

Job Preparedness Packet II

Section 2: *Developing your Portfolio*

Job Search Checklist

Next Week I Will...

Employer Contact Journal

Job Search Schedule

Section 3: *Preparing for the Interview*

Before

Practice

The Day of the Interview

During

The 4 Phases

After

What to Ask When A Job Is Offered



Developing Your Professional Portfolio

A portfolio is a great way to keep all of your job search materials together. It also makes a very professional presentation packet to take along to an interview.

Your portfolio should include the following items:

- Resume
- Professional and Personal References
- Master Job Application
- Certificates/Transcripts
- Letters of Recommendation
 - Professional (supervisors, instructors, career counselors)
 - Personal (volunteer experience, people who you know well)
- Letters of Appreciation
- Sample Work
- Media Coverage
- Any other material you feel is relevant and represents you well

Your Job Search Supply Checklist

The following are suggestions for tools you will need to conduct your job search.

- Resumes and cover letters customized for each job lead.
- Formal thank you cards/letters also customized for each contact.
- Professional paper for job search letters and resumes: white, cream, light gray.
- Large mailing envelopes (9"x 12"), manila or white, for mailing cover letters and resumes.
- Business envelopes to match stationery used for job search correspondence.
- Stamps
- Answering machine or service, with formal outgoing message.
- Fax or email capabilities, your own or easy access. If you do not have a private fax, then locate nearest fax service to your work or home:

Fax #	Phone #
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- Word processing capabilities, your local library or institution with accessible computer lab. as well as Kinko's

Next Week I Will: *(specify #)*

1. Write _____ job search/cover letters.
2. Send _____ cover letters and resumes to potential employers.
3. Complete _____ job applications.
4. Make _____ job search telephone calls.
5. Complete research on _____ jobs and companies.
6. Set up _____ appointments for informational interviews.
7. Conduct _____ informational interviews.

Things to Do This Week (Notes)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Rewards to Myself

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Summary of My Progress This Week

Employer Contact Journal

Company Name & Address	Contact Person & Phone #	Referral Source	Application Submitted (Date)	Resume Cover Letter (Date)	Interview (Date)	Follow Up Thank You Letter (Date)
1						
Comments:						
2						
Comments:						
3						
Comments:						
4						
Comments:						
5						
Comments:						
6						
Comments:						

Job Search Schedule- Week of: _____

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00							
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Interviewing

Interviews provide an opportunity for you and an employer to get to know each other. In addition:

- You and the employer decide if the position is a mutually beneficial fit for you and the organization.
- The employer gets to decide if you have the skills, interests, and qualities needed to do the job.
- You have an opportunity to impress the employer with your knowledge of their organization and your ability to explain why you are right for the job.

How can you make your interview go well? ---Preparation is the key!

Why Prepare?

The person who gets hired for a position is not necessarily the one who can do the best job, but the one who knows how to get hired. Securing a job takes time, commitment, initiative and practice.

A good interview is a significant part of the process. The interview is a short period of actual time that demands careful preparation. The success of an interview can be directly related to the preparation time that has been invested.

An article in the Wall Street Journal reported that one in five interviewers decided on a job candidate in the first five minutes and two thirds of them need only fifteen minutes.

Clearly this means that your entrance, appearance and the first words you speak are of critical importance to your being considered for the job.

How Do I Prepare?

Know Yourself

Begin by developing a good understanding of your education, experience, skills, interests and abilities. Be able to translate these characteristics about yourself to show how they would be an asset to the company/organization where you are interviewing: There are exercises and tools available to help you as you consider your skills, interests, and abilities.

Think of three major accomplishments and answer these questions:

- What did I actually do from start to finish?
- What special skills or abilities did I use?
- What knowledge or training did I gain as a result of this accomplishment?
- How would these characteristics transfer or relate to the job I am interviewing for?

Practice Interviewing

Once you have reflected upon your skills, interests, and abilities, it is time to practice articulating them. Go through the following list of interview questions and answer them based on your self-knowledge.

There are several ways to practice interviewing:

- Have a friend interview you.
- Interview yourself in front of a mirror, repeating your answers until you are satisfied with them.
- Do a mock interview and audiotape.
- Write out the answers to the interview questions.

These steps are not meant to give you 'pat' answers. This preparation is meant to help you give organized, concise and thoughtful answers.

What about the day of the Interview?

Time/Place:

Be sure to confirm the time and place of your interview. Find out directions, and give yourself adequate travel time including traffic and parking. Arrive on premises 15 minutes early, but do not go to the actual office until 3-5 minutes before the actual interview.

