

H-5
Title
INTERVIEWING SUCCESSFULLY

The importance of the job interview cannot be overstressed. What transpires in the interview can be one of the most significant events in the average person's life. Your job can determine where you live, how you live, with whom you associate, and what you do for forty hours a week. The following guidelines will serve to start you thinking about how you can prepare for your job interview.²

Personal Research

The first step in preparation for an interview is research into yourself. Know what you want to do and what you don't want to do. Know your goals, abilities, interests, and qualifying experiences, and be prepared to talk about them.

Research on the Organization or Institution

Research on the organization or institution with which you are interviewing is a must. Such research should be aimed at understanding the organization or university and the position for which you are applying to enable you to ask intelligent questions and to sell yourself. Publications that might prove helpful in your research on business organizations include Thomas' Register of American Manufacturers, Moody's Manuals, Standard and Poor's Corporate Records Publication, Poor's Register of Directors and Executives, annual reports, and product or services information produced by the organization. And don't forget the organization itself as a resource. Talk to current or former employees of the organization if you possibly can. If you are interviewing with a college or uni-

versity for a teaching position, find out what you can from individuals who have taught or are teaching in the department and from those who have heard about the department through association with the faculty there. Professors at the University of Denver may be able to supply you with information about a particular speech communication department.

The Interview

An interview for a teaching position at a university or college is likely to be more extensive than an interview for a position in business. You are likely to be asked to spend at least a day--perhaps more--at the institution. During your time there, you will be asked to demonstrate your skills and expertise in a number of ways. You may talk individually with each member of the faculty, present a lecture to the faculty and graduate students on a topic of your choice (your dissertation research is a logical topic), teach one or two classes in the department with graduate students and faculty observing you, meet with the graduate students as a group, and meet with the dean of the college in which the department is located. Professors in our department will be glad to offer you tips on all aspects of the interviewing process since they've all been through it and know the pitfalls you may encounter.

As in your resume and cover letter, the focus of your interview should be on how your qualifications can help the employer solve his or her problems or meet his or her concerns. During the interview, take a genuine interest in the interviewer's concerns. Listen carefully, then ask intelligent questions that will elicit more information about the concerns that are facing the department or organization. Show how your ex-

perience and abilities make you a person who can effectively address the interviewer's concerns.

Whatever the question you are asked, try to answer it from this perspective: how does my expertise meet a need in the organization or institution? Be prepared for questions in the areas of education, working record, personal characteristics, and social involvement. The following are questions you might be asked in these areas. Although many of them are questions that pertain particularly to the business setting, you may be asked similar ones in an interview for a teaching position.

1. What can I do for you?
2. Why are you interested in joining our company?
3. Why do you feel qualified for this job?
4. What do you think you can do for us?
5. What attracts you to us?
6. Tell me about your experience.
7. How would you describe yourself?
8. What caused you to enter your job field?
9. What would you like to be doing five years from now?
10. What is the ideal job for you?
11. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
12. What qualifications do you possess that you feel will make you successful in your career?
13. Do you have plans for continued study?
14. What have you enjoyed most about your past jobs? What have you enjoyed least?
15. What have you learned from your mistakes?
16. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
17. What do you consider to be your strengths? Your weaknesses?
18. Describe your education for me.
19. What were your average grades?
20. What courses did you like best/least and why?
21. Have you had any special training for this job?
22. What kind of work environment do you prefer?
23. How would you deal with a conflict between you and someone in another office with whom you had to work closely?
24. How do you fit the requirements for this job?
25. What would you do to improve our operations?
26. Looking at your papers, you don't seem as qualified as some of our other candidates. What makes you think you are?
27. How do you spend your leisure time?
28. What extracurricular or outside activities have you pursued? What did you learn from them?

29. What books have you read in the last three months?
30. Do you belong to any organizations?
31. Will you be able to put in extensive overtime or travel extensively on the job?
32. With whom can we check for references?

