

***“Helping Illinois Organizations Excel”***

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**Interviewing For Success**

***DuPage Job Fair – August 19, 2010***

# Interviewing for Success

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- **Evaluate the job & the company**
- **Preparation - Preparation**
  - Expected questions & answers
  - Your questions for them
- **Conducting the interview**



# Interviewing for Success

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## Evaluate the job & the company



# Analyzing the Job Requirements

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- **Find out as much about the job as possible**
  - If answering an ad, they are usually listed
  - If you are referred by an employment or government agency, ask them
  - If you are pre-screened and then invited in for an interview, ask the person doing the pre-screening
  - If all else fails, ask the person who is interviewing you, when it is your turn to ask questions
- **Remember to match your skills, abilities and values to the job requirements and the organization culture**



# Evaluating the Employer

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- **Look for**
  - Vision (where they're going)
  - Mission (why they exist)
  - Values (real or fantasy)
  - Code of ethics (they should demonstrate these)
  - History, current status, soundness
  - All available information
- **Go to the company website (if available)**
- **Other places to find this information**
  - Company lobby
  - Literature
  - Employees



# Compare to Your Values

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- **Would you be happy working for this organization?**
- **What else would you want to know before you accept their offer?**
- **How does this employer compare to**
  - Your least favorite
  - Your ideal
  - Your last



# Interviewing for Success

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## Preparation

## Preparation

## Preparation



# Preparing the Answers

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- Most every question asked can be answered with a skill, ability, experience, or value
- Your example for each should match what they are looking for
- If the question pertains to “How would *you do*, etc. (duty)? Your answer should demonstrate you can. If you merely answer, yes, you are just like everyone else



# 10 Most Frequently Asked Questions

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## 1. Why don't you tell me about yourself?

- This is a great opportunity for you

## 2. Why should I hire you?

- Your chance to sell your skills
- Your skills should match their expectations

## 3. What are your major strengths?

- Pick those skills, values, abilities that go directly toward what they are looking for



# 10 Most Frequently Asked Questions

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## 4. What are your major weaknesses?

- Choose those that do not apply to the job or organization

## 5. What sort of pay do you expect to receive?

- Can be a trick question to eliminate
- Your best answer, *“I am more interested in the job at this point.”* Ask what the job pays and then say that’s fine
- You can negotiate later

## 6. How does your previous experience relate to this job?

- This is your chance to sell yourself
- Choose those experiences, skills, and abilities that directly relate to what they are looking for
- Tell them how you will benefit them



# 10 Most Frequently Asked Questions

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## 7. What are your plans for the future?

- They want to know if you thought about this
- They also want to know if THEY fit into your plans or you are just short term
- Additionally, they want to know if your future plans and theirs are compatible

## 8. What will your former employers say about you?

- This is a golden opportunity for you
- Check with your former employers and ask them what they will say
- Tell the interviewer what they said. When this is confirmed, you will look truthful
- If the former employer will say something negative, be sure to relate that as well
  - You now have the opportunity to present your side before they hear it from the former employer. It will soften or eliminate the impact



# 10 Most Frequently Asked Questions

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## 9. Why are you looking for this sort of position and why here?

- Another golden opportunity
- You can restate the skills you will be using or bring up some that have not yet been mentioned
- You can show them you have researched their organization
- MOST IMPORTANT you can tell how the job and the organization will allow you to use your skills and achieve your goals

## 10. Why don't you tell me about your personal situation?

- This also can be a trick question
- You want to relate things from your personal life that enhance your prospects and fit into the organization's culture
- DO NOT relate negative things



# Optional Tough Questions

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- **What did you like most in your previous jobs? Least?**
- **Do you prefer working with others or by yourself?**
  - The answer will directly relate to the job
- **Why did you choose this field of work?**
- **How do you handle pressure?**



# Optional Tough Questions

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- Did you ever work overtime? How do you feel about it?
- Describe your relationships with your last two supervisors?
- How many days did you miss on your last job?
- What will happen if you do not meet your goals?



# Optional Tough Questions

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- Why do you think people succeed? Fail?
- What do you feel was your greatest contribution on your last job?
- What do you want most in a job?
- Tell me about your day on your last job?
- Why do you want to work for this organization?



# Optional Tough Questions

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- What can this organization do for you?
- Describe yourself in one word?
- What one word would your former employers use to describe you?



# Do You Have Any Questions?

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- **This is very important**
- **It is your opportunity to learn more about the organization**
- **Only wrong answer -**
  - *“No, I think you have covered everything.”*
- **These will only work if you thought them out before hand**
- **Make a list and check them off, if necessary**



# Tips for Completing a Job Application

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- **Follow Directions**
- **Be Neat**
- **Be Honest**
- **Come Prepared**
- **Fill out the application as completely as possible**
- **Be sure spelling and grammar are correct**
- **Don't forget to sign the application**



# Illegal Application Questions

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- **QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO -**
  - Age
  - Sex
  - Religion
  - Club or organization affiliations
  - Physical disabilities
  - Criminal records other than convictions
  - Children and any related questions
  - Marital status
  - Ever filed a worker's compensation claim
  - Wages ever been attached or garnished



# Answering Illegal Questions

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- **This is a double edged sword**
  - By answering, you could be putting yourself in the “eliminate” category
  - By not answering, you could be perceived as not following instructions, a troublemaker, a bad hire and be putting yourself in the “eliminate” category
- **Your best strategy is to answer the questions**
  - If you are eliminated because of one of these answers, you probably would not be happy working for this company anyway



# Employer Expectations

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- **Can you do the job?**
  - Do you have the experience (direct or indirect)?
  - Related education and training
  - Achievements that are job related
- **Can you be counted on?**
  - Can you be trusted?
  - Will you get to work on time?
  - Will you gets things done?
  - Do you work well with others?
  - Are you productive?



# Employer Expectations

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- **Do you look like the right person for the job?**
  - Personal appearance - (Dressed neatly and appropriately for the interview)
  - Manner - (How do you handle yourself during the interview)
  - Paperwork - (Was your résumé and application neat, complete and free of errors?)



# Employer Expectations

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- **What you can do for them, NOT what the employer can do for you**
  - They are mainly interested in how you will help them do a better job
  - How you will make their job easier
  - How you will help the company/ organization reach their goals



# Interviewing for Success

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## Conducting

## The

## Interview



# The Interview

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- **Dress appropriately**
- **Remember the interview has two parts**
- **Answer each question with a skill, ability or value**
- **Demonstrate the skills whenever possible**
- **Know how and when to handle salary and benefits**
- **Be willing to negotiate**
- **Follow-up each interview with a thank-you letter**
  - Stress how you can benefit each employer



# Top 10 Interview Blunders

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1. Don't Prepare
2. Dress Inappropriately
3. Poor Communication Skills
4. Too Much Communication
5. Talk Too Much
6. Don't Talk Enough
7. Fuzzy Facts
8. Give the Wrong Answer
9. Badmouthing Past Employers
10. Forgot to Follow Up



# A Final Thought

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**Getting a job offer is your goal.  
Being rejected is part of the process.  
Remember, you will probably hear “no”  
a lot more than you will hear “yes”.**

**After all, you only need to hear “yes” once.**



# Resource Information

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## *The Lincoln Foundation for Performance Excellence*

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