

**HARRINGTON**  
COLLEGE OF DESIGN

CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

WEEKLY WORKSHOPS

Cover Letters, Resumes, Interviewing

2008

Third of a three-part weekly series:

# MASTERING THE INTERVIEW

Preparation is key!!

What happens during an interview...

# TYPICAL FORMAT

- Small Talk – 5 minutes
- Discussion about your background and qualifications – 15 minutes or more
- Employer asks you questions – 10 minutes or more
- You ask employer questions – 5 minutes or more
- Interview conclusion – 5 minutes

# PRESENTATION IS INTEGRAL

- DON'T FORGET – you are marketing yourself to everyone you meet
- Be in the right place, at the right time
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist when you arrive
- Turn off your cell phone
- Body language is essential
  - Positive, upright, and open body language shows self confidence and interest
- Focus on accomplishments and qualifications that match the job
- Smile, be positive, show enthusiasm, and be courteous
- Project yourself as someone who is thoughtful, helpful, and prepared
- Shake hands and make eye contact
- AND...

...PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE



- Research the company you will be interviewing with
  - Articulate your skills and experience
  - Practice your responses to standard questions
    - Understand your career plans
- Have a list of questions you want to know about the company or position
  - Dress professionally
  - Prepare materials
  - Conclusion/Follow-Up
- Be enthusiastic and show motivation

# RESEARCH THE COMPANY

- Do your homework, check the company website and find out a bit more about the company and/or department
- Be prepared with a few select facts:
  - Key company products and services
  - Project work you found interesting
  - Markets where the company competes
- When prompted, ask questions you may have about the company:
  - If multiple offices, is there collaboration between offices?
  - Will you work with a team or independently?
  - Is there an opportunity to work with outside vendors and clients?

# YOUR SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Be prepared to talk about yourself:
  - your education, your accomplishments,
  - related work experience,
  - transferable skills from unrelated work experience,
  - any other related interests
  - This is your opportunity to sell yourself!
- Be prepared to talk about your background that could be construed as negative. It is up to you to convince the interviewer that although these points appear negative, positive attributes can be found in them
- Include personal accomplishments and awards that directly relate to the position you are applying for

# STANDARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why did you leave your last position?
- Can you describe a previous work situation in which you \_\_\_\_\_?
- What is your ideal work environment?
- How do you handle mistakes?
- What is your most notable accomplishment?

# CAREER PLANS

- Where do you want to be in five years
- Talk in terms of growth with the employer you are interviewing with

# ASK QUESTIONS

- Prepare questions about the position and company that you would like to know more about; that weren't covered in the interview
- Wait to be prompted by the interviewer to ask questions
- It is important to have a clear understanding of the job and the company

# DRESS PROFESSIONALLY

“Clothes should be a part of who you are and should not be noticed.”

- Error on the conservative-side
- What NOT TO WEAR:
  - wild nail polish, hair coloring, or piercings
  - jewelry that jangles
  - flip-flops or sneakers
  - miniskirts
  - bare midriffs
- What TO WEAR:
  - Suit or other professional dress
  - Opt for a tie
  - Dark, subdued colors are more appropriate than bright, wild colors
- Whatever you wear should accent the fact that you're a professional who's ready to get to work at a new job.

# PREPARE MATERIALS

- Bring copies of your resume and portfolio
- Prepare references
- Bring a pen, paper, breathmints, and umbrella!

# CONCLUSION/FOLLOW-UP

- Find out next steps
- Commit
- Ask for business cards after interviewing with an individual
- Send out a hand written thank you note the same day so you don't forget
- Take follow-up notes of who you met, and particulars discussed with each individual
- Take notes on pertinent job information that you may not have jotted down in the interview

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**Come visit us in Room 411!**