

INTRODUCTION

I've created this handout for the people who have attended one of my interview workshops. Some of the information may seem obvious to you, but had this been obvious to everyone, I wouldn't have to mention it! This paper covers information I've learned as a recruiter, human resources professional, consultant, career coach and job seeker. I also wrote a book, Recruiters on Recruiting, and many professional recruiters echoed this information.

GOAL

To learn successful interview skills by understanding the process, types of interviews, and how to best present yourself.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS CAN MAKE OR BREAK YOU!

Professional attire, haircut, attitude, handshake, smile, resume are all very important. Visual assessments take less than 5 seconds, and an auditory assessment within the first 15 seconds.

BE ON TIME!

BE PREPARED:

- Research the company:
 - Website
 - LinkedIn
 - Public Records (annual reports, announcements of VC funding)
- Research the interview team
 - LinkedIn
 - Review Your Resume
- Check your spelling on resume, application form.
- Professional image: e/vmail and phone manners; check social networking sites; clean, pressed conservative interview clothes/shoes; no perfume, extreme makeup, lots of piercings.
- Turn off phone.
- Be on-time, firm handshake, smile, eye contact.
- Don't trash former employer, manager or job.

INTERVIEW FORMATS: STRUCTURED VS UNSTRUCTURED

STRUCTURED - Used in particular industries such as the government and for certain banking positions.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS - Much more common!

- More informal
- Open-ended questions, focus on past performance (Behavioral Interview)
- Candidate talks 70-80%
- Limited specific information about the position until your qualifications are confirmed
- Eye contact, silence/wait for you

YOU HAVE A LOT OF CONTROL!

PRE-SCREENING INTERVIEWS

- Resume Screening - basic criteria, keywords
- Telephone Screening - are you available, how do you sound, basic discussion of skills

STAR OR PAR STATEMENTS

Situation—Task/Action—Result

Problem—Action—Result

Be organized and succinct--1 minute or less.

Describe the situation, actions taken, state your result.

PREPARE FOR THESE QUESTIONS

Tell me about yourself.

Why did you leave your last position?

Tell me about a time when you managed a project that didn't go well.

ANTICIPATE "DEFICIENCIES" - *Anticipate concerns and address them.*

Do you think you may be considered "too young" or "too old?"

How will you answer questions about "too much" or "too little" experience?

Never worked in a start-up or large company?

Never managed such a large budget?

MONEY QUESTIONS

Delay money questions:

See if the position is a match.

Research salaries: www.salary.com, www.cbsalary.com, ask friends, professional associations and emails

Be prepared with a range.

YOU ASK QUESTIONS, TOO!

How would you describe the companies' culture?

Why is the position vacant?

What do you see as the most important challenge for this position?

How can I be most successful in this role?

What are your 60-/90-/120-day goals for this position? (Or 30/60/90 - customize for the job.)

How does this position interact with other departments?

What is your vision for the department / division?

What are your next steps?

When can I expect to hear from you, and if you get too busy, may I follow up in one week?

How should I contact you - through phone or email?

QUESTIONS **NOT** TO ASK

Do not ask about salary, benefits.

Do not be too familiar, casual, overly-friendly.

Do not say, "This is my dream job." Find out if it is your dream job, and be able to negotiate a little.

Don't be desperate. It's scary.

STRONG CLOSING

- Have your questions been answered?
- Restate your interest and how you fill the position's requirements.
- Know the next steps in the process.
- Ask for the job. Is there anything else you need to know about me in order to make your decision?
- Thank the interviewer /s and send a thank-you note.

PRACTICE Q & A

TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

20-30 second verbal commercial, highlighting your qualifications, strengths and personal attributes.

My name is _____. I'm a previous or current title. My background includes _____.

Quick summary of your experience: career highlight, something challenging, something you've learned, how you helped the company or others. _____.

Why are you looking for a new job/why'd you leave your last job?

What did you like *most* about your last job?

Tell me about your previous manager and company.

Don't complain.

What are your strengths?

What are your weaknesses? *Quickly note truth, what you've done to correct it, and note something you do well.*

Be positive.

How long have you been looking for another position? Why has it taken so long?

Be honest about how long your search has been and your challenge to find the right match.

Finding the right job takes time and careful evaluation and it's OK to be selective.

Mention what you have done in the meantime.

*Make this "down time" sound like a **positive** experience.*

Tell me about something you planned to do that did not work out.

Bring up a failed situation, how you turned it around, and describe what you learned / gained as a result of the experience.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send customized thank-you notes.
- Follow up in 1 week or as suggested at the end of the interview.
- Prepare your references.
- Double-check your social network sites for professional appearance.

SHRM SURVEY

Society for Human Resource Management's survey of nearly 500 HR managers:

- 30% of hiring managers will decide whether to hire you within 15 minutes
- 40% of hiring managers say a cell phone ringing in the middle of an interview is a "deal breaker"
- 70% prefer job candidates to have unpaid internship experience directly related to their companies' work versus paid employment in an unrelated field
- 39% say "chemistry" with a job applicant accounts for half of their hiring decision

RESOURCES

www.santaclaracountylib.org/brainfuse - Must be a member of the Santa Clara County Library for this site. Check your local library for resources.

Users need a library card and PIN number.

Click on the purple button "Click here to go to Brainfuse."

Click on "Adult Learning Center," then on "*Write a Winning Resume*."

Tutors are available Monday through Sunday from 1:00pm - 10:00pm PST.

www.linkedin.com

www.referenceusa.com - use at home or at library

www.ourhrsite.com/resources.html

Networking Groups, News, General Information

Downloads:

- Job Boards
- Reference Checks
- Insurance
- LinkedIn
- And more!

BEST OF LUCK IN YOUR JOB SEARCH!

About Marcia Stein, PHR

Marcia Stein has worked in the Silicon Valley since 1989 and owns a Human Resources Consulting practice with experience as a Recruiter, Staffing Manager and Human Resources Director. Marcia is an active speaker presents to organizations, corporations and job search groups. She is the founder and organizer of the Silicon Valley Women in Human Resources...and Friends group, a networking, mentoring and educational group for professional women with over 1,500 members.

Marcia started and maintains a website for the group and has been recognized by the HR Symposium with the Partners in Innovation Award. She is the author of [*Recruiters on Recruiting*](#), a look into the career paths of different types of recruiters, their tips for job seekers and new recruiters. Her second book is [*Strained Relations: Help for Struggling Parents of Troubled Teens*](#).

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