

## **THE INTERVIEW**

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What is an interview? It is an exchange of information to determine if the joining of mutual talent, skills and goals benefit both parties. The following are some dos and don'ts to help you attain the job of your dreams.

### **A little bit of knowledge can take you a long, long way.**

Prepare; be knowledgeable of the firm or corporation with whom you are interviewing. Today, we live in the "Information Age". There are many more accessible sources of information than ever before. Online there is Martindale Hubbell and Westlaw as well as many directories. Additionally, many firms have their own websites with their brochures included.

When you work with Gibson Arnold & Associates, Inc., our consultants give you pertinent information regarding the job duties, and some insight into the personalities and culture of the firm. Use this preparation to plan what areas of your experience to emphasize in the interview. Remember, the more you know up front, the better you will be able to impact the hiring decision.

### **Stuck in traffic ... had a flat tire... Jerry Garcia died – BE ON TIME!**

Allow ample time to get to your appointment. Do not cancel and reschedule interviews unless it is really an emergency. Be prompt. Arriving a few minutes before the interview allows you to sit quietly in the waiting room and observe the interactions of the employees. One can learn much about the environment by just observing, such as formality, friendliness, atmosphere, high-pressure – all this by sitting in the reception area.

### **Cop an attitude and you're out.**

Attitude is prized as highly as ability. A professional is cooperative. Many firms want an application filled out in addition to your resume. Other firms require testing. Whatever is requested, do it with a smile.

### **A runway model we are not!**

Times change, but first impressions do not – look the part. Dress for the job you want not the one you have. Controversial fashion statements may be fun, but often will turn opinion against you in the business world.

Many firms have relaxed dress codes, but do not risk a faux pas. Conservative attire for the interview will make a great impression. Shoes should be polished; nails clean and manicured, hair and beards groomed. Interviewers notice minor details such as heavy makeup and dirty clothing. You want to look conservatively sharp and in sync with the culture of the firm. An



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advantage of working with Gibson Arnold & Associates, Inc. is we make you aware of what is appropriate.

**If it smells, leave it at home!**

Cleanliness is expected. Strong body odor is not accepted. Many people are allergic to perfumes. If your smell lingers after you, it is best to leave it at home.

**We ain't got no bananas today.**

Excellent verbal and writing skills are strongly valued in the legal marketplace. Most firms will automatically refuse candidates who use double negatives and incorrect verbs. Writing samples should be error free, concise and pertinent.

**0000... Limp fish!**

Have you ever shaken someone's hand and felt repulsed? Handshakes impart definite positive or negative messages to most people. Generally, a firm handshake indicates confidence and trustworthiness. We have discovered the secret to a firm handshake is in a firm wrist not a crushing hold. Practice with your friends until you feel confident.

**Looking a turkey in the eye will hypnotize it; looking an interviewer in the eye will build trust.**

Good eye contact is important to most people. Looking away or down, keeping the eyes closed or flitting around the room will not inspire trust. If you are uncomfortable with constant eye contact, try looking at a point between the eyebrows. It appears the same.

**Hup! One, Two, Three, Suck in that gut, Hold up those shoulders – BODY LANGUAGE SHOUTS!**

Back up your words with your body. Sit up straight, lean a little forward and don't fidget, scratch, or play with your hair. Soggy Kleenex, loud voices, and nervous laughter destroy the image of confidence and professionalism.

**"I know it's on my desk somewhere."**

You may have mailed or had your resume presented prior to the interview. Do not assume the interviewer will have it available. Have a copy of your resume to offer the interviewer. Have extra copies with you in case you are asked to talk with other people within the firm. Also, have available transcripts, references and writing samples. Don't carry huge three-ring binders of information. Portfolios are for models and artists.

**Is this a match made in heaven?**

The resume is a tool to get an interview. It is a mistake to expect interviewers to know everything about you from the resume. It is your responsibility to inform them about your strengths and abilities, especially the ones that fulfill the needs of the job. If you are unsure of the scope of the job, ask, don't assume. Answer questions thoroughly but do not ramble. Ask

questions. You need to know what you will be doing and what is expected of you. The interviewer needs to know you are capable of fulfilling the needs of the job. Remember this is a mutual decision and should accomplish the goals of both parties.

