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INTERVIEWING STRATEGIES

1. **Practice! Practice! Practice!** - with friends and family

2. **Do your homework.** Be prepared like it's a final oral exam.

Be aware of employer's needs - Study an ad or posting that asks for specific experience, be prepared to highlight those skills at your interview in terms of:

- a) your past accomplishments and failures
- b) how you approached a problem
- c) how you got by it, and
- d) what you learned from it.

Make notes on your relevant experience before the interview. Be prepared to provide specific examples that are quantifiable. Don't embellish. Don't fib.

Many recruiters say job applicants are clueless about the companies they interview at. There's no excuse for that. You can find everything you need to know on a company's web site or by talking to gatekeepers.

Don't wait until the first interview to find out about the company. If you do, there might not be a second!

3. **Be prepared to answer questions** – rehearse them before the interview:

- a) Refer to book, Best Answers to the 201 Most Frequently Asked Interview Questions

4. **Be prepared to ask well-considered questions** – write them down before the interview:

- a) Refer to book, 201 Questions to Ask at A Job Interview

If you don't ask questions, you leave the impression that:

1. You're not vested in the interview
2. You think the job is unimportant or trivial
3. You're uncomfortable asserting yourself
4. You're not intelligent
5. You're easily intimidated
6. You're bored or boring

5. **Beware of Top 10 attitude strikeouts:**

1. Doesn't ask questions
2. Condemnation of former employer
3. Inability to take criticism
4. Poor personal appearance
5. Indecisive, lazy, cynical
6. Overbearing, overly aggressive, "know-it-all"
7. Late to interview
8. Failure to look at interviewer while interviewing
9. Unable to express self clearly
10. Overemphasis on money

6. **The ability to speak well is a plus.** It helps to be able to improvise. Think on your feet. Spend a few minutes (don't rush) answering each question and pay attention to the tone of your voice, the level of your enthusiasm, the progression of your thoughts. Be able to answer a question with a question.

7. **Ask what's next** – process and timing of decision making

8. **Ask for the job!** – this step seems so obvious, but most candidates skip it.

Employers value sincere enthusiasm. If you're qualified and you really want the job, chances are you won't have to sell too much.

Just say, "I would really like to work here" in the most sincerest way possible.

BASIC RULES

1. Keep your cell phone off during job interviews –
2. Never be late – this one isn't rocket science, but you'd be surprised how many people still do it - Arrive only 15 minutes before the interview – sitting in the waiting room will only make you more nervous
3. Address the interviewer as Mr. Smith or Ms. Jones – unless you're asked to use his or her first name
4. Dress professionally –
 - a. Fresh haircut
 - b. Clean or polished nails (neutral color)
 - c. Pressed or new suit
 - d. Shined shoes
 - e. Organized briefcase
 - f. Fresh scent (easy on the perfume or cologne)
 - g. Fresh breath
 - h. Heavy-duty deodorant
 - i. Light makeup
 - j. Minimal jewelry (you want them to focus on you not your accessories)
5. Deal with Pre-Interview Jitters –
 - a. Get a good night's rest
 - b. Go easy on the caffeine before the meeting
 - c. Repeat positive affirmations about yourself
 - d. Listen to calming music on your way to the interview
 - e. Look at the interview as your opportunity to shine
 - f. Welcome the challenge
 - g. Breathe
 - h. Exhibit interest in the job instead of trying to be interesting
 - i. Stay focused and positive
 - j. Know that the job is yours provided it is the right one for you
 - k. Smile

The **handshake** - staple of modern communication (at least in this culture). Practice it. No limp fish, sweaty palms, or white knuckling.

6. Send thank you letters after interviews

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. **What are you looking for ideally in a job?**
2. **Tell me about how you got to where you are?**
3. We have a number of very talented applicants for this position. Why should we select you?
4. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
5. What area needs personal and professional development?
6. **Why did you major in X?**
7. What are you leaving Company X?
8. Tell me about a specific project you recently worked on?
9. If I talked to your manager, what would he or she tell me about you?
10. What interests you about this job at this company?
11. What did you learn from one of the projects that you worked on that failed?
12. If you could re-create one cultural aspect from a previous employer and bring it here, what would it be?
13. Describe your “wow factor” to me.
14. **Have you acquired a reputation for anything in your work?**
15. What competencies would you like us to help you develop?
16. **What leader do you admire most? Why? What have you learned from that person?**
17. **What have your accomplishments been in your current role?**
18. **What are your career aspirations in both the short term and the long term?**
19. What influenced you to pursue a career in your particular area of expertise?
20. Why is this position your next right move?
21. Tell me about your qualifications and what experiences/skills you can bring to this organization that will add value?

22. Why did you go to X College?

23. What is motivating you in considering another position?

24. Explain to me a situation in which your business and personal ethics were challenged. Describe it, and how did you respond to it?

25. Describe your leadership style.

THE OFFER

1. Do you know what the average salary range is for someone with your experience? You should so you know what the ballpark figure is. www.salary.com Cost of Living Wizard. Then when you get an offer you can counter in an informed and reasonable manner based on the facts. Good negotiators respect worthy opponents.
2. Do not mention salary until the discussion is initiated by the interviewer. Avoid discussion of salary for as long as possible.
3. Consider these variables while you're waiting for the offer:
 - a. Do you have to relocate? This is usually a negotiable item.
 - b. Will you have a particularly long commute? Travel costs should be factored into your salary.
 - c. Do you warrant top of the range? Do your accomplishments reflect that?
 - d. Will you have generous benefits? This is usually a negotiable item.
4. Always go high, rather than waiting to get your foot in the door and then negotiating later. This is the only time you really have any leverage.
5. If they ask for a range, go wide enough to accommodate your needs (\$50,000 to \$60,000) but not so wide to render it meaningless (\$55,000 to \$95,000).
6. Sleep on an offer – at least 24 hours, preferably 3 to 4 days.
7. Put the offer and terms in writing.