Interviewing Strategies
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INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES

Interviewing is a sales process. You are now the CEO, Marketing Director, and Sales Manager of YOU, Inc. You are now the product. So let's start by getting well prepared before you begin interviewing.

PREPARATION PRIOT TO ANY INTERVIEW

- **Research the Target Companies & Industries**
  - Mission, vision and values of organization
  - Governmental influences affecting organization/industry
  - Name of the interviewer
  - Areas they are eliminating
  - Training Programs
  - Career paths
  - Types of clients
  - Job description & job title
  - Employee benefits & compensation

- **Challenges companies/industries are facing**
- **Organizational structure**
- **Divisions/departments that interest you**
- **Products/Services**
- **Size of company**
- **How long have they been in business**
- **Growth in the past and future potential**
- **New products and services they are developing**
- **Geographic location of home office, branches, stores**

- **Know Yourself**
  - Identify your strengths
  - Identify your weaknesses

- **Marketing tools for Your Marketing Toolbox**
  - Market Ready Resume
  - 60-second Commercial
  - Reason for Leaving Statement

Now that you know what needs to be done prior to interviewing, let's take this step-by-step:
Resources for Company & Industry Research:
Find out as much as you can about your target employers and the target industries. Here are some great resources:

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<td>Company’s annual report</td>
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<td>Glassdoor (<a href="http://www.glassdoor.com">www.glassdoor.com</a>)</td>
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Know Yourself

Creating Accomplishments/Success Stories
Accomplishments or success stories are used to build your 60-second commercial, answer behavioral questions and summarize why you should be hired at the end of the interview.

The STAR Approach
The acronym STAR provides you with a guide to effectively and completely answer any behavioral based interview questions.

S = Situation (Describe the situation: general/specific)
T = Task (What needed to be done?)
A = Action (What action did you take?)
R = Result (What was the result of your action?)

Results or outcomes of your actions make you stand out from your competition. If you can quantify the results, the better your answer will be. Anytime you can use a number put it in your answer.

Here is a sample behavioral interview question and a STAR response:
**What significant problem did you solve on your last job?**

**Example 1**

**Short Title:** Website Optimization
**Date and Place:** 2011, Columbia Sportswear

**Situation/Task:**
I was working as an intern at XYZ in the sales department of the website. The customer orders on our website were down by 15% and we needed to generate more sales.

**Actions:**
I reworked the website content to include additional target words for search engine optimization.
Results

By optimizing the site, our sales went up by 29% within the month.

Skills Used:

• Research, analysis, Website development, Sales, Problem solving, Attention to detail

Example 2

Short Title: XYZ Company
Date and Place: 2010, Evansville

Situation/Task

Store management received over 150 complaints per week regarding the customer service throughout the tri-state region. As the top sales person/trainer, I was asked to analyze the complaints and determine what actions to take.

Actions:

Analyzed the complaints received from 20 stores, conducted a needs analysis by observing and interviewing staff to determine causes of complaints from staff’s perspective. Conducted over 30 customer service training programs throughout tri-state region.

Results

Reduced customer complaints by 15% in 3-month period

Skills Used

Verbal communications, interpersonal skills, listening, research, analysis, customer service, presentation skills, critical thinking, attention to detail, problem solving

Example 3

Short Title: Disgruntled Patient
Date and Place: 2012, ABC Nursing Facility

Situation/Task:

Patient did not want to cooperate. He didn’t want to eat or take his pills. He seemed to have given up
He needed to build his strength up and eat, take his pills, and walk around.

Actions:
Spent time with him and listened to him. Asked him questions about his family and why he felt the way he did. Contacted family that was out-of-town to discuss his mood and how a visit from them might help. Spent more time with him when I worked. Played chess with him every so often.

Results

Family came in more often to visit, sent him more letters and care packages. Patient was more cooperative and his mood became much better. He later was released to his family.

