

## 11 THINGS EMPLOYERS WANT

	Yes	No
<b>1. Objective</b> Do your career goals match up with the things this job and company can offer you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Compatibility</b> Will you fit into the organizational culture? Are your goals, values, and style compatible with what the organization needs and can use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3. Intelligence</b> Do you have enough smarts to do the job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4. Motivation</b> Are you motivated to work hard?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5. Enthusiasm</b> Are you eager to do this job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6. Assertiveness</b> Do you have the guts to assert yourself when the situation requires? Can you stand up for your ideas and beliefs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7. Adaptability</b> Can you “roll with the punches” – when necessary, adapt to change?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>8. Maturity</b> Do you have good judgment? Do you know how to accept responsibility, evaluate situations, and get along with other people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>9. Communication</b> Can you organize and articulate your thoughts effectively? Are you also a good listener who can respond to others’ comments, thoughts and needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>10. Commitment</b> Are you serious about the work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11. Follow-through</b> Are you a results-oriented person? Do you set goals and follow through on your projects and goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*\*Questions to which you answered “no” point out areas you need to work on.*

## HOW YOU WILL BE RATED IN THE INTERVIEW

When the interview is over and you've left the office, the manager(s) will evaluate your interview based on the following criteria:

### **ALERTNESS:**

Your ability to understand and perceive important issues. Did you respond appropriately to the interview questions? How well did you think on your feet when asked behavioral questions?

### **AMBITION:**

Your overall motivation or desire to get ahead, learn new things, and be successful.

### **APPEARANCE:**

Your overall grooming, hygiene, dress and appropriateness for the job.

### **ATTITUDE:**

Your positive attitude and ability to convince the manager that you want the job and can do the work required.

**COMPOSER:** Your overall confidence and ability to handle difficult questions.

### **CONVERSATION:**

Your ability to speak well and get to the point. Your ability to appropriately answer the interview questions and ask follow-up questions.

### **EXPERIENCE:**

How your background and qualifications (coursework or job history) match the job description and requirements.

### **KNOWLEDGE:**

How your knowledge of the field will help you quickly transition into the position. Your ability to successfully answer interview questions related to the company, their products, sales strategy, competition, etc. (*Helpful hint: Research the company via the web.*)

### **SOCIABILITY:**

How your overall warmth and friendliness are portrayed in the interview. Did you answer the interview questions very quickly or very thoroughly? (*Helpful hint: You should spend about 3-5 minutes answering each question.*)

### **SUITABILITY:**

How your overall personality and knowledge will fit in the company environment.

## INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

### DO's

#### BEFORE:

- Get plenty of rest. Present yourself in the best light.
- Practice interviewing and answering sample questions.
- Be on time! If possible, arrive 10 - 15 minutes early.
- Go to the interview alone. Do not bring your spouse, family or children.
- Create a good impression when you arrive. Be polite and courteous to the receptionist.
- Always bring extra copies of your resume, even if one was already sent.
- Bring your REFERENCE LIST.
- Bring your portfolio if required.
- Bring a pen/pencil.
- Pay close attention to your appearance. Look polished, professional and business-like. Be well-groomed, neat and clean.
- Be prepared to take a computer test or written test. Leave yourself extra time for a test or company tour, do not rush off!

## DURING:

- When you greet the interviewer(s), smile and introduce yourself.
- Shake hands warmly with each person in the room. Do not present a limp hand or shake too vigorously.
- Show enthusiasm. Be cheerful, friendly and confident by maintaining good eye contact and smiling.
- Pay attention to what the interviewer is saying. Don't daydream or think about your next comment.
- Make eye contact with each person in the room as you answer the questions, especially in panel interviews.
- Body language is key! Sit up straight, look alert and confident.
- Speak up! Keep the conversation moving.
- Be tactful. Always have a positive statement regarding former employers.
- Honesty is the best policy. Remember, employers do check references.
- Anticipate the interviewer's questions. For instance, "Why are you interested in our company?" By doing background research before the interview, you should know info about the company products etc.
- Emphasize your strengths, but do not brag.