### **I didn't wanna do it! I didn't want to do it!**

The way you state the reasons you are leaving or have left former jobs can make or break you. Prepare; be brief and positive. The dreaded words "I left because of a personality conflict" is almost always a killer. Try something like:

"I felt it was time to find an opportunity which stimulated growth and communication."

Be careful with statements like: "There is nothing more for me to learn; there is no place to go." Always tell the truth. Never lie and never, ever belittle your present or former employer. A major cringe factor is divulging sensitive financial data. It is unprofessional to air your former or present employers confidential information.

No matter what your reason, excessive short-term employment is not helpful. If you are having a problem determining "what you want to do with the rest of your life", seek help. We spend the majority of our waking lives at work.

### **Cry me a river.**

The purpose of the interview is to get a job not give your life's history. The interviewer will want to know something about you personally but not every detail. Be pleasant and informative but not chatty. This is not your best friend. On the other hand, one needs to be able to meet the demands of the job. If your personal life will not allow you to perform the tasks and time requirements, let the interviewer know your limitations.

### **How much is that doggie in the window?**

Salary discussions are usually the most dreaded part of the interview. Preferably we do not talk about salary and benefits during the first interview unless the firm is ready to make an offer. However, most times it does not work that way. Be prepared. Do not talk yourself out of an opportunity. There are a number of ways to deal with the question. First try to answer the question with a question. "What is your firm looking to pay?" If pressed, try:

"I am looking in the range of..."

"I am presently making..."

"This a wonderful opportunity. I would be interested in your best offer."

"My research shows that the marketplace values my experience at... Is that in your range?"

One needs to consider the whole package when negotiating salary. Please be forthcoming and realistic. Base salary does not consist of overtime and bonus pay. Many people try to inflate their salaries with these discretionary figures. The extra income is important, but honesty is the best policy. Realistic negotiation will accomplish your goal and build respect at the same time.

Gibson Arnold & Associates, Inc. will help negotiate this sensitive issue when you work through our service.

### **Wallflowers make excellent wallpaper.**

Ask for the job. The most over used phrase in interviewing is I am very interested in your job. Make a statement!

“Your opportunity is exciting and I feel I would do an excellent job for you. What is the next step?”

“This is a wonderful career growth opportunity and I feel my background will be of benefit to your company. How do we proceed?”

### **Let your little light shine**

Have a prepared list of references available. Make sure you provide the names and titles of direct supervisors, their addresses & phone numbers. When the company tells you they are going to check your reference, call the reference and let them know who will call. Many companies will not allow their employees to give references because of legal liabilities. Most people will give unofficial references if you ask.

### **Darling, it's time to say good-bye.**

The time has come to say good-bye. Thank the interviewer. Ask if there is any further information needed. Agree on follow-up, i.e. “I will send you..... and call you in a few days to ascertain if you received it.” “When would you like for me to check back with you?” Be gracious, shake hands, smile and leave.

### **“He loves me, he loves me not....”**

Daisies may work for love but I think establishing a follow-up program works better. When you get home, write a thank you note. Follow-up in a timely manner with any agreed upon actions. Stay in touch but do not be a pest. Appropriate behavior is the key. When you work with Gibson Arnold & Associates, we will follow up for you.

## **Conclusion**

The interview is a marketing activity and should be approached that way. A good interview includes, the following steps:

- Rapport Building – Getting to know the company and people.
- Needs Assessment – Explanation of job requirements.
- Needs Agreement – Stating your understanding of the needs
- Presentation – Presenting abilities that fill the need.
- Closure – Agreeing on future activity.
- Rapport Building – Parting pleasantries.

Interviewing can be fun. Approach it as an opportunity to build relationships and share opportunities. Everyone wins when a job is filled appropriately. Gibson Arnold & Associates stands ready to assist you with your job search. We look forward to talking with you in the near future.