Skills Used

*Listening, Research, Persuasion, Problem solving, Analysis, Attention to detail, Initiative*

Here is a sample of a negatively-oriented behavioral interview question and a STAR response:

**What significant problem did you not solve on your last job?**

**S** = I was working as an intern at XYZ in the advertising department of the website.

**T** = The customer orders to our site were down by 15% and we needed to generate more sales.

**A** = I reworked the site content to include additional target words for search engine optimization.

**R** = I had been hoping for our sales to go up within the first 30 days, but it didn’t. What I learned from that experience is that it wasn’t just the addition of target words. I should have contacted previous customers to see what they liked and didn’t like about our website. I believe our website isn’t as user friendly as the competition and next time, I’ll be more thorough in my work plan.

As you can see, you always want to end your “negative” result on a positive. What did you learn from the experience? What would you do differently?

**Situation/Task:**

I was working as an intern at XYZ in the advertising department of the website. The customer orders to our site were down by 15% and we needed to generate more sales.

**Actions:**

I reworked the site content to include additional target words for search engine optimization.

**Results**

I had been hoping for our sales to go up within the first 30 days, but it didn’t. What I learned from that experience is that it wasn’t just the addition of target words. I should have contacted previous customers to see what they liked and didn’t like about our website. I believe our website isn’t as user friendly as the competition and next time, I’ll be more thorough in my work plan.

As you can see, you always want to end your “negative” result on a positive. What did you learn from the experience? What would you do differently?
**ACTIONS TO TAKE:**

- Write out 6-8 accomplishments or success stories based on skills you possess and skills the employer is seeking. Review job advertisements for your target job (doesn't matter where the jobs are) and look for the common skills requested for the target job. These are skills for which you should draft success stories.

- For each accomplishment or successful story, list every skill it took to handle that situation or task. This will help you identify your strengths and weaknesses.

- Now, using this same approach, write out 3-5 unsuccessful stories where things didn’t work out. Review the skills needed for the specific position.

- Identify Your Strengths by reviewing what skills you used repeatedly for each success story. If you used the same skill in 6 or more success stories, then that would be viewed as a strength. This will help you prepare for interview questions like "What are your strengths?"

- Identify your Weaknesses by reviewing what skills you used in just one or two success stories. Think about how you might improve on that skill. Now you're ready to answer "What are your weaknesses?"

- With the skills you listed, divide them into three categories:

  **Hard Skills:** These are skills you either acquired from your education or on the job experiences (e.g., computer skills, languages, degrees, training and technical ability).

  **Transferable or Soft Skills:** Your transferable skills are skills you have learned over a lifetime. These are the skills that you take from job to job (e.g., communication and people skills, analytical problem solving and planning skills)

  **Personal Traits:** Your unique qualities or traits (e.g., dependable, flexible, friendly, hardworking, expressive, formal, punctual and being a team player).

  It’s important to understand the difference in skills because you never know what will be asked in an interview.

Now we are going to start putting all your hard work together....
Your Marketing Toolbox Should Include:

A 60-Second Commercial
Setting up a 60-Second Commercial is a critical piece of your job search. This will become part of how you market yourself. In this job market, networking accounts for 75% to 80% of how people get jobs. We also know that one of the most asked interview questions is “Tell me about yourself.” By preparing and practicing your 60-Second Commercial, you will immediately come across to the listener as clear, concise and professional.

Elements of a commercial:
• Explain who you are and what you are interested in
• Illustrate past experiences and state an accomplishment you are most proud of in your last position or in school
• Convey your strengths and abilities
• Conclude by describing your interests and their connection to the employer or what you want to do next.

Who you are:
My name is ______________________. I am a(n) ________________________________________________
(Tip: This can be what you are doing now... I am a student at Henderson Community College and work part-time in sales at Best Buy.)

What you do:
My experience is in (describe) _____________________________________________________________
(Tip: Write a couple of sentences to describe what you do... I attend classes and work 20 hours a week.)

Why you’re the best, unique, talented; or what you do especially well:
I am very strong in (identify a strength) which I demonstrated when I (list an accomplishment/specific example) ____________________________________________________________________________
(Tip: Write a sentence that expresses your strength(s). Provide a specific example of how you used your strength – specific action you took and an outcome of those actions.)