Interview questions that might be asked when applying for a teaching position follow. In some interview situations, you will be asked questions concerning theory and research in speech communication--much like a doctoral dissertation defense. In other situations, the interview will focus less on content and subject matter in the discipline and more on your professional activities and teaching philosophy.

33. What are your feelings about team teaching?
34. How would you allow for individual differences in your students?
35. The students here tend to have poor reading and writing skills (to be poorly motivated, to be apathetic, to be extremely bright, etc.). Have you ever taught in this kind of classroom before? Do you think you can handle these kinds of students effectively?
36. What techniques would you use to motivate students in your classrooms?
37. I notice that you have not yet published anything. Are you working on any possible publications now? Do you believe that you can establish a strong publications record in the next several years?
38. What courses would you most like to teach?
39. Are there some courses that you would like to develop?
40. We are trying to strengthen our undergraduate speech communication program here. What contributions could you make to this area?
41. What are your specific research interests at the present time? How do you see these interests developing into a program of research?
42. Would you feel comfortable teaching graduate students? What contributions do you feel you could make to a graduate program?
43. Are you active in any professional organizations? In what way?
44. Would you be willing to participate in university and departmental activities such as serving on committees, etc.? Do you have particular interests in the types of activities in which you would most like to be involved?
45. What kind of a commitment are you willing to make to the advising process? Are you willing to serve as an advisor to majors in the department?
46. What are your weaknesses? What are your strengths?

Questions asked of prospective employees are restricted, by laws against discrimination, to information that is related to the individual's

ability to perform the specific job for which he or she is being considered. You should be aware that employers do not have the right to ask for information that is not job-related nor to discriminate against you because of such factors. Illegal pre-employment inquiries include: age, sex, race, national origin, birthplace, religion, marital status, number of dependents, or any inquiry that is not necessary for determining your eligibility for employment. You have the right not to answer a question that you feel is discriminatory; however, refusal to answer could cost you the job. If you refuse to answer a question, do so politely, as: "I think that is not relevant to the requirements of the position." If you decide to answer one of these questions, word your response in such a way that you present yourself as positively as possible.

Of course, the interview is not going to consist only of questions asked by the interviewer. You will want to ask questions, too, particularly if you are interested in discovering the concerns of the interviewer and the organization. The following questions might help you discover what you need to know about the organization or the university:

1. Have you had a chance to review my resume?
2. Did it raise any questions about my qualifications that I can answer?
3. Would you mind describing the duties of the position for me, please?
4. Is this a new position?
5. What characteristics do you most like to find in people in this position?
6. Could you tell me about the people with whom I would be working?
7. Is there anything unusually demanding about the job that I should know about?
8. What have been some of the best results produced by people in this position?
9. What are the primary results you would like to see me produce?
10. What methods do you use to evaluate your employees (professors)?
11. How would you describe the differences between your organization and others?
12. What are your promotional (tenure) policies?
13. I've had experience . . . Would I be likely to use these skills in your organization?

average day - used

14. Is there any problem on this job with waste/quality/accuracy/public acceptance/meeting quotas/animosity from the administration or senior management?
15. Have you considered . . . (some equipment or technique) . . . to improve operations?
16. Do any factors prevent action along the line of . . .?
17. What are the criteria used in tenure and promotion decisions?
18. How is this department regarded by other departments and the administration?
19. How would you characterize the relations among the faculty members in this department?
20. What is the normal teaching load in this department?
21. How many students are in the courses taught in this department?
22. How many undergraduate majors and graduate students does this department have?
23. What kind of support does the department give faculty members in terms of travel funds, typing and duplicating services, etc.?

Thank-You Note

When you get home after the interview, write a letter to the interviewer thanking him or her for the time and consideration shown you. Stress high interest in the job and confidence in your ability to produce strong results. Add anything of importance that may have been overlooked or inadequately emphasized in the interview. This letter should be typed on the same paper that you are using for your cover letters.