

# Interviewing

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The purpose of an interview is to find out whether a candidate's qualifications and personal qualities meet the needs of the job and the department. The interviewer should also let the candidate know as much as possible about the position and performance expectations. A successful discussion is when both sides open up and talk candidly. Help candidates relax and then draw out information.

## Making the Candidate Comfortable

To make the candidate comfortable the interviewer should:

- Make the meeting informal from the start by stepping out from behind his or her desk.
- Hold the interview in a place other than the interviewer's office, such as a conference room.
- Sit side by side or at the same table so the interviewer and the candidate are equals.
- Offer the candidate something to drink such as coffee, tea, or water and have one as well.
- If unsure of the candidate's name pronunciation ask this question first.

## The Interview

Come to the interview knowing a few things about the candidate. Background information may be found on their resume.

To start the interview the interviewer should introduce who they are, what they do, and maybe why they chose to work in the department. They should then explain the interview process, describe the job, and the organization. This leads to mentioning goals of the department, training, upward mobility, personnel policies, salary information, and benefits.

## Questioning the Candidate

Questions should be phrased carefully to help the candidate relax. They should be open-ended; that is candidates can answer however they choose. For example, for a management position ask "What are your major strengths?", "Where do

you hope to improve yourself?" and "What do you hope to gain from this position?" For a crew position ask "What do you like to do most?" or "Tell me about the best days on your current job and then about your worst days?" The questions must be related to the job and to the applicant's ability to perform it. All applicants should be asked the same questions and treated consistently. No questions should be related to the applicant's personal life.

### Sample Interview Questions

- Please tell me about your present job.
- What did you like most?
- What did you like least?
- What were your major areas of responsibility?
- What are some of your more important accomplishments from your present position?
- What is the biggest problem you have faced on the job?
- How did you resolve it?
- What interests you most about this job?

Eye contact shows respect for the candidate and that the interviewer is paying attention. The questions a candidate asks often provide important information. Questions such as "how quickly will I be trained?" or "how much responsibility will I have?" indicate that the candidate has initiative and may not need a lot of supervision. If the candidate spends a lot of time talking about stress, they may not be able to handle it.

## Following the Interview

At the conclusion of the interview, thank the applicant and inform him or her what will happen next. The interviewer should write notes immediately after the interview. Check references if the individual is considered a serious candidate.

Sources:

*Hiring New Personnel*, Road Business, Fall 1997.

*Interviewing for Employers Winning the best in the 21st Century*, Perman Willits & Associates, Inc., Peak Search Company, Colorado Springs, CO <http://www.peaksearch.net/hiringtips.htm>, 2000.

Tips for Interviewing, PageWise,

[http://ny.essortment.com/interviewtips\\_pvt.htm](http://ny.essortment.com/interviewtips_pvt.htm)