

Interviewing Skills

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Top Ten Things that Impress Employers

- Enthusiasm
- Communication Skills
- Self-Confidence
- Well Groomed
- Business Attire
- Politeness
- Technical knowledge
- Steady eye contact
- Assertiveness
- Decisiveness

Interviewing

- Key to successful interviewing are the Three P's
 - Preparation
 - Presentation
 - Participation

Preparation

- Do your homework to find background information on the position
 - Internet
 - Journals
 - Contact employer
 - Talk with current employees
 - Visit the location(s)
- Be familiar with major developments and trends in pharmacy
 - Read four lead journals the months leading up to the interview

Things to look for

- Mission statement and goals
- Background hx of Co.
- Turnover rate/stability
- Background info/ location of positions
- Company perspective- Annual report
- Benefits/Retirement plan
 - 30% of salary
- Advancement
- Future growth plans
- Other Professional opportunities
 - ASHP, APHA meetings

Things to look for

- Type of facilities
- Organizational Structure
- Reputation
- Personnel demographics
- Scope of products or services provided

Preparation

- Send resume prior to interview
- Prepare questions that are important to you (be specific)
- Review your own resume/CV ahead of time so can pull experiences from them
- Find out in advance what materials you will need to bring (e.g. CV, transcripts, letters of reference/writing samples)
- Find out what interview will be like (format/length)
- Residency interview-be prepared to give a presentation or work up a patient care-plan

You Have Just Thirty Seconds

"We never get a second chance to make a good first impression."

-Unknown

~Some hiring decisions are made within the first 30-45 seconds.

How First Impressions Are Created

- Clothing
- Accessories
- Grooming

Clothing

- The purpose of your clothing is to project an image of professionalism
- Play it safe.....
- You don't want to be remembered as the one in the green suit.... You want to be remembered as the one with the GREAT CREDENTIALS.....

Safest Clothing Selection for Women

- Solid color skirt suit
 - Color: navy>dark grey/black>brown
 - Fabric: natural fabrics i.e. wool!
 - Skirt length: No shorter than 1" above knee
- Shirt/Blouse
 - Color: off white or colors are okay, try to stay away from too bold of colors i.e. fluorescent
 - Neckline: conservative/scarves are OK

Rule of Thumb

Always dress one level more formal than required

Why a skirt suit?

- You may wonder- what is wrong with a pant suit.
 - If you are 100% positive that your interviewer is a young up to date person, by all means, wear a pant suit.
 - However, there are several interviewers out there yet that are old fashioned. They believe women should wear skirts. You do not want to offend them.

Safest Clothing Selections for Men

- Solid color suit
 - Color: not black but dark
 - Fabric: Natural
- Shirt
 - Color: Colors are okay
 - Fabric: Natural fibers
 - Sleeve length: Should peak out when extend hand for shake.

Safest Accessories for Women

- Shoes
 - Style: Closed toe/leather pump (low/mid heels:2-2.5")
 - Color: Color of Hemline or darker
- Pantyhose: natural color (color of skin)
- Purse
 - If don't have to carry one –don't
 - Briefcase/Portfolio with keys –okay
- Jewelry
 - 1 non-oversized ring/hand
 - No Watch-provides too large a temptation to look at
 - Wear smaller jewelry to eliminate distractions

Safest Accessory Selections for Men

- Shoes/Belt
 - Style: dress shoes
 - Color: Hemline or darker
 - Don't wear suspenders if have belt
- Socks
 - Suit socks→ no black cotton
 - Need to cover calves
- Tie
 - End at mid belt or no shorter than top of belt
- Briefcase/Portfolio
- Jewelry
 - Go easy

Accessory Tips for Men & Women

- Remove all body piercing
- Cover tattoos
- Carry a quality pen
- Avoid wearing anything that indicates an affiliation e.g. fraternity pin/cross
- Do not wear tinted glasses
 - They want to be able to see your eyes

Grooming Basics

- Clothing-Impeccable/Crisp/Clean
- Shoes-Shine/No Worn Heels
- Fingernails-Trimmed/clean
- Hair-trimmed/pulled back
- Scent-No Smell
- Breath-nothing between tooth brushing and interview

Grooming Tips

- Women:
 - Hair Length: Avoid Big Hair/Extreme Color
 - If long pull-up or clip back—Hair down is unprofessional
 - Nail Color: Clear/Light Pink
 - Makeup: Understated
- Men:
 - Hair length: short or (if long) pulled back
 - Facial hair: none or manicured

First Impressions

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early
 - If earlier, sit in car
- Interview begins when enter building
 - Administrative assistant may be required to evaluate you as you wait
 - So, be courteous
 - Don't pick at teeth in waiting room or brush hair

Nonverbal communication

- Movement
 - Don't sit on comfortable couch
 - Sit on stiffer chair so easier to get up and walk briskly toward them when they enter room
- Facial Expression
 - Eye Contact: In U.S. if no eye contact it means person is hiding something
 - Animation: Nod occasionally/Listen
 - Smile

First Impressions

- Entrance & Greeting
 - Make sure right hand is free
 - Stand up→Eye contact→Smile
 - Walk toward them→Shake→Look at Name Tag→Use title and say name of the person
 - If possible, know title of interviewer ahead of time so can use appropriate title.