Personal Appearance:

Take care of your appearance. Arrive well-groomed and dress appropriately for the business. First impressions are hard to change.

Bring:

Portfolio or folder with interview information: (name, address, phone), several copies of your resume, list of questions you might have about the company and the position you are interviewing for, pad of paper and pen.

Types of Interview Formats

- **Screening interview:** Initial interview, basic questions, maybe individual or group.
- **Second interview:** Follows screening interview, more in-depth, often interviewed by more than one person, office tour, job offer may come.
- **Phone interview:** Interview takes place over the phone. May be a conference call with several people asking questions on the same line.
- **Panel interview:** Panel of interviewers ask you questions, similar to screening or second interview with more than one interviewer.
- **Stress interview:** Involves questions similar to traditional interview, using different techniques to evaluate your answers. May put pressure on you by changing the pace and/or subject to see how you react. Involves more reading between the lines on the part of the employer:

Phases of the Interview

1. **Get Acquainted Phase:** This is a time of small talk. The interviewer may ask you about some interest area on your resume. The purpose is to set you at ease and develop rapport.
2. **Employer Questions Phase:** During this phase of the interview, the employer may give a brief informative description of the organization, department, and/or job. You will then be asked a series of questions about your education, skills, and experience. You may be asked specific and/or hypothetical questions. Answer thoughtfully, concisely, and do not ramble!

You may not be asked these exact questions, but having thought through them will definitely help you answer other related questions.

Questions often asked in an interview Include:

- What are your career plans? Short range? Long range?
- Why are you interested in this organization?
- What do you know about this position or employer?
- Tell me about yourself?
- How would a friend describe you?

- What are your greatest strengths? What are your chief weaknesses?
- What qualifications do you have that you feel will lead to success in your career?
- What have you learned from some of the jobs you have had?
- What kind of boss do you prefer?
- Are you willing to travel?
- What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
- What kind of books have you read?
- What could you contribute to this job if you were to be hired?
- Where do you see yourself ten years from now?
- What do you do in your spare time?
- What are your long-range and short-range objectives and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
- What goals other than those related to work have you established for yourself for the next five years?
- What rewards in this field are most important to you?
- What major problems have you encountered and how did you deal with them?
- What qualities should a successful supervisor possess?
- How do you work under pressure?
- What three factors are most important to you in your work?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable working?
- When you have been the most productive, what were your motivations?
- Why should I hire you?
- Give me an example of a work-related idea that has come to you and what you did with it.
- Give me an example of a work-related problem you solved and the process you used.
- Give me an example of the most creative work-related project that you have worked on.
- Tell me about yourself. (That is, tell me about yourself and your employment history, not your personal life.)
- What work experiences have been most valuable to you and why?
- Tell me about a project you initiated.
- What has been your greatest work-related challenge?
- Describe the project or situation that best demonstrates your analytical abilities.
- What have the experiences on your resume taught you about managing and working with people?
- Tell me about your most difficult work-related decision and how you went about making it.
- How have your education and work experiences prepared you for this position?
- Describe a leadership role of yours and tell why you committed your time to it.
- What types of situations put you under pressure, and how do you deal with pressure?

- Give me a work-related situation in which you failed, and how you handled it, or how you should have handled it.
- What interests you about this job?
- What challenges are you looking for in a position?
- What makes you think you can handle this position?
- What can you contribute to this company?
- Why should my company be interested in you?
- What goals have you set for yourself, and how are you planning to achieve them?
- What is your most significant accomplishment to date?
- To what do you owe your present success?
- What motivates you?
- What turns you off?
- If I asked the people who know you well to describe you, what three words would they use?
- If I asked the people who know you well for one reason why I shouldn't hire you, what would they say?
- Describe a situation involving conflict and how you handled it.
- When you take on a project, do you like to work in a group or individually?
- Describe the type of manager you prefer.
- What are your team-player qualities? Give examples. Tell me about a team project of which you are particularly proud and your contribution.
- Describe a situation where you had to work with someone who was difficult. How did you handle it?
- What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
- Why do you feel that this company will be a career for you rather than a job?
- Name two management skills that you think you have.
- What characteristics are most important in a good manager? How have you displayed one of them?
- We are looking at a lot of great candidates; why are you the best person for this position?

How Do I Answer?

The list of possible questions in an interview is endless, but they often come down to asking the same thing in different ways. Remember that questions about your past are really about your future. Try to understand the real intent of any question. When asked about past experience, emphasize skills and achievements. Give specific examples of what you did. The following are a few of the most typically asked questions and some suggestions for effective responses.

