.
- Argue in any way with the interviewer.

Note-taking

During the course of the interview it is a good idea to take some notes. Doing so demonstrates that you are interested in capturing important information. But this brings up a question: should you do this on an electronic device such as an iPad, a notebook or laptop computer, etc? No you should not. You should use a standard, old fashioned pen and note pad. Taking notes on an electronic device, while convenient for you, may come across as problematic to the interviewer. They may wonder if you are actually checking a message on email, or glancing at a social networking site – which may seem ridiculous to you, but why risk it? Take your notes on a notepad and that will remove all suspicion.

Your Turn to Ask Away

In most interviews, there will come a time that the interviewer will allow you to ask whatever questions you wish to pose. As indicated above, **Appendix C** contains sample questions you may wish to consider asking, however not all of those questions will be relevant to the particular job you are interviewing for. For example, if you are interviewing for an entry-level staff position, you won't be asking the interviewer if you will be managing a budget. So simply take the time as part of your preparation for any major interview (which means any interview that follows the initial screening interview) to think of some specific questions that you

will ask. The questions should be relevant, intelligent, and of a reasonable number. On that last point, allow me to elaborate: You probably shouldn't have more than a dozen questions to ask in a given interview. But you shouldn't only have one or two, either. And be mindful of the likelihood that some of your prepared questions may get automatically answered in the course of the interview.

One of the factors that may determine how many questions you actually ask is time constraints. If the interview was scheduled to last for one hour and if you are given the chance to begin asking your questions with only ten minutes left, you won't likely get to ask, say, ten questions unless both your questions and the interviewers answers last an average of sixty seconds on all ten questions. But not to worry: as the interview winds down, and you've only gotten through, say, 4 of your questions, just let the interviewer know you had some additional questions but you are happy to send those questions via email. The interviewer may allow the interview to extend beyond the allotted sixty minutes, or the interviewer may agree to have you send the remaining questions via email. Either option is fine, though I prefer the latter option as it keeps the communication channels open.

Show and tell

There will be occasions where the interviewer would like to see samples of your work. If you are a graphic artist or something similar, you probably have some sort of portfolio of work to show. If you are a writer, let's say for a newspaper, you likely have a collection of clippings to show. If you are an instructional designer who creates training modules, you hopefully have binders containing samples of past training programs you have authored. And if you are in sales, perhaps you have commission reports to show.

Whatever your craft, it is always wise to put together some samples of your past work whenever possible. Also, if you can, it would be highly advantageous to have a collection of written testimonials or endorsements of your work by co-workers or bosses who can vouch for your skills. Such testimonials can be retyped into a fresh document containing a uniformity of font type and size, etc., and should contain the person's name, title, and organization at a minimum, and if possible, either a current phone number or email address. Of course, whatever the original source of the endorsement (be it a hard-copy letter or memo, or an email) should be kept somewhere for verification purposes if at all possible. **Appendix F** contains a sample of what I am talking about. And you should actively court such endorsements from people in your past who can offer such praises to the quality of your work. It's never too late to seek such persons out for these endorsements.

Getting Clear on Next Steps

As the interview comes to a close, there is a very important thing you must do: get clear on the next steps. Come right out and ask the interviewer what their process is going forward. You might ask any of the following:

- Now that we've concluded this interview, can you give me a sense of the next steps in your selection process?
- Do you have many more candidates to evaluate?
- How close are you to making a decision?
- Are there going to be additional interviews forthcoming with the candidates you are most interested in?
- How soon might those interviews take place? And who will those interviews be with?

And one question I almost always close with goes something like this:

- Without making any commitments of any kind, could you, at least in an unofficial way, give me some indication as to your off-the-cuff perceptions of me as a candidate? Do I seem to have the experience and the qualities you might be looking for? Or, where do I stand compared to those other candidates you've interviewed so far?

How the interviewer answers that question can tell you a great deal about whether you have a reasonable shot at the job, or whether you need to keep on looking. . . .

The Aftermath

When the interview is officially over and you are escorted out of the building, your work is not over. Hopefully you obtained the business cards of any and all who interviewed you, and if you didn't, hopefully you will make sure you have the correct spelling of their names, and the correct address of that organization.

Why?

Because your next order of business is to write a Thank You card – by hand – and get it in the mail immediately.

So you get in your car, and you find out where the nearest U.S. Post Office is, and you drive straight there.

Once you get there, you grab the box of Thank You cards you brought with you (and yes, you should have already obtained either a box of Thank You cards, or purchased individual Thank You cards) and you proceed to write, using clear penmanship, a brief, hand-written note of appreciation for the interviewer's time. Also, you should mention that you are even more interested in the position following the interview than you were before the interview. They need to know you want the job.