## TOWARDS THE END:

- Ask questions. Demonstrate your verbal communication skills. Come prepared with a list of questions to ask the interview committee. Research the company!
- The interviewer should be the one to initiate the discussion of salary. If the subject is not brought up, do not ask how much you will be paid. Generally, salary is discussed during the job offer process after your references are called.
- Ask for the job! Don't plead, but make it clear that you want the job. Say how interested you are in the position and find out when you will be notified about the results of the interview and hiring process.

## AFTER:

- Write down the name and title of the interviewer(s). Take a minute to write down what you liked and what you could improve.
- Send any requested information to the company (health forms, transcripts, etc.)
- Remember to send a **"Thank You Letter."** It will set you apart from the crowd and show that you are really interested in the job.
- If your first attempt does not end with success, do not be discouraged. You have gained experience and skills that will help you in your next attempt.

## INTERVIEWING ERRORS DO NOT's

- Do not discuss salary and benefits. Don't discuss salary requirements prematurely (unless they bring it up).
- Do not talk about needing rather than wanting the position.
- Do not fail to make eye contact with everyone in the room.
- Do not slouch, slump, sit with crossed arms, tap toes or drum nails.
- Do not have an argumentative or sarcastic tone of speech.
- Do not have all the answers. Do not act aloof or conceited.
- Do not interrupt.
- Do not fail to answer the questions being asked by the interviewer.
- Do not be so optimistic you cannot hear what is really being said or asked by the interview(s).
- Do not control the interview by asking questions back. Wait until the end to ask your own questions.
- Do not complain or talk negatively about past employers/co-workers.
- Do not smoke before the interview (stinky!).
- Do not eat, drink coffee or chew-gum during the interview session.
- Don't get discouraged if you don't get the job...keep going!

## Practice Makes Perfect

You can have a great, impressive resume, but if your interview skills are weak, you are unlikely to get your dream job! The key to a successful interview is being **WELL PREPARED**. Preparation will give you the confidence to interview calmly, thoughtfully and will make a lasting impression.

### Research the Company:

- What does the company do?
- How many employees work for the company?
- What is the general salary for the position you want?

### Research Tools:

- Internet
- Quarterly reports, stock market analysis
- Trade journals

Employers will not be "wowed" by the mere fact that you found them on the web. What will impress them is your effort to gain knowledge about the industry they are in, their relative place in that industry, and the position itself.

***All this shows your desire and passion for the job!***

### Face-To-Face Interviewing:

For every part of your resume, you should have examples that back up what you've said about yourself. Don't just say that you are a hard worker. Give an example of how your hard work helped the company reduce costs (an accomplishment). *Example: "I was able to increase revenues by 20% in three months by retraining staff..."*

Prepare yourself for questions that are out of the ordinary. These may not have a right or wrong answer, but are aimed at uncovering your value system or your ability to think on your feet.

Develop the ability to transition a challenging answer into an opportunity to share an example of a previous success. For example you can begin with "While I can't speak to that exactly, in a similar situation at ..." and then present your experience. It's also a good idea to prepare to discuss a situation that may not have been an obvious success, but was a valuable learning experience. Show that you can turn adversity into a future strength.

## Interview Questions

### **Skills, Qualifications & Background:**

Briefly describe your background and experiences that have prepared you for this position.

Describe your background as it relates to this position and tell us why you would like this position.

What attracted you to this particular position and what qualities/qualifications would you bring to the position if it were offered to you?

Tell us how your education, training and experience qualify you for this job. Can you describe them?

How do you think your experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

Tell us about a job experience in which you had to speak up in order to be sure that other people knew what you thought or felt?

Which aspects of your present or last job do you like the most and the least?

This position is the right hand to the Department Manager. She is going to need you to be a self starter and able to take a project and run with it with little or no supervision. Can you give us some specific examples when you have done this in your current or prior employment?

There is always a learning curve when one begins a new job. If you receive this position, what methods would you use to be successful in this position?