What contributions (values added) are you looking to make:
I can be of benefit to your company because (list how)_________________________________________________________________________
(Tip: Tell how you can add value or contribute to the organization. What can you produce or deliver to the organization? You may want to include some of your goals or what you are looking to do with as a career)

Examples:
I was a restaurant management trainee at Burger King for 2 years when I decided to pursue my degree in Business. My exposure to human resource classes such as employment law and HR Management interested me so much that I decided to pursue a career in human resources.

I am graduating from Henderson Community College with an Associate’s Degree in Nursing. As a nurse extern, I worked on the Medical and Emergency departments where I got to use the skills that my instructor signed off on such as insertion of Foleys, IVs, etc. Prior to that, I worked at Dairy Queen. I find that wherever I have worked, I bring three key strengths to the table: quick decision making, building relationships, and organizing and prioritizing. My future plan is to work in a medium-sized hospital, hopefully in the medical unit to get a good grasp of the basics and get my routine going.
A Reason for Leaving Statement
The goal of this statement is to provide the listener with a simple, positive message that leads the listener from why you left to what you want to do next. It should be short, truthful and positive.

Note: Avoid using negatively charged words such as “unfortunately.”

If you resigned:
• I resigned to focus on my education. I’m excited about my major and want to use my skills and experience in a different capacity.
• I recently achieved certification and I want to utilize my educational background and technical skills in my next position.
• I am interested in a job with more responsibility, and I am very ready for a new challenge.

If you were fired:
• I was fired, actually. The job had a big sales component and I had pretty bad sales numbers. I realized from that experience that I just hate selling and I’m not good at it. They made the right decision, and I realized pretty quickly how relieved I was by it.”
• Although my last job didn’t work out, I’ve since taken classes and did well there. I probably didn’t fully understand my previous boss’ expectations or why he let me go before I had a chance to prove myself there.

If you were laid off:
• I had a great four years with ABC Corporation. I learned a lot and was able to contribute significantly to the company’s success in meeting its quality and production goals. Late last year the firm decided to restructure its manufacturing operation to better reflect market conditions. My position was one of a number affected by the reorganization.
• Due to the market, my company had to go through a restructuring where 30 employees including myself were affected. Now I have an opportunity to get a fresh start, using my experience and education to help a new company.

ACTIONS TO TAKE:
- Write and practice your 60-second commercial
- Write and practice your reason for leaving statement.
- Make sure they both sound natural and conversational.
UNDERSTANDING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Purpose of an Interview
Interviewers are looking at three things:

- **Can you do the job?** Do you have the experience, the education, the background to do the job.

- **Will you do the job?** What is your interest in the position, company, and industry. What is your work ethic? Are you enthusiastic? Do your career goals match with the employer? Are you willing to work and are you available to work?

- **Are you a good fit for the job?** Hiring managers want to ensure you are a good fit for their department as well as the organization. They are assessing your likability, chemistry, communication, values, work and management styles, general interests, and even your appearance. Are you dressed professionally? Do you use good grammar when you speak? Do you have good eye contact?

Types of Interviews

The Screening Interview
The screening interview is the first step in the interview process and is frequently conducted by phone. A recruiter or human resources professional will determine if you meet the minimum requirements for the position, that your resume is accurate, and that you are truly interested in the position.

The Qualifying Interview
The qualifying interview is usually conducted by the hiring manager. It is typically an in-depth review of your experience and skills to determine if you “can” do the job, but also to see if you “will” do the job and if you are a good “fit” for the department. These types of interviews are either conducted by phone and/or in-person. You may have several phone interviews prior to a face-to-face interview.

A Technical Interview
Many times the hiring manager will want you to meet with a technical expert who “can” determine if you can do the job technically – do you possess the technical skills and specific knowledge. These interviews are typically used for technical positions in Information Technology, Mechanical, Industrial Maintenance, and Engineering roles, typically.

