

# HOW TO GET THE JOB YOU WANT!

■ By Dawn Murphy

**F**inding new opportunities in today's job market isn't easy. You must be able to sell yourself, and your best opportunity to do that is during the job interview.

One common mistake people make when looking for a new job is that they don't do their homework on the company, and they lack enthusiasm. When you don't do your homework, it is often perceived as a lack of interest in the position.

A little investigation and preparation on your part before you go to an interview will help you leave a good impression. Your goal is to impress the person who is interviewing you with your questions and with the quality of your "homework." Show that you are there not only for what the company can offer you, but also for what you can offer the company.

## Before the Interview

- 1. Do your homework by researching the company.** Go to the public library and ask for help finding information about the company. You also can call the local Chamber of Commerce. Friends, relatives and neighbors who work for the company also can be good resources, or you can call the company directly and ask them to send information.
- 2. Match your skills and abilities to the company.** After you have completed your research on the company, take time to review what you've learned. Match that information with your skills, abilities and interests. This will help you in the actual interview to focus on things that are important to the company.

## 3. Prepare your answers to the interviewer's questions.

A big part of the interviewer's evaluation of you will come from how well you answer questions in the interview. The best advice is to THINK. Choose your words carefully, but be honest. Be prepared to answer questions like:

- Why are you interested in this job?
- What do you know about this company?
- Why should I hire you?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What are your greatest weaknesses?
- How would other people describe you?
- What are your career goals?

## 4. Prepare your questions.

Interviews are two-way conversations, so you should always ask questions as well. Bring a note pad with questions on it, and use it to write down the answers. Even if the interviewer answers all the questions you brought with you, ASK SOMETHING to show that you are interested and that you listened during the interview. Here are some questions you can ask:

- What would a day on this job be like?
- Whom would I report to?
- What training programs are available?
- Are there advancement opportunities available?

## During the Interview

When you arrive at the interview, remember to say hello and introduce yourself to the receptionist. When you meet the person who will be interviewing you, a smile and a firm handshake

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are very important. Maintain eye contact with the interviewer, but don't stare, and don't shuffle or slouch on the way to the person's office. The format of the interview normally is as follows:

## 1. Introduction.

This is normally the first few minutes after you sit down. The interviewer will introduce himself/herself and explain his/her position with the company. All you need to do at this point is listen.

## 2. Establish rapport.

The interviewer will GIVE you information by describing the history of the company, what it does and what you would do if you worked for the company. Again, it's important to listen carefully so that you can ask your questions based on the information you learn from the interviewer.

## 3. Probe.

This is when the interviewer will GET information by asking you questions about your skills, abilities and interests. Good interviewers will talk about 25 percent of the time, and will expect you to talk about 75 percent of the time.

## 4. Close.

The interviewer will let you know that the interview is coming to a close by asking you whether you have any questions. Always ask questions to show your interest and enthusiasm.

If the interviewer hasn't mentioned the salary for the position and the benefits, you should ask if there is a salary RANGE for the position. Also ask if you would be eligible for benefits if you were chosen for the job. If the interviewer asks you about your salary requirements, you should respond by saying, "I'm interested in this position as a career opportunity so my salary requirements are negotiable." If you name a specific salary that may be too high, you could risk not getting the job. If you name a specific salary that is too low, you will undersell yourself.

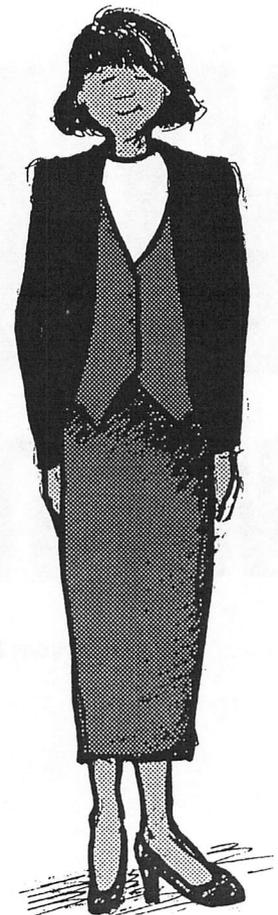
Ask the interviewer about the next step in the interview process and when you might hear about any decision. It's important for you to be as courteous at the close of the interview as you were at the beginning.

## After the Interview

If you haven't heard anything in two weeks, call the interviewer and ask if the position has been filled. If it hasn't, ask when the decision will be made, and tell the interviewer that you are still interested.

**If you don't get the job ... don't give up. There's always a next time ... and one of those jobs is bound to be yours!**

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## **INTERVIEW DO'S AND DON'TS.**

### **DO:**

- Do wear clothing that's just a little more dressy than what is required on the job.
- Do keep jewelry simple.
- Do go easy on makeup, perfume and cologne.
- Do speak English that you have been taught in school, and not the everyday language you use with your friends.
- Do lean forward slightly, look interested and maintain good eye contact.
- Do arrive about 10 minutes early for the interview, and bring a notepad with your questions.

### **DON'T:**

- Don't wear anything so unusual that attention is drawn to your clothes rather than you.
- Don't wear sunglasses during the interview.
- Don't fidget, twirl your hair, chew your fingernails, giggle or chew gum.
- Don't wear heavy scents that will linger after you are gone.
- Don't bring anyone with you – go alone.



## **INFORMATION YOU WILL BE ASKED TO PROVIDE ON A JOB APPLICATION**

- Name of position you are applying for.
- Current address and phone number.
- Social Security number.
- Names of previous employers, with addresses and phone numbers.
- Starting and ending salaries at previous jobs.
- Names of immediate supervisors at previous jobs.
- Computer skills.
- Names and phone numbers of at least three people who will provide a reference for you.