### **Multi-Tasking:**

How do you organize your daily routines at work? What methods do or do not work for you considering that you will be working in an office with frequent interruptions?

This position requires the ability to carry out several tasks at once, working with students, handling interruptions, serving as a resource for questions while at the same time managing your own work load. How does your background and experience qualify you to cope in a sometimes stressful environment?

The responsibilities of this position will involve juggling many activities at once. Tell us how you go about organizing your time to ensure you manage your schedule wisely.

How would you prioritize the following events and why?

1. You have two phone lines ringing
2. 5 customers are gathered at the counter waiting to be helped
3. You are busy compiling data for a project due the next morning
4. The supervisor comes out of her office and asks you to make copies for a meeting in an hour
5. The copier is jamming and a frustrated customer member wants your help immediately



How important is it for you to finish one task before proceeding to the next?

The scope of duties and responsibilities in this position are wide ranging, everything from making copies, monitoring budgets, following through on several projects, and interacting with clients simultaneously in and open office, (and sometimes noisy environment), to coordinating daily functions of the office. What do you like least and what do you like best working in this type of environment?

**Team Player & Working with People from Diverse Backgrounds:**

When we have conducted interviews in the past, we often hear the phrase, “I treat everyone the same.” How do you determine how to best serve people of different backgrounds?

This position will require you to work as part of a team. Tell us about your previous teamwork experience and what you see as your strongest contributions to a working group.

This position requires that you work with a variety of people of all different ethnicities, abilities and disabilities. Tell us about a similar experience you’ve have that involved coordinating and communicating with different people.

Describe how you would handle the following:

1. A deaf client comes to your desk for help, but you cannot understand his/her speech.
2. A customer wants to see the manager but refuses to tell you why.

**Strengths & Weaknesses:**

What do you consider to be your strengths and weaknesses?

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. Tell us which strengths you will bring to this position and what weaknesses you are working to overcome.

**Work Style Questions:**

When you have planned an event or a project in the past, describe your work style in meeting the deadlines. How did you organize other people to help you with the event?

**Accomplishment:**

Tell us about a project that you have managed successfully and are proud of, that showcases your abilities.

**Computer Skills or Job-specific Technical:**

Describe your experience with computer hardware, software, and peripherals, including a list of the applications you use regularly. What is the level of computer skill you bring to this position?

Please elaborate on your computer skills and software you’ve used to create flyers and presentations.

Describe your experience with computer hardware and software, including a list of the applications you use regularly. What is the level of computer skill you bring to this position?

**Problem-Solving:**

Give us an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person, even when that individual may not have been most cooperative.

What are some techniques you would use when dealing with difficult people?  
How do you resolve conflict?

Please give us an example of when you had to deal with a difficult personality and what you did to diffuse or rectify the situation?

Tell us about a specific situation where you disagreed with a colleague. How did you inform the colleague of your disagreement. How well do you feel you handled the situation? What would you do differently the next time?

Have you ever been in a situation where you disagreed with your supervisor or co-worker? How did you handle the situation?

**Work Style & Organizational:**

Tell us about your organizational skills, give us an example from a previous job on how you were able to accomplish this.

Give us an example of how you've handled an unexpected problem that occurred at the last minute for a workshop or event that you had planned.

Give us an example of a time you felt you were able to be a positive influence with your co-workers.

How do you handle time pressure? How do you get others to help?

How do you handle pressure and stress? What is your tolerance for tension?

What experience have you had in working with little or no direct supervision?

What gives you job satisfaction and what makes you thrive in the work environment?

What goals have you set for yourself for the next 5 years?

What will your references supervisors and peers say about you?

What would your supervisor say about your commitment and energy level? And why?

Give us an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.

**Closing Questions:**

Do you have anything further you would like to let us know about you?

Do you have any questions for me (us)?

