

YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER LANDED YOU AN INTERVIEW – NOW WHAT?

- **Learn all you can about the company.** A prospective employer will expect you to be interested in the organization and have some background knowledge about its business. Otherwise, why would you be looking for a job with them? Knowing something about the company will also help you to formulate intelligent questions to ask the interviewer.
- **Select your outfit for the interview.** You need to wear clean, pressed, business-like clothing. Attractive, appropriate dress is a compliment to the person you are meeting. Shine your shoes! And if you are applying for a job at a bank or elementary school, you might want to consider taking out that lip ring...
- **Consider what answers you might give to the following questions:**
 - Why do you want to go into this field?
 - Why do you want to work here?
 - How do you feel about evening work? Weekend work?
Carrying a pager? Being on call?
 - Do you prefer working independently or as part of a team?
 - Why should we hire you? Why do you believe you are the best candidate for this job?
 - When did you leave your last job, and why?
 - What did you like the most and the least about your last job?
 - What have you been doing since you left your last job?
 - Tell me about the best and worst bosses you have had. (This is a trick question – *never* say anything offensive about a previous employer.)
 - What type of people do you have the most trouble getting along with in the workplace, and how do you handle it?
 - Do you plan to further your education? If so, to what extent?
 - What has been your greatest achievement so far, and what your biggest disappointment?
 - What is your greatest strength?
 - What are some of your weaknesses?
 - How do you handle stress?
 - What are your pet peeves?
 - You don't have the necessary experience or background for this position, so why would we benefit from hiring you?

the interview

- **You will also need to answer questions about money:**
 - What exactly were you paid at your last job? (This question requires an absolutely truthful answer; do NOT fudge it.)
 - What is the minimum salary you will accept?
 - What salary range do you wish to be considered for?
 - What are your financial needs?
- **Prepare some questions to ask the interviewer. Here are some examples:**
 - What is your management style? If you were my boss, how often would we meet?
 - How would my performance be measured? By whom? How often?
 - Would there be opportunities for advancement, and how long would it be before I could be considered for a promotion?
 - What is the greatest challenge you see in this job?
 - What would you expect me to accomplish in the job?
 - Can you describe a typical day for someone in this position?
 - How many people have held this position in the last five years and where are they now?
 - Why isn't this position being filled from within?
 - How soon do you expect to make a decision?
 - If I am offered the position, how soon will you need my response?
 - Does this company expect to expand over the next five years?
 - Can you explain your organizational structure?
 - What do you see as the biggest opportunity facing this company at the present time?
- **Prepare your papers.** Make a folder containing extra copies of your resume and cover letter along with any other back-up materials you might be asked for:
 - Reference list
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Salary history if applicable
 - Writing samples or project summaries
 - Also include a pad and pen to take notes

HDAY: THE BIG INTERVIEW

- Plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. If in doubt about how long it will take you to get there, arrive half an hour early and spend the extra time in your car or in the lobby of the building. Don't arrive even one minute late!
- Do not chew gum or smell like cigarette smoke. If you wear cologne, it should be discreet and light.
- Turn off your cell phone. NEVER answer a telephone call during an interview.
- Treat everyone you meet with professionalism and courtesy. The receptionist or maintenance man may offer his or her opinion of you to the boss, and the rumple-suited person in the elevator may BE the boss.
- Maintain a professional image throughout the interview. Smile, shake hands and say, "How do you do?" upon meeting the interviewer. Sit straight, smile as often as you can, maintain eye contact and sit still in your seat – don't slouch or fidget.
- Don't be shy and try not to appear nervous. You should seem confident, enthusiastic and energetic but not pushy, aggressive or overconfident. If you find that you are trying too hard to sell yourself, sit back, take a breath, and calm down. Never interrupt the interviewer, even in your enthusiasm.
- Listen very carefully to each question you are asked and give thoughtful, to-the-point and honest answers. Ask for clarification if you don't understand a particular question, and it's okay to take a few moments to collect your thoughts before answering.
- Before you leave, make sure you understand the next step in the hiring process. Know what action you are expected to take, if any, and know when and from whom you can expect to hear about the position. Establish a follow-up plan.
- At the end of the interview, shake hands firmly and make eye contact. Smile and say, "Thank you very much for your time," or "I greatly appreciate the time you have taken to see me."



LAST BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST ...

Immediately after the interview, you should send a thank you letter or formal thank you email to every person with whom you spoke. A thank you letter will set you apart from the many candidates who do not send one, and additionally it will allow you the opportunity to reemphasize your strengths, accomplishments and skills in a targeted fashion. It is also a chance to explain or clarify any potential misunderstandings that might have occurred during the interview, although it is not the place to apologize for blunders you may have made. If you arrive 10 minutes late despite your best efforts, apologize profusely and forget about it. If you make a technical mistake – “I would be able to start Monday in two weeks” and then you remember you have a doctor’s appointment that Monday, explain in your thank you letter that you have a previous commitment and would actually only be able to start on the Tuesday.

Statistically, less than 5 percent of job applicants send a thank you letter after an interview. You will stand out from the crowd if you write a gracious thank you letter. So get that letter out RIGHT AWAY!

Carol Long
1900 22nd Street North
Arlington, VA 22207
703-534-9643
celong@cox.net

Mr. Paul Stanton
Stanton Research Services, Inc.
2307 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 720
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Mr. Stanton,

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the office manager position at Stanton Research Services, Inc., with me. After meeting with you and observing the company’s operations, I am further convinced that my background and skills coincide well with your needs.

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. Stanton, to hearing from you concerning your hiring decision. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol Long
Carol Long