**Interview Preparation**

Preparation is essential to remaining calm under pressure and is the first step toward a successful interview. Here are some tips:

The Formula for Successful Interviewing is:

**Mindset + Preparation + Interest/Enthusiasm = Successful Interview**

**I. Determine your mindset.**

**II. The Three C’s – What the Interviewer is Looking For:**

**Competence**: Can you do the job? Interviewer is looking for evidence that you experience, skills and competencies match the position and organization.

**Compatibility**: Can you do the job here in this corporate culture? Will you relate effectively with the diverse employees in the organization?

**Chemistry**: Can you do the job with us? Do they like you? How is the interpersonal chemistry?

**III. The Four C’s – What Are You Looking For:**

**Competence**: Can you do the job? You want a position that you can handle. Do you have the experience, skills and competencies to do the job on a day-to-day basis? Is this what you want to do?

**Compatibility**: How do you feel about the corporate culture? Is it consistent with your values? Will you relate effectively with the diverse employees in the organization?

**Chemistry**: Do you like these people? How is the interpersonal chemistry? With your supervisor? With your peers?

**Compensation**: Can you do the job for what they will pay?

**IV. Before the Interview:**

* Ask whomever is making the arrangements the logistics of the interview – how long it will last, with whom you will meet (names and titles), what type of interview, location of building and where to park.
* Drive to the location beforehand so that you can arrive **ON TIME**. Leave enough time for traffic delays and flat tires.
* Research and learn as much as possible about the company, the individuals with whom you will interview, and the available position. Resources for information on industries, companies and leadership: Walker Management Library <https://library.vanderbilt.edu/management/>; [www.LinkedIn.com](http://www.LinkedIn.com) (use Advanced Search); [www.bizjournals.com](http://www.bizjournals.com); [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com); and *company insiders*.
* Plan to look your professional best. Make sure that you have clean and pressed business attire in neutral colors and be conservative in your use of cosmetics and jewelry. NO cologne.
* Bring several copies of your resume (on high quality paper), list of questions and references, and a folder or notepad. Greet your interviewer with a firm handshake and an enthusiastic smile.

**V. Prepare to Answer the 10 Most Commonly Asked Interview Questions:**

*Please also see the Vanderbilt YouTube videos at:* [*http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srSLnvogeeE&list=SPA7D2D988E5118795*](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srSLnvogeeE&list=SPA7D2D988E5118795)

The following questions most likely will be asked of you:

1. Tell me about yourself OR walk me through your resume.
2. Why do you want to leave your current position/company? Why did you leave your last job?
3. What position or function are you looking for?
4. What qualifies you for this position?
5. What do you know about our company?
6. Why do you want to work for our company?
7. Why should we hire you?
8. What are your career goals?
9. What are your strengths?
10. What are your weaknesses?

*Plan to speak about what you can do for the company/interviewer if hired. Their mindset is, “We have a problem. How can this person solve our problem?”*

**VI. Prepare for Behavior Based Questions**

Tell me about a time when…

Use your already prepared SOAR stories. (Situation, Objective or Obstacle, Action, Result)

**VII. Your Questions:**

About the position:

1. What are the greatest needs for this position? This department?
2. What are your long and short-term expectations?
3. What keeps you (hiring manager) up at night?
4. What attracted you to the company and what keeps you here?

About the company:

1. What does the future look like?
2. What is the corporate culture like?
3. How is your company different from its competition, from the viewpoint of customers and employees?

**IX. During the Interview:**

Have in mind that you are there to obtain a job offer. If you want the position, ask for it.

Make sure the interviewer sees warmth, enthusiasm and interest in first few minutes.

**Most valued characteristics of candidates:**

* The interviewee showed honesty, personal integrity, warmth, enthusiasm, substance behind image, natural curiosity about the company and the interviewer.
* The interviewee listened to the interviewer.
* Made no excuses for past failures.
* Was not overly concerned about money.
* Clearly stated why they are interested in the position and the company.
* Showed evidence of researching the company.

# X. Compensation

* Don’t initiate conversation about salary, benefits or hours in first interview.
* Know the amount you want and know what you will walk away from. Go to **www.salary.com** and other sites listed at [Salary Guides & Guidance](https://www.myperfectresume.com/how-to/career-resources/salguides/#eval) *(formerly The Riley Guide; now owned by The Perfect Resume)* to research salaries for the position for which you are interviewing. Also, company insiders can be helpful in talking about salary ranges.
* “I’d like the best possible offer you can make.” “I need to know more about the position.” “What is the range for this position?”

**XI. Before You Leave:**

* If possible, get **business cards** from interviewers (these will be handy references when following up).
* Ask when you should expect to hear from them. Ask if you may follow up if you haven’t heard after a certain amount of time.

# XII. Follow-Up

Write each person you interview with to **thank them** for their consideration. Clarify any points you feel strongly about.