"Why do you want this job?"

Be honest and depend upon the research you have done on the employer as well as your own self-assessment skills and experiences as they relate to the position.

"What do you know about this position or employer?"

It is crucial here to have done your homework. You must know about the employer, but it is even more important to know about the position itself.

"What are your strengths?"

Be sure to identify your strengths by using specific statements describing your skills, interests and abilities that directly pertain to the job.

"What are your weaknesses?"

Here you are trying to get across the fact that any weakness you have will not effect your ability to do the job. Either identify a weakness that doesn't directly relate to the work or identify a weakness that does and explain how you are working on it. Another approach is to identify weaknesses that are actually strengths.

"Where do you see yourself in two years? Five? Ten?"

Rely on your research about the organization to describe how you plan to develop your skills within the typical career ladder of this organization. Avoid identifying goals, which will not benefit the employer.

"We have interviewed 10 candidates equally qualified to you. Why should we select you over the others?"

Again, the most powerful information you can offer is a restatement of your best skills to perform the job. Realize that your enthusiasm and desire for the position are also convincing.

"Do you have any questions?"

Prepare questions ahead of time. Asking intelligent questions reflects the depth of your research and the clarity of your thinking. When you say, "No, my questions have all been answered," you forfeit an opportunity to sell yourself to the employer through the caliber of the questions you ask. (See *Phase 3*)

"What salary are you looking for?"

Do not inquire about the salary during the initial interview; but realize the employer can. Delay salary negotiation until the employer is convinced they must have you. Ask to discuss salary when you are both certain you are right for the job. If pressed for an amount it is best to talk about the salary range you have learned from doing your research.

- 3. Interviewee Question Phase:** This is your opportunity to ask the employer relevant questions. You should come prepared with several questions that will demonstrate your familiarity with functions of the organization. If questions have occurred to you as a result of the interview, ask them. However, two cautions: do not ask about salary or benefits in the first interview. There will be a time for that later. Do not ask redundant or basic questions that you should have known or researched prior to the interview. You will want to ask about the decision-making timeline, and when you can expect to hear from the employer.

Questions to ask at an interview:

Most interviews will include an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions. When you are asked if you have any questions you should be prepared to ask some pertinent and intelligent questions. Your questions can demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm as well as the research you conducted on the organization prior to the interview. Use these questions carefully and appropriately, as it is usually unwise to appear to be controlling the interview yourself. You also want to avoid questions dealing with company sick leave, vacations, holidays, and other benefits which allow you to get away from work. These are important issues to be discussed, but not at this point in the interviewing process. Some questions you might want to consider, if appropriate to your situation, are:

1. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
2. How often are performance reviews given?
3. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
4. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
5. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
6. What products or services are in the development stage right now?
7. Do you have plans for expansion?
8. What are your growth projections for the next year?
9. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
10. What is the single largest problem facing your staff/department right now?
11. May I talk with the last person who held this position?
12. What kind of training can I expect in the first three months?
13. How much authority will I have over decisions?
14. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
15. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
16. Is there a lot of team/project work?
17. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?

18. When do you expect to make a decision?
19. Who will I report to?
20. Will I have a chance to meet the people I would be working with?
21. How would you describe your management style?
22. What opportunities for job advancement does your company offer?
23. What opportunities does your company offer for professional development?
24. What are your job performance expectations for this position?
25. What are your company's strengths?

4. Closing The Interview Phase: The employer will let you know when s/he is ready to wrap up by verbal and non-verbal signals. Closing a file or pushing back a chair are two of the cues to look for. As you finish, be sure to reiterate your interest in the position, smile, make eye contact, request a business card and shake hands.

What to do after an interview

- Send a thank you note within 24 hours of the interview. It can be handwritten or typed but keep it brief. Use professional looking note cards or business letter format. Reemphasize your interest.
- Inquire after 7-10 days. You may call to inquire about your status and to find out when you can expect an answer.

What to ask the employer when a job is offered

- To whom will I report? Will I get the opportunity to meet that person?
- Where is the job located? What are the travel requirements, if any?
- How regularly do performance evaluations occur? What model do they follow?
- In researching the position, I discovered that your organization/department has been working on a _____project. Can you tell me more about this?
- What would my first assignment be?
- Can you give me an idea of when you expect to make a decision?
- What have been some of the best results produced by people in this job?
- Could you tell me about the people I would be working with?

Notes: