

Best Practices for Gaining & Maintaining Employment

Preparing for a job interview can give you an advantage over other applicants and give you the opportunity to make a great first impression.

Prepare for Your Job Interview:

- ✓ Prepare yourself and dress appropriately. Review “Dress for Success”!
- ✓ Eat a healthy meal before your employment activity.
- ✓ Learn about the company that you are interviewing with... check out its website.
- ✓ Make sure you have all of the materials you need for your interview.
- ✓ Take a moment and think about the day ahead of you. How would you like this day to go? What can you expect from this day? What may be some issues you will have to deal with?
- ✓ Arrive for your interview at least fifteen minutes before your scheduled time.

Prepare for Interview Questions You May be Asked:

- What jobs have you had before?
- What kind of tasks did you perform on your previous jobs?
- What did you like about your previous jobs?
- What did you not like about your previous jobs? You can talk about specific tasks that you did not like about the job itself, but do not criticize your former employer, coworkers or company.
- Why did you leave your previous job(s)?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- Why should this company hire you?
- What are some of your strengths?
- What are some of your weaknesses?

Think About Questions You May Want to Ask at Your Job Interview:

- What kind of work schedule does the position require (hours and days)?
- Are there possibilities for advancements or promotions?
- You may have questions specific to your situation or the position you have applied for. Make sure to have these questions prepared before you go on your interview.

Practice Interviewing:

- Practice interviewing with a job coach, family member or friend. This will help you become more comfortable with the interview process and giving answers.
- Practice giving concise and complete answers.
- Practice making and maintaining eye contact with the interviewer while you are answering questions.
- Do not speak too fast or too slow.
- Ask for honest feedback. Do not get defensive... the person is trying to help you grow your skills to better your chances of getting a job. Work to improve your interviewing skills.

During the Interview:

- ✓ Be honest with your answers.
- ✓ Keep your answers complete, but short, simple and to the point.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to admit that you do not know an answer to a question. If you do not know the answer, just tell the interviewer that you do not know the answer to that question and that you will get back to him/her with the answer.
- ✓ Be courteous during the interview. Turn off any cell phones or electronic devices before your interview. Speak clearly. Remember to say "please" and "thank you" when appropriate.
- ✓ Thank the interviewer for his/her time when the interview is completed, and state that you are excited about the job opportunity and hope to hear back from him/her soon.

After the Interview:

Send a letter of appreciation to the person who interviewed you. In the letter, thank the interviewer again for his/her time and reinforce that you are excited about the possible opportunity to work for the company. Research sample job interview appreciation letters on the internet for examples.

Maintaining Employment:

If you have been offered a new job... congratulations! Now, it is important to develop and reinforce self-discipline techniques and use the basic strategies listed below to help keep your job performance at a high-quality level to help you maintain your job.

- ✓ Be prompt – arrive a few minutes early and do not “watch the clock” for the end of your shift.
- ✓ Do not miss work unless it is absolutely necessary.
- ✓ Be sure to give at least a two-week notice when asking for personal time off.
- ✓ Know and meet your employer’s expectations... always complete your job assignments to the best of your ability and look for ways to improve your work. Go the “extra mile” when you can. Offer to help and take on more responsibilities when possible.
- ✓ Be a good communicator.
- ✓ Do not be afraid to ask questions to help you understand exactly what your supervisor wants you to do or how to do a specific job task.
- ✓ Do not be afraid to admit that you have made a mistake and to ask for help if needed.
- ✓ Be a positive team player. Work well individually while also being valuable and welcomed as a helpful and productive team member.
- ✓ Keep a positive attitude and be pleasant and courteous to your supervisor and coworkers. Listen to and respect other people’s ideas. Work to get along with everyone.
- ✓ If you have problems or issues with your job or coworkers, talk with your job coach or supervisor. However, be mindful to keep a positive attitude and not to be a constant “complainer”. Be open-minded to suggestions and work positively with them to help correct any issues.

In order to keep your job, remember that you need to keep looking for ways that you can be the kind of employee/person that your employer needs. Continue to be the best that you can be, take pride in your work, continue to grow your job skills and always keep a positive attitude.