## Problem-Action-Result (PAR) Questions

Before starting the interview process, identify 2 or 3 of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points (with demonstrated PAR stories) during the interview. The following questions can help you select suitable PAR experiences from your professional life:

- What class have you taken?
- What research have you conducted?
- What events have you attended and contributed to?
- With whom have you worked?
- What were the problems you tackled?
- Do you seem to get involved with administering projects? Organizing people? Communicating ideas?
- Have you been recognized for taking initiative? Pioneering new projects? Taking reasonable risks?

The PAR Structure:

- **P** = Problem / Purpose you encountered
- **A** = Action(s) you took (alone or with others) to overcome that problem or purpose
- **R** = Result(s) you achieved, in as concrete terms as possible

Example:

**Problem:** Advertising revenue was falling off for the student newspaper and large numbers of long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.

**Action:** I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of the paper's circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set up a special training session for the account executives with a professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.

**Result:** We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and 5 for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year.

*As you can see, an employer is looking for your reasoning and problem-solving skills.*

## ASK QUESTIONS AFTER THE INTERVIEW

1. Hiring managers want to hear intelligent, well thought-out questions.
2. The questions you ask will show that you're looking out for your own happiness and job security.
3. Ask questions that you think are important. You do not have to ask all 25 questions - pick & choose from those listed in this packet.
4. Write out your questions so that you will appear "well prepared."
5. Don't be afraid to pull out a sheet of questions and ask them to the manager. If more than one person is in the interview, then go around the room and ask questions to each person.
6. You will impress the hiring committee - it shows that you are prepared, thorough and conscientious.
7. **SELL YOURSELF!!!!**
8. **NEVER ask questions about:**
  - SALARY
  - VACATIONS
  - HOLIDAYS WITH PAY
  - SICK DAYS
  - MATERNITY LEAVE

Wait for the manager(s) to bring up the issues of wages. When they ask what salary you expect, ask what the standard salary is for your qualifications. Force the managers to throw out the first figure. If the figure is what you want - grab it. If the figure is too low, explain your financial situation and try to negotiate an increase.

## QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK THE INTERVIEWER

1. What are the major responsibilities of this position? You should know, but maybe they can elaborate.
2. How is the department organized?
3. How long has this company been in business? You should also know this by doing research before the interview, but you can expand and share the knowledge you gathered to impress them.
4. What will be the first projects that I should expect to tackle?
5. What is a typical path for career advancement in your company?
6. Why is the position open?
7. How long has the position been open?
8. What specific clients or customers do you expect your new employee to handle?
9. What is your position (interviewer)?
10. How long have you worked in the industry (interviewer)?
11. What is the day-to-day work environment like?
12. Can you describe (clarify) the current job opening? You should know, but they can elaborate.
13. Is there a training and/or cross-training program?
14. What skills/attributes are important to succeed in this position?
15. Will there be advancement possibilities from this position?
16. What are the department's goals for the year?
17. How many people work in your department? In the company?

18. Can someone in this job be promoted? If so, to what position?

19. How would I get feedback on my job performance, if hired?

20. If hired, would I report directly to you, or to someone else? If someone else, can I meet him/her?

21. Could you give me a brief tour? I'd enjoy seeing where people work.

22. What is the next step? How long will it take to hear back from you?

23. I would like to submit my references to you!

**Make sure that you state your interest in the position before the close of the interview.**

## TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

### **Phone Interview**

### **Face-To-Face Interview**

Initial screening if multiple interviews, used by H.R., recruiters, etc.

### **Multiple Interview**

Interview in a group setting can include lunch

### **Panel Interview**

### **Behavioral Interview**

## REFERENCE SHEET

You need to prepare a professional-looking **REFERENCE SHEET** to bring with you to each job interview. *After your interview*, you tell the interviewer(s), “ **I would like to submit my references to you.**” Then hand the sheet to the manager/supervisor.

Your **REFERENCES SHOULD** include at least **3** people:

- Present or former supervisors
- Co-workers
- Instructor(s) in your major/field of study and related to the job

Your **REFERENCES SHOULD NOT** include:

- Friends & Family
- Neighbors
- Angry boss or co-workers

Before you create your **REFERENCE SHEET**, *call each person* you want to list and ask his/her permission. Tell each person that you are job searching and tell him/her exactly what positions you will be applying for.