And why hand-written? Why not typed, as in an email or even a regular letter you bang out on a word processor? Because a hand-written letter is uncommon. So it makes you stand out from the crowd. And it shows a personal touch. And it's classy

and memorable. It may not get you the job, but it will certainly set you apart with a mark of distinction. That's an advantage because so few candidates will take the time to do so.

Once you've carefully and legibly written the card, simply place it in the envelope and seal it. Address the envelope with the correct spelling of the interviewers name and address, place the proper postage on it (and yes, it's best to be prepared with postage stamps in advance) and then either hand write your name and return address in the proper place or have handy some return address labels, and drop it in the outgoing mail box at the post office. Do this before you do anything else. Do not wait till later that evening or the next day. Why not? Because you want that letter to arrive in a day or two – before they make a decision on a different candidate, and before too much time has elapsed. So timing is critical. Hence, make this task your very next step in the process, the moment you leave that interview.

A Final Word

The basics of performing well in an interview can be summarized as follows:

- You prepare for each interview by researching the company, the job, and the person you will be interviewing with.
- You show up on time, dressed appropriately, and treat the receptionist with respect.
- You bring extra copies of your résumé, and where possible, samples of your work.
- You answer their questions with poise, confidence, and precision, neither with too much detail, nor too little.
- You come prepared with your own appropriate questions for the interviewer.
- You verify next steps.
- You send out a Thank You note to whomever interviewed you.
- You follow up when appropriate.

The information in this guide won't guarantee you success. Nothing can provide an absolute guarantee. But what it will do, if followed, is bend the odds in your favor. And that's not a bad outcome.

We Would Like To Hear From You

If, as a result of your implementing the ideas contained in this special report, you have a successful experience with your job interviews, we would like to hear from you. Send me a note via email to ara@aranorwood.com.

And good luck with your interview. You're going to hit it out of the park!

Appendix A

Jobs I Recently Applied To

This is meant to be a simple document that contains three columns: the date you applied on line, the name of the organization you applied to, and the title of that specific job you applied to. I also like to put the location of that job in parenthesis, especially if the job is not local.

I also put a yellow highlight through any job that has resulted in an interview(s) so that I can quickly see at a glance who has responded favorably to me.

Also, I put a "double strike through" after the fact, on any company that sends me a rejection letter or otherwise rejects me, even if we did any interviews together.

The value of such a document is that it enables you to track your efforts and results (number of jobs you applied to, number of interviews received, etc.)

Such a listing might look something like the following:

Date Applied	**Organization**	**Job Title**
1/6/14	Walt Disney Parks	L&D Consultant (Glendale)
1/6/14	Hyundai	Manager, L&D – Contract job (Irvine)
1/6/14	WellCare	Training Manager (Tampa)
1/6/14	Blue Cross	Corporate Leadership Trainer (Santa Monica)
1/6/14	TransFirst	Corporate Trainer (Cypress)
1/5/14	Cypress Semi	Director, Leadership & Organization Dev (Culver City)
1/4/14	Jewel Enterprises	District Sales Manager (Los Angeles)
1/4/14	T-Mobile	Trainer II (Sales)
~~1/4/14~~	~~USC~~	~~Training Specialist~~
1/4/14	Corinthian College	Training Manager, Career Services (Santa Ana)
12/30/13	Experian	Sales Trainer (Costa Mesa)
12/30/13	Fortress Publishing	Senior Instructional Designer
~~12/30/13~~	~~Barnes & Noble~~	~~Instructional Design Specialist~~
~~12/30/13~~	~~Princess Cruises~~	~~Training Evaluation Specialist~~
~~12/30/13~~	~~SouthWest Airlines~~	~~Sr. Specialist, Leadership Development~~
12/30/13	Nationwide Medical	Director, Learning & Development
~~12/30/13~~	~~United Health Grp~~	~~Trainer – Optum (San Diego)~~
12/30/13	Starboard Cruise	Field Training Specialist (Miami)
12/30/13	Herbal Life	Manager Quality & Training (Torrance)
12/30/13	Live Nation	Corporate Trainer/Performance Coach
12/30/13	SweetRush	Learning & Change Mgt Champion
~~12/30/13~~	~~Toastmasters~~	~~T&D Specialist (Rancho Santa Margarita)~~
12/30/13	Scripps Health	Senior Sales Training Specialist (Irvine)
12/30/13	CapitalOne	L&D Manager (Los Angeles)
~~12/30/13~~	~~Quality Media~~	~~T&D Manager (Studio City)~~

Appendix B

Info Sheet

As you do your research on a given company that has scheduled an interview with you, it is wise to capture such information on paper. Especially during a phone interview, if you are asked what you know about the company – a very common question which weeds out those who can't answer it intelligently – you can just rattle off data and facts that you put into an information sheet such as the fictitious sample below. (Bear in mind you should customize your sheet based on what you deem to be important information.)