Blessing or Approval Interview
This is still an optional step, but more and more companies include this step. This is the interview with the hiring manager’s manager. It is their responsibility to ensure you “will” do the job and that you are a good “fit” not just for the department, but for the organization.

Team Interview
Are you a team player? Can you interact with others well? Do you communicate well? Be prepared to be called back for a team interview where you will meet with individual peers, members of the department, or other company employees with whom you might work. Again, the hiring manager wants to know if you are a good “fit” for the department.
Interview Formats

Telephone
This type of interview relies solely on your voice and your vocal inflections. For phone interviews, here are some recommendations to ace that phone interview:

- If a recruiter contacts you and wants to do a phone interview at that moment, try to reschedule the conversation at the interviewer’s convenience. You can let them know that they are calling at an inopportune time. This way you have a scheduled appointment and time to prepare and put your best foot forward.
- Have your resume, your accomplishments and any notes in front of you.
- Ensure you have a quiet room - no dogs barking or kids screaming in the background.
- Ensure your cell phone is charged with excellent reception. If possible, use a land line.
- Stand up and walk around during the phone interview. Standing will make you sound a lot more energetic and passionate on the phone.
- Never eat or drink or chew gum
- SMILE! When you smile, your voice sounds more enthusiastic and positive.
- Dress for Success as if you were having an in-person meeting with the interviewer.
- Take notes.

One-on-One
This is the most common format where it is just you and the interviewer.

Round Robin
This is a format where you have a series of interviews lined up with different interviewers and you move from one interviewer to another. It is still a one-on-one type of interview.

Panel
This is a great way to get the team together and see how you interact with everyone. Recommendations to ace the Panel interview:

- When you are responding to a question, look at the person who asked the question.
- You will spend more energy in this type of interview, so be prepared.
- Treat each person with respect. Ask for business cards from each person on the panel at the beginning of your interview if possible. Otherwise, write each of their names down in your portfolio, so you can address them by name.

Lunch/Dinner
Employers want to see how your table manners are and how you conduct yourself during a meal especially if the position will be entertaining clients. A few tips:

- Don’t drink alcoholic beverages during the interview but having one glass of wine with dinner is certainly acceptable. Don’t order any after-dinner drinks even if your host is ordering them.
- Never order an alcoholic beverage at lunch.
- Be selective about the type of food you order. You want to be able to chew and swallow and still keep up your end of the conversation.
- Avoid dishes such as spaghetti, soup, or pizza or foods like barbecued ribs that require you to pick them up.
- Never pick the most expensive meal. Rule of thumb is to order something less expensive than what the host orders.
- Don’t take the first bite. Let your host take the first bite.
Types of Interview Questions
There are three types of questions interviewers may use during their interviews with you:

Common Questions
These are the questions that you typically expect and you can prepare in advance for these types of questions.

1. **Tell me about yourself.**
   This is already in your marketing toolbox – your 30-second commercial. Keep your answer PROFESSIONAL. Never discuss personal information.

2. **What are your strengths?**
The interviewer is looking for a “fit”. Notice the statement below talks about a strength and then backs it up with a specific example.

   *My strength is my flexibility to handle change. As customer service manager at my last job, I was able to turn around a negative working environment and develop a very supportive team.*

3. **What are your weaknesses?**
Talk about a true weakness in a skill or trait and show what you are doing to overcome it.

   *I have had trouble in the past with planning and prioritization. However, I’m now taking steps to correct this. I just started using an electronic Franklin Planner. . . then show them your planner and how you are using it.*

   *I’m proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, but I have to admit Access is not my strength. So, I have been taking online tutorials to get a better understanding of how Access is used and how to actually use it.*

4. **Why did you leave your last job?**
Answer with your reason-for-leaving statement that you prepared earlier.

