

HANDOUT: THE INTERVIEW

THE INTERVIEW

Job interviews can be helpful learning experiences. However, most people get nervous throughout this process. This is very normal. Try to establish good communication with the interviewer. Your personality, abilities, actions and answers to questions will determine whether you are accepted or rejected for the job. Try not to get discouraged if you do not get the first job for which you interviewed. Keep up your courage and motivation. With practice, you will become more confident. Remember that getting the right job for you takes a lot of effort.

PLAN IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

- **Plan the interview.** Know the answers that you will give if certain questions are asked. Try not to memorize answers — you might forget the answers under stress. Sometimes reviewing your information sheet or resume may be helpful.
- **Watch the timing of interviews.** Avoid late afternoon interviews, lunch time, or weekend interviews unless the potential employer has offered those as possible times. During the week, chances are more favorable for longer discussion times. Of course, be willing to go whenever it is most convenient for the potential employer. Remember, you want to get a job and must be flexible.
- **Learn something about the business or job.** Ask others or read about the job. There may be a time during the interview that you may find this certain knowledge helpful. This shows the potential employer that you are interested in the job. Be sincere.

GOING TO THE INTERVIEW

- **Carry your resume with you.** Some of the information from your resume may be helpful.
- **Go by yourself.** Employers want your services and want to know how you react, not your friends or relatives.
- **Be neat.** Use common sense and use good grooming habits when going to an interview. Show the potential employer that you care about how you look by the way you present yourself. This includes clothes, shoes, hair, jewelry, and other accessories. Avoid being excessive with any of these. Remember that you are looking for a job, but you also must be yourself and must be comfortable.
- **Arrive several minutes early.** Give yourself plenty of time to get to the interview in case something happens that changes your plans. Tell the receptionist who you are and why you are there. Be friendly. Catch your breath and mentally go over a few things you want to say in your interview.

- **Notify your potential employer** if an emergency comes up and you cannot keep the appointment. It is always best to call and let people know if you cannot make an appointment. If you change your mind and do not want to go to the interview, call and tell them you will not be coming. It is polite and courteous to let people know your plans.

AT THE INTERVIEW

- **When you arrive for the interview, state your name and why you are there.** A receptionist will usually introduce you to the interviewer. Sometimes you will go in by yourself. Shake hands firmly with the interviewer. Try to be yourself and smile, even if you are nervous.
- **Show respect.** You may be talking to your future boss. Remember that the person is not your friend or buddy, rather a businessperson. Let the interviewer take the initiative, asking questions first.
- **Sit straight with your feet on the floor.** Keep calm. Look alert and avoid fidgeting. Maintain eye contact without staring.
- **Think** before answering each question.
- **Give the information in a business-like manner.** Avoid mentioning any personal problems. Stick to subjects that relate to the job.
- **Concentrate on your job skills and your interest in the job.** Be prepared to show how your experiences match those of the job you seek. Ask for a specific job, rather than “anything.” The employer is purchasing your services and abilities, not trying to “fit you in.”
- **Be confident** and enthusiastic.
- **You may be asked questions** that you think you have already answered on the application form or in your resume. Answer the questions anyway. The potential employer wants to hear your answer and wants to learn more about you. Think carefully before you talk.
- **Be realistic, but assertive, when wages are discussed.** Know your needs before the interview. Also, know the current wages for this type of job. Many jobs have a set pay scale; sometimes wages can be negotiated.
- **Usually you will be given time to ask questions.** Be prepared to ask questions. Give some thought to the questions you may want to ask. You may have questions about work hours, work responsibilities, promotions, benefits of the job and other things.
- **Check your attitude before going to an interview.** You do not have to change who you are to please a potential employer, but you do need to give a good impression if you want to be hired for the job. If you have negative feelings about working for a certain business or at a certain job — consider those feelings before going to an interview.
- **Check to see where you would be responsible for working if you are hired.** Some jobs are located out of town. Some jobs require travel. Some jobs may have several locations.
- **Ask when you will be notified** about the job decision.

- **Close the interview in a businesslike manner.** Say that you appreciated the opportunity for an interview and that you may be contacted for further information. Smile and shake hands.

It often takes a lot of time to find a job. It takes a lot of patience and energy to go through the process of finding a job. Try not to get discouraged. The rewards of your hard work will pay off when you find a job. Hopefully, the job you get will provide for your needs, as well as be a job you enjoy.

For more information, please contact your local extension office:

Resource Information:

Kansas Legal Services

<http://www.kansaslegalservices.org>

1-800-723-6953