XYZ Company
Type of Entity: LLC
Founders: Jeff Southwick and Dave Potts
Founded: October 2001
HDQ: Ojai, CA
Regional Offices: NY, Chicago, LA, SF, Boulder, London, Singapore, Hamburg
Industry: Advertising
Revenues: $40,000,000
Employees: 250
Size: 9th largest promotional advertiser in the US, handling about $37M from 400 clients annually.
Competitors: Total System Advertising, First Data Associates, Heartland Ads
Services Provided: Silk Screening, Promotional Advertising, Outdoor Display Ads
Values: Integrity, Speed, Service
Regional Offices: NY, Chicago, LA, SF, Miami, London, Tokyo, Frankfurt
Clients: Forbes, Expedia, Google, MasterCard, AT&T, Citibank, Coca Cola, McDonalds
Fiscal Year Begins: October 1
CEO: Jeff Southwick
CTO: Dave Potts
COO: Rob Jensen
BBB Rating: A+

Appendix C

Questions You Might Consider Asking

- How would you describe the culture at this company?
- Tell me about your boss? What's it like working for him/her?
- What do you most enjoy about working at this company?
- What types of priorities would I be facing right from the start?
- What are the biggest challenges of this job?
- What kind of orientation training or onboarding is currently in place?
- What caused this job opening (termination; growth needs; new position)?
- Who would I be reporting to?
- What % of travel would I be doing? Where are the travel destinations?
- Does this position manage a budget? If so, how much?
- Does this position have any direct reports?
- What can you tell me about the training provided at this organization?
- How is my job performance going to be measured? What does success look like? The bottom line: what does it take to succeed in this position?
- How soon are you hoping the hire the right candidate?
- What are the next steps in the selection process?

Appendix D

Checklist of Things to Bring

- ☐ Extra copies of résumé
- ☐ Samples of my work
- ☐ Letters of reference
- ☐ Notepad and pen
- ☐ Thank You Cards
- ☐ Postage Stamps
- ☐ Return Address Labels
- ☐ Breath Mints
- ☐ Bottle of Water
- ☐ Previous Employment Data

Appendix E

Previous Employment Data

Company:	Johnson and Johnson
Address:	14138 Ventura Boulevard, Encino, CA 91471
Phone:	(818) 557-5900
Title:	Customer Service Manager
Supervisor:	Sean Browne
Starting Salary:	$84,000
Ending Salary:	$89,000
Start Date:	June 18, 2006
End Date:	April 9, 2013

Company:	Baxter Industries
Address:	201 S. Pullman Avenue, Hacienda Heights, CA 90114
Phone:	(310) 685-2222
Title:	Customer Service Lead
Supervisor:	Sally Jennings
Starting Salary:	$77,000
Ending Salary:	$80,000
Start Date:	July 1, 2000
End Date:	March 16, 2006

Company:	Sheraton Universal Hotel
Address:	811 Universal Way, Universal City, CA 90944
Phone:	(818) 948-9400
Title:	Customer Service Rep
Supervisor:	Sue Golden
Starting Salary:	$67,000
Ending Salary:	$70,000
Start Date:	September 20, 1998
End Date:	June 28, 2000

Appendix F

Endorsements for Joe Jobseeker

It was a pleasure to be on the receiving end of your customer service magic. Your level of commitment, enthusiasm, and warmth is considerable. ***The effort you go through to enrich the customer experience is impressive****, so much so that I hope your boss understands and appreciates the effort you go through on behalf of your customers. Kudos to you!*
David Russell,
Director, Sales Operations
Federal Express

Thank you for addressing our recent misgivings with your senior management. The results of the review of our account were fabulous! We appreciated your call informing us of the steps you have taken on our behalf. You left us with much food-for-thought and desire to send more business your way as well as refer our friends to you. Thank you!
Jennifer Davis
Senior Vice President
Health Net of California

Having worked in Corporate America for the past 12 years, and having experienced many so-called service professionals, I can say with confidence ***that Joe Jobseeker is in the top 1% of service professionals*** *I have worked with. . . Joe* ***creates an atmosphere of service that is top notch.*** *A refreshing change.*
Laura Hanover
Accounting
UCLA

I would like to highly commend you on your recent problem solving intervention on behalf of my wife and I. You presented ***an outstanding and dynamic example*** *of first-rate service, which had such a profound impact on our overall experience with your organization. I wanted to let you know what a positive impact you made on both my wife and myself.*
Doug Livermore
Regional Manager
San Dimas Hospital