5. **What is your work style?**
Your answer should reflect your strengths, while overall emphasizing the qualities of a good employee. Here are some examples:

   *I’ve always been a top performer, from school to my first job to the present. It’s not that I’m smarter than other people, but I put in a lot of extra effort and clearly define goals so I can meet and exceed them.*

   *I’ve never called in sick, always met deadlines, and according to past bosses my performance has met or exceeded expectations. My last boss told me I work like the sun rises and sets, every day, without fail.*

   *I like to plan things, and stick to a plan, but I know that sometimes the best plan needs changes on the fly. It’s actually part of good planning to be flexible.*

6. **What are your future career plans?**
The key is to focus on your career objectives and what you are doing to reach those objectives.

   *Within five years, I would like to become the very best bookkeeper your company has on staff. I want to work toward becoming the expert that others rely upon. And in doing so, I feel I’ll be fully prepared to take on any greater responsibilities which might be presented in the long term. For example, I am*
presently enrolled at Henderson Community College getting my Associate of Applied Science in Business with an Accounting Option.

7. **Why are you interested in our organization**
   Avoid the urge to say “you have an opening and I need a job”. This is where the research you did prior to the interview will make you stand out on this question and show that you are competent. The interviewer wants to know that you’ve thought about where you want to work -- that you’re not just sending your resume to any company with a job opening.

8. **How did you get along with your last manager?**
   Interviewers want to know how you got along with your boss. This is a tough question to answer because you never want to talk negatively about any boss. Discuss only the positives and the strengths your past supervisors had and how they helped you succeed in your positions.
   
   *I learned a lot from my previous manager. She expected a lot out of each team member and told you when she didn’t think you were working up to your potential. It made me want to work harder and exceed her expectations.*

9. **How would your peers, subordinates or last manager describe you?**
   Refer to the positive reactions you experienced from other team members. Support your perception of how you came across with specific examples of observations or remarks made by the team.

10. **Why should we hire you?**
    Review the job description and note the job requirements. Then, refer to your skills and experience relevant to the job requirements and the company’s needs. What benefits are you bringing to this job? Mention your previous successes and your goals for the future. Be straightforward and confident about your abilities.

   *I have the right combination of skills and experience for this job. I also bring the additional quality of strong analytical and problem solving ability as shown by my introduction of a more efficient work flow system at ABC Company. My commitment to excellent work standards will add value to the team. I am a fast learner, I had to learn a totally new operating system in my last job and I was up and running within a couple of weeks. One of the reasons I want to work for this company is your reputation for staff development, learning and growth are important values to me. I sincerely believe I am the right person for this job and for this company.*

11. **How has your education prepared you for your career?**
    Provide specific examples (using the STAR approach) in your educational background which specifically aligns to the required competencies of your targeted job.
    
    *I played a lead role in a class project where we gathered and analyzed best practice data from this industry. Let me tell you more about the results . . .*

12. **If I were to ask your professors to describe you, what would they say?**
    Prior to any interview, ask your previous bosses or professors if they would provide a reference and give you a letter of recommendation. Then you can answer the question like this:
    
    *I know she would say I’m results-oriented and one of the best work-study people she has ever had. May I show you her letter of recommendation?*
Salary Questions

What are your salary expectations for this job?

1. **DEFLECT** when asked the first time
   
   *I'd like to know about you’re the position and your expectations before we discuss salary*

2. **THROW IT BACK** when asked a second time
   
   *You know the job better than I do, what is the salary range?*

3. **GIVE THEM A RANGE** when asked a third time
   
   *Based on my research, I’m looking between $x and $y*

   You will need to conduct salary research prior to any interview. There are several websites to do so:

   - [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com)
   - [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)
   - [www.glassceiling.com](http://www.glassceiling.com)

Behavioral Questions

Past performance predicts future performance, so interviewers will ask questions about your past performance and behaviors to indicate your future performance. These types of questions often start with:

- Give me an example when....
- Describe a time when....
- Tell me about a situation when...

Remember the exercise where you had to write 6-8 successful stories and 3 – 5 unsuccessful stories, this is where these stories come into play. Make sure you answer completely using the STAR approach. If you find the interviewer probing more, it’s possible you have not given them specific information or you have left out actions or results.

Below are sample behavioral questions.

1. Describe a situation in which your work or idea was criticized.
2. Tell me about a time you had a major conflict with a co-worker.
3. Describe a time when you did not meet a deadline? What happened and why?
4. Tell me about a time you made a mistake at work.
5. Describe a time you disagreed with your professor or boss?

Hypothetical Questions

These are questions to see how you would handle a specific situation. Interviewers ask these questions to see if you can *think on your feet* and are resourceful. Before answering, think about the question and take some time. Provide specific examples of what you would do. Use strong action verbs to describe the actions you would take.

Here are some sample questions:

1. If you had a problem and did not know the answer, how would you find the solution?
2. If you could design the perfect job, what would it be? **BE CAREFUL WITH THIS ONE!** Make sure it is similar to the job for which you are interviewing.
3. Imagine you have several projects due at the same time and you are running out of time. What would you do?

Inappropriate Questions

Interview questions should only relate to the job; however, on occasion you may be asked questions that are inappropriate or illegal. Questions relating to age, sex, religion, children, family, etc. are in appropriate. How do you handle the situation when it arises? Many interviewers are not properly trained and just don’t know that they should not be asking these types of questions. Keep calm and professional. Try and find out
what the interviewer is really asking. Answer in a polite, honest manner, but do not offer detailed personal information. Steer the answer to your ability to meet the employer’s expectations.

Example: Do you have children?
Response: Are you concerned about my ability to be at work on time and work overtime as needed? Be assured that I have never missed a day of work in my previous position and I will be able to be on time and work overtime.

Example: Were you born in the United States?
Response: I have the legal right to work in the US and my English language abilities are excellent.

Questions You Need to Ask

DO NOT ask about salary or benefits or how you did on the interview or if you are being considered for the job. Be prepared to ask questions. Never say to an interviewer “I don’t have any questions” or “You answered all my questions”. You want the interviewer to know you have a strong interest in learning more about the job and the company.

Here is a sampling of questions you can ask:

Human Resources:
- How would you describe the position?
- To whom does the position report?
- What can you tell me about him/her?
- How might you describe his/her management style?
- How did this opening occur?
- How long has the position been vacant?
- Have you interviewed any internal candidates and what is their status?
- Describe the organization’s structure.
- How would you describe the culture?
- How does this position interact with other departments?
- How do my skills compare with those of the other candidates you have interviewed?
- In your opinion, what is the most important contribution that this company expects from its employees?
- Is there a structured career path at the company?
- What is the next step in the process?

Hiring Manager:
- What do you see as the biggest challenge for this position?
- What are your 60/90/120-day goals for this position?
- What are the specific responsibilities/goals for this position?
- What specific skills/experience are you looking for?
- What would you expect the first assignment to be?
- How would you describe a “typical day” in this position?
- How does this position interact with other departments?
- What is your vision for this department/division?
- Are there formal metrics in place for measuring and rewarding performance over time?
- How can I be most successful in this role?
- I am extremely interested in this position, what would preclude
me from getting this position?***

- **What is the next step in this process?***
- **When will you be making decision?***

***These last three questions are very important so you know if there are obstacles you need to overcome at that point, and when to follow-up if you do not hear back from the company.

Manager’s Manager:

- What is it like to work here?
- Describe your job/role here.
- Describe how work gets done here. As a team? As an individual contributor?
- How are decisions made?
- How will this position impact you? Your group/department?
- How does this position contribute to the company’s goals, productivity, or profits?
- How would you describe the organization’s culture?
- What types of issues does the supervisor consider critical?
- If I were a spectacular success in this position after six months, what would I have accomplished?
- What do you enjoy most about your job? Least?
- How long have you been with the company?

**Dress for Success**
Keep your attire conservative and simple. Never wear jewelry, clothes, or other apparel that would distract the interviewer from listening to what you have to say.

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<th><strong>DO'S</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON'T'S</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Dress conservatively</td>
<td>Don't wear torn, soiled, wrinkled clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base your clothing choice on your research about the job and the employer.</td>
<td>Don't wear too much jewelry or dangling jewelry or body piercings (Men should avoid earrings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check out what management wears and dress similarly without overkill</td>
<td>Don't let them see tattoos. Cover them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do practice good grooming</td>
<td>Don't dress casual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do have clean, updated, neatly styled hair</td>
<td>Don't wear a lot of cologne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do have clean hands and trimmed nails</td>
<td>Don't wear athletic shoes, open-toed shoes, flip-flops, sandals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do carry a portfolio or briefcase with extra copies of your resume</td>
<td>Don't eat spicy, offensive smelling foods prior to the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do bring a clean notepad and pen that works</td>
<td>Don't wear &quot;flashy or silly&quot; ties (i.e. a flashing Mickey Mouse tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do wear basic hosiery (no textured hose)</td>
<td>Don't wear sexy clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do wear shoes you can walk easily in</td>
<td>Don't chew gum or smoke prior to the interview or during the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Wear Close-toe shoes only.</td>
<td>Don't wear a mini-skirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Wear effective deodorant</td>
<td>Don't wear heavy make-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't carry a purse AND a briefcase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don't wear t-shirts, jeans, shorts, ball caps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After the interview

1. **Say Thank You.** Send a thank you note within 24 hours restating your interest in the job and how your qualifications match the job requirements. Write a personalized thank you note to each person with whom you speak. Don’t forget to proofread.

   Generally, thank you letters should be word processed on your resume paper and should follow proper business format. Some employers feel that a thank you note sent via e-mail is sufficient, while others feel that a letter sent through snail mail is more appropriate. You may also choose to handwrite a thank you note on note paper or note cards if you know the interviewer personally, but should probably only do so if your handwriting is neat and legible.

2. **Follow up.** If you haven’t heard from the interviewer within the time frame indicated at the close of the interview, call the hiring manager and/or the contact person that you're still interested in the job. Ask when they plan to make a hiring decision or if there is any additional questions you can answer for them.

3. **Continue** other job search efforts while you wait on a decision.

4. **If you aren’t hired** send a “turndown letter”. A well-written response to your rejection shows that you handle rejection with reasonableness rather than bitterness. This type of letter thanks the hiring manager for their time and if anything changes, to keep you mind.

   If you continue to be interested in the company, it also pays to keep in touch with the hiring manager. Persistence can pay off as you may be offered a position at a later date.

5. **Prepare** for your next interview. The more interviews you tackle the more polished you become. You may want to contact the hiring manager or interviewer who rejected you and see if you can get any pointers on what to improve before your next interview.
Sample Correspondence

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

FULL NAME
Street Address
City, State Zip

Home: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
Email Address
Cell: (XXX) XXXX

Date

Mr(s). FirstName LastName
Title
Company Name
Street
City, State ZIP

Dear Mr. or Ms. LastName:

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the Customer Service position at Independence Bank with me. After meeting with you and observing the company’s operations, I am further convinced that my background and skills in sales and customer service coincide well with your needs.

I really appreciate that you took so much time to acquaint me with the bank. It is no wonder that Independence Bank has such a growth record in the Henderson area. I feel I could learn a great deal from you and would certainly enjoy working with you.

In addition to my qualifications and experience, I will bring excellent work habits and judgment to this position. With the countless demands on your time, I am sure that you require people who can be trusted to carry out their responsibilities with minimal supervision.

I look forward, Mr(s). LastName, to hearing from you concerning your hiring decision. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Signature

FirstName LastName
Dear Mr. or Ms. LastName:

I appreciated the opportunity to interview for the Administrative Assistant position with your company. I was, of course, disappointed to learn I was not selected for the position.

Since I remain confident that I have the skills and qualifications to excel in your company, I hope you will consider me for any other similar positions either now or in the future. I learned a great deal and enjoyed meeting with you and your very enthusiastic staff. ABC Associates is exactly the type of exciting organization I’m interested in working with and building a career.

Please keep me in mind if and when another position becomes available for someone with my qualifications. Best wishes to you and your staff.

Sincerely,

Signature

FirstName LastName