



## Have a Stellar Interview

A Talentlab Job Seeker Guide

## **Two Words: Be Prepared!**

Looking for a job is a stressful time and there are lots of things you need to consider during the job search process. After the potential position is chosen, the resume submitted and the interview pending, the battle has just begun. The job seeker (namely, you) must follow some important rules of etiquette in order to be as successful as they (you) can in the interview process. Here are a bunch of simple tips that will help ensure a good impression, and give the interview the greatest potential of landing you the job.

## **Ask the Right Questions**

Find out who you are interviewing with, what their title is and if you'll be seeing anyone else during the interview. This will help you determine how to prepare. Make sure that you find out as much as you can about the interviewer, his or her position within the company and how it might be related to your potential role within the organization.

## **Do Your Homework**

Find out basic information about the company—it's products, it's past, it's culture and the anticipated direction of it's future. Also, get really familiar with a particular aspect of the company that's related to the position you're pursuing. Find out all you can about this area and make it understood during the interview that you are interested in and have the capacity to learn about this component of their business.

## **Make Sure the Route to the Interview Is Clear**

Make the drive to the company the day before the actual interview day at the actual time of the interview. This will alleviate extra tension, and reveal any obstacles (i.e. excessive traffic or construction) that may affect your timing. Try to arrive at the interview 10-15 minutes early, so you have time for unexpected interruptions and so you can relax a little before the meeting. At the same time, don't show up too early as this may create an awkward tension in the office.

## **Dress for Success**

The first visual impression of you will last a long, long time. Neat and clean is the key. If your clothes are wrinkled and your hair is disheveled they will wonder if that's how you'll show up to the work place. Wear something that you are comfortable and confident in. A well pressed, classic outfit is always a safe bet.

## **Use Courtesy when Dealing with Office Staff**

A team environment will encourage input from receptionists and secretaries, so everyone you talk to may have a say about whether you get hired. When meeting the interviewer give him/her a firm handshake, and make eye contact. Don't stare the person down, mind you, or squeeze the life out of their hand. Pure aggression is not generally a trait sought after in new hires.

## **Keep the Vibe Positive**

When asked why you're leaving your present job, don't complain about the mindless job duties, the chatty co-workers and your lousy boss. First, highlight the positive experiences that you've had with your current employer. Then explain that you'd like to explore new challenges, learn new skills and broaden your horizons. Honesty is obviously important but leaving out certain experiences can be as important as highlighting others.

## **Be as Calm as Possible**

It's definitely okay to be a little nervous; a new job is a big deal—especially when it's one you really want, and you're only human. But, this is your time in the spotlight, so sit back and enjoy the barrage of questions. More than likely the interviewer is trying to find out how you function under pressure. Show that you have what it takes to fill the position by staying confident, keeping cool and thinking your answers through.

## **Answer All The Questions Posed**

It doesn't hurt to talk yourself up in order to make a good impression, but don't go overboard. Prepare yourself for tricky, in-depth questions and be honest in your replies. Take a look around the office for something that might indicate a common interest with you and your interviewer. Chat about yourself in a personal sense but don't go overboard—be brief while maintaining an open and honest style.

## **Be Prepared to Discuss Time Laps in Your Resume**

Many prospective employers are interested in these breaks in your working history. Make sure you're honest with your interviewer. It may be a little bit uncomfortable sharing personal things about yourself, but in the long run, honesty is always the best policy.

## Ask Questions

More than likely, the interviewer will ask you if you have any questions. Come with questions prepared for the interview and make sure you're conscious of questions that pop into your head along the way. This will leave an impression of intelligence and observance. It is important that the interviewer realizes that you are viewing this as a two way street. "Am I good for them and are they good for me?"

## When the Interview Is Over, Make Eye Contact

As you shake the interviewer's hand, thank him/her for taking the time to see you, and make a graceful exit. Within 24 hours it is important to send a handwritten thank-you note to the interviewer. Mention one specific comment from the interview that impressed you about the company or the interviewer. The personal touch is very important and doing this will make sure that your name is fresh in the mind of the people doing the hiring even after you have left the building.

It is very important to view this experience in a positive light, whether you are successful at landing the job or not. Interviewing is a great means of building your confidence, and the more practice you have at it, the better off you'll be when the right opportunity presents itself. Keep in mind that everyone you meet may be met again. Leaving a positive, professional impression is important not only in the moment, but potentially for the future as well.

## Common Questions Asked by Employers

Prepare yourself a little bit by going through the following questions before the interview...

1. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
2. Describe your ideal job.
3. What can you offer us?
4. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
5. Do you plan to return to school for further education?
6. What skills have you developed?
7. Did you work while going to school? In what position?
8. What did you enjoy most about your last employment?
9. What did you enjoy least about your last employment?

10. What did you learn from these college work experiences?
11. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
12. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
13. Why did you choose your major?
14. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
15. Can you name some weaknesses?
16. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
17. Would you be successful working on a team?
18. Of which three accomplishments are you most proud?
19. In which campus activities did you participate?
20. Have you ever dropped a class? Why?
21. Why did you select your college or university?
22. What do you know about our company (product or service)?
23. Which college classes did you like the best? Why?
24. Which college classes did you like the least? Why?
25. Who are your role models?
26. Do you think you received a good education at University?
27. What is your overall GPA? What is your major GPA?
28. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability?
29. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?
30. Have you worked under deadline pressure? When?
31. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
32. Do you prefer large or small companies? Why?
33. How do you feel about working in a structured position?
34. How do you feel about working overtime?
35. How do you feel about travel?
36. How do you feel about the possibility of relocation?
37. Do you have any hobbies?
38. What problems have you solved in your previous positions?

39. Are you willing to work flextime?
40. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What?
41. Define success. Failure.
42. Have you ever had any failures?
43. How does your college education or work experience relate to this job?
44. How did you get along with your former professors (supervisors or coworkers)?
45. How many classes did you miss because of illness or personal business?
46. What are your ideas on salary?
47. Tell me about yourself.
48. Do you have any computer experience?
49. Have you ever spoken to a group of people? How large?
50. Would you be willing to take a drug test?