\*You want your references to be prepared and not caught off-guard. You want them to be able to immediately answer questions related to your *skills, abilities* and *qualifications*. It would be VERY embarrassing if your former supervisor or instructor couldn't remember you!

**ONLY** give out your **REFERENCE SHEET** to those people who actually interview you!

**DO NOT** mail or email your **REFERENCE SHEET** with your **resume** and **cover letter** because you have no idea if you will even be called for an interview.

**REFERENCES**  
**Mary McDaniel**

**Name**

Title

Company

Relationship to you

Phone Number

Email

**John Doe**

Operations Manager

Oracle Computers

Former Supervisor

(650) 555-1212

doejohn@oracle.net

**Lisa Smith**

Administrative Assistant

Oracle Computers

Former Co-Worker

(650) 555-1214

smithlisa@oracle.net

**Arnold Tamamoi**

Instructor, Business Administration

Foothill College

(650) 949-1234

tamamoiarold@fhda.edu



## **JOB APPLICATION STUMBLING BLOCKS**

### **➤ CRIMINAL RECORD**

If there's a ghost in your past, insist on discussing it, rather than writing about it. In the space where it asks about your convictions, write, "Please see me." Later, during the interview, you can explain what happened, what you've learned from it, and how you've tried to make amends for your mistake.

### **➤ EDUCATION**

Employers will check your skills and educational background. Some employers will give you a computer skills test or ask to see your portfolio (if you are into web design or graphic design). Some employers may ask for transcripts of the courses you completed or if you completed your degree. Don't exaggerate your education or experience.

### **➤ FIRED**

If you were fired from your last job, don't despair. Everybody gets fired from a job at least once in their lifetime. Don't omit that job from your application though. It will leave an employment hole in your work history. Fill in the required information. In the space where it asks you why you left that job, write, "Please see me." During the interview you can explain that you usually get along with everyone, but for some reason, you couldn't seem to please the person who fired you.

### **➤ FRIENDS AND RELATIVES**

Most applications ask if you have any friends or relatives who work for the company. Choose your friends carefully. If your friend is hardworking, mention his/her name. The manager will assume that, like your friend, you are a hard worker. But, if your friend is a lazy worker, don't mention his/her name.

### **➤ JOB HOPPING**

Job hopping is when you switch jobs too often. If you're a student or a recent graduate don't worry. Employers expect you to have had quite a few part-time and summer jobs. However, employers are not fond of adult job hoppers. If you have more than three jobs during the past five years, have a good excuse for leaving each job (ex. career exploration, relocation, layoff, health, job stagnation).

➤ **LAY-OFF**

If you were laid-off due to a plant closing, down-sizing, merger or any other reason beyond your control - don't be embarrassed. There are tens of thousands of people in your situation. Fill in the information requested and give the reason for the company's down-sizing.

➤ **MONEY**

When the application asks for wage or salary expected, write, "Open." If you put a dollar amount that is too high, you may price yourself out of the job.

➤ **NO WORK HISTORY**

If you have no formal work history, don't panic. In the Work History section of the application, list any volunteer, charitable, casual labor or self-employment jobs you might have had.

➤ **POOR REFERENCES**

What if your boss won't give you a decent recommendation? Don't give the boss's name. Instead, give the name of someone else in the chain-of-command who would give you an impartial recommendation (ie. another manager, supervisor, your boss's boss). Get permission first to list him/her as a reference!

➤ **REFERENCES**

Employers will contact each of your references. Don't let the employer catch your references off guard. Ask for permission to list them as a reference and they'll be prepared for the call.

➤ **UNEMPLOYMENT GAPS**

If you have gaps of unemployment between jobs, you should offer some explanation. Since it may take some time to find a new job, "job hunting" is a legitimate reason. You can also use words such as retraining, continuing education, starting a small business, even travel.