Nonverbal Communication- Handshake

- Firm but not bone crushing
- Lasts about 3 seconds
- May be "pumped" once or twice from the elbow
- Is released after the shake, even if the introduction continues
- Includes good eye contact with the other person
 - do not let eyes lead to next person before done with 1st

Nonverbal Communication- Gestures

- Do:
 - Do use gestures to reinforce your message
 - Vary your gestures
 - Gesture with open palms with fingers together
- Don't:
 - Look at your watch-DON'T WEAR ONE
 - Point a finger
 - Cross your arms
 - Nod Excessively
 - Fidget
 - Use Cliché Answers

Nonverbal Communication- Posture

- Stance:
 - Back Straight
 - Arms and Hands:
 - Hanging & relaxed at side
 - Go to pocket for one minute but not whole time
 - Don't lean on door
 - Feet
 - One foot slightly in front of the other

Nonverbal Communication- Posture

- Sitting
 - Back: Sit with slight angle
 - Lean back a little or lean forward a little
 - Hands: Relaxed in lap
 - Legs: Don't cross legs
 - Cross at ankles
 - Head: Don't tilt it

Business Etiquette

- It is a good idea to review books/articles on business etiquette
- The interview may involve lunch or dinner—so you may need to review table manners

Business Etiquette - DO

- Turn off cell phone/pager
 - If you forget to turn cell phone off, DO NOT answer it.
 - Hit the off button and apologize for the interruption.
- Wait to be seated in the interviewers office. If no seat is offered, ask where you should sit
- Send a personal hand written thank you note within 24 hours

Business Etiquette – Don't

- Interrupt the interviewer
- Take candy from a candy bowl on the interviewer's desk
- Touch or play with anything on the interviewer's desk
- Take too many notes during the interview
Ask permission to set anything on desk.
- Chew Gum
- E-mail a thank you note

Types of Interviews

- Initial or screening interviews
 - Designed to reduce the number of applicants for a position to a few top candidates
 - Typically one-on-one, face-to-face
 - Usually short 20 mins to 1 hour
- Hiring interviews
 - After the initial interview
 - More than one interviewer
 - Longer: Residency interview ~ 6 hours

Formats

- Telephone interview
 - Keep CV and resume nearby
- Serial interviews
 - Meet several interviewers
- Group interviews
 - Either several interviewers at once
 - Or several interviewees at once

Weaknesses?-Say What?

- Don't tell interviewer what you can not do-even if they ask you point blank "What are your weaknesses?"
- You have no weaknesses.
- A positive attitude is the key.
- Don't lie-simply elaborate on an experience that relates to the skill, or say that you're willing to learn
- E.G. "I do not feel I have any weaknesses. I have strengths that I may be developing in more, for example...."

Interview Components

- Introduction
 - First Impressions
 - Small Talk
 - Weather/trip
- Interview questions
 - Be prepared
- The Close

Strengths

- Try not to answer with rehearsed/run of the mill statements
- Ask your colleagues or close professors what your strengths are and you will get a much more diverse/interesting list.

Presentation

- Use a professional portfolio
 - Carry extra resumes with you in case of several interviewers (on quality paper)
 - Bring along a pen and paper to take notes when needed
 - Stay organized-keep other items out of sight of the interviewer
 - e.g. information obtained from another interview with another employer earlier that day

Participation

- Display good communication skills, be direct and to the point (less than one minute per response)
- Tailor answers to reflect resume
 - Think before you speak
- Include personal value to company
- Show motivation and initiative
- Be confident

What to **avoid** during the interview

- Discussing salary and benefits early in the interview process
 - Only during second interview and try to wait 'til interviewer brings it up.
- Consistently making references to the superiority of the institutions you've been associated with
- Speaking negatively about current/past employers, faculty, colleagues

What to **avoid** during the interview

- Displaying a "know-it-all" attitude
- Discussing religion or politics
- Seeking to be treated in a special way because of your connections

Participation

- Ask questions regarding the company to show interest
 - Examples:
 - Opportunity for advancement
 - Description of typical day
 - Expectations of patient care
 - Continuing education provided
 - Details of benefit package
- If they ask you if you have any questions you **CAN NOT** say NO!

What you should know about a company's benefits

- Support/resources for professional development
- What is the waiting period for insurance eligibility?
- Is professional liability insurance provided?
- Is there a 401(K) or other retirement plan?
- Equity/Stock Options
- Signing bonus/Performance bonus
- Time off/funding for professional development
- Relocation costs

What you should know about a company's benefits

- Overtime pay
- Financial planning assistance
- Paid memberships to professional groups
- Extra vacation time
- Flexible work hours- 4-ten hour days instead
- Paternity, maternity, or family leave
- Travel insurance
- Health club membership

In the final minutes of the interview

- Reinforce and highlight your strengths
- Give the interviewer something positive to remember you by
- Voice interest in employer (if interested)

In the final minutes of the interview

- Thank the interviewer for their time & Shake their hand
- Find out timeline for correspondence
 - Change Answering Machine/Voicemail to a professional message in case they call with a job offer or notification of another interview and you are not there.
- Exchange business cards with interviewer

Tips on Thank you notes

- Send one note to each person who interviewed you. The interviewers will likely compare notes.
- Make the note personal, but professional
- Keep the tone positive and confident
- Keep the note brief
- Refer to specific things that the interviewer said during the interview
- Reaffirm how you can add value to the company
- Follow up the thank you letter with a phone call a week later, if you have not heard from the employer.

Point to take home!

Don't be modest; Sell yourself!!!

There are no failures in pharmacy; all failures are opportunities

Job offers

- Normally the company lets you know the date they would like your acceptance.
 - In general a response should be made within 2-4 weeks
- If you are unsure or waiting to hear from another company, thank them for their offer and inform them that you are currently weighing all of your options and you will be in touch in the near future.
- At the job fair next week, there is no reason to say yes now....reasonably February or March.

Respect

- Even if you know from the beginning that this is not the appropriate job for you, maintain respect and composure throughout.
- The world of pharmacy is far too small to burn any bridges.

Respect

Ask not what the Company can do for you,
Ask what you can do for the company!
~Julie Dawn Flynn

References

This information is a compilation of several leadership lectures I have attended. Thanks to the following speakers for their knowledge:

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