



## 6 Degree Search Interview Tips

### How to Prepare for the Interview:

Before an interview, a company wants to know a little about you through a resume. In the same way, it is important for you to have some preview information about the company's "resume." Take time to do some research about the company, such as its locations, private funding or current financial standing, products or services, and future growth plans. Research is most easily done through their corporate web site. Peruse the site and note their press releases, executive team, and product lines. Write down any questions you have about them and bring them with you to the interview. Showing you did research on the company shows your enthusiasm about the position & company.

Another important way to prepare is to know how to answer anticipated questions such as:

- Why are you contemplating a change, and/or why did you leave previous positions?
- What do you consider to be your strengths/weaknesses?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years? Be ready to explain what you're also doing to prepare yourself. Also prepare 1 sentence about your career interests (keeping in mind the role for which you're applying)
- Who are your references? (Be ready with names and phone numbers of pre-called, professional references who know your work, and are prepared to speak well of you.
- Tell me about yourself. This is not an open invitation to ramble.
- Prepare 1 sentence to summarize what you've done that is relevant to the job. Prepare 2 sentences to explain a major accomplishment/impact you made and how it saved your company time or money.

Think of these words when planning your answers:

ACTION WORDS: I... planned, created, originated, initiated, developed, conceived, implemented, formulated, designed.

RESULT WORDS: It... led to... ; or I... contributed, demonstrated that, saved, reduced, collected, achieved, provided for, increased, shot holes in, evaluated.

LEADERSHIP WORDS: I... organized, directed, led, supervised, guided, managed, was responsible for, presided over, coordinated, gave direction to, and built.

**\*\* REHEARSE REHEARSE REHEARSE \*\***

## When you arrive for the interview:

### Attire:

- Men: Wear a sport coat and tie at the least. If you are interviewing for a sales or executive level position, consider wearing a suit. Do not wear cologne.
- Women: Wear a suit, business-like outfit, or dress with nylons. Do not over-accessorize & do not wear perfume.

Arrive early for your interview. If, for an unavoidable reason, you will be late, call ahead to let them know. \* Be aware of your behavior in the parking lot if you are arriving at a glass building. Companies in these types of buildings often look to see how a candidate behaves when they don't know they're being watched. Shake hands firmly with everyone you meet, look them in the eye and smile.

- Bring a copy of your resume as well as reference names and phone numbers.
- If you are asked to fill out an application as well, complete the application form in full detail—never make reference to “see resume,” and leave salary requirements “open.” Be honest about all employment, dates, and hiring/firing situations. Remember that while your resume is not, an application IS a legal document.

**Begin the first few minutes** of the interview by asking the interviewer, “What qualifications are you looking for in a person to fill this position?” The answer to that question will give you great insight into what to share about your experience, education, attitudes and philosophies.

### Probing Questions to Ask in an Interview:

- Asking the right questions will demonstrate your value system, listening skills, sincerity, and how you will take future direction.
- Listen to total answers without interrupting. The last 5 words in a sentence linguistically have the most meat.

### **Select 2 – 3 questions to ask each person who interviews you:**

1. What are some major short- and long-range department/company objectives?
2. What are some characteristics that are unique about your company or make it attractive from the outside?
3. In what areas does your company excel or need improvement?
4. What outside influences affect your company's growth?
5. What have been some common denominators of your successful employees? (you can then use this information for the next person you meet.)
6. What would you add or subtract from the last employee to increase efficiency?
7. What major challenges will I face immediately coming into the job? What resources and staffing will be available?
8. Based on what you've seen of me so far, where do you think I could contribute the most? Are there any concerns about my ability to do the job?

9. What is the next step?
10. Generic questions for multiple interview situation: Tell me about your career at this company. What excites you about working here?
  - Be positive and enthusiastic about the company, the position, and the interviewer. Nothing turns an interviewer off faster than arrogance, a know-it-all attitude, or apathy on the part of an interviewee. Also, do not bad-mouth your current/former employer or management.
  - If the interviewer asks you about your salary needs/desires, respond by saying that you are open for the right opportunity. Don't lock yourself in high or low by mentioning a specific dollar figure or range. If the interviewer presses you, tell him/her: "There is one reason why I'm here today - the opportunity. Based on what I've heard, I'd like to entertain your best offer."

**Close the Interview with Three Statements:**

1. Compliment the interviewer on something with regard to his/her personality, enthusiasm, presentation, success or other attributes that you've been impressed by.
2. Make a positive comment about the company based on what you've previously read and/or learned during the interview.
3. Make a positive statement about your ability to handle the position and reaffirm your interest in it, especially now that you've seen the job in person.

**How to Follow-Up After an Interview:**

- Call your 6 Degree Search Group consultant within the day after your interview to give your honest and immediate impressions. If you want the position, he/she can help you get it. If you don't want it, he/she will tell the company for you.
  - Send a thank you note in any case. Even if it's not your dream job, you never know what that person's positive impression might lead to...referrals to other positions within the company or to other companies!
- \* See sample thank you letter below

**SAMPLE “THANK YOU” LETTER**

Date  
Name  
Title  
Company  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ :

It was a privilege to have been invited to (Name of Company) to interview for the (Job Title) position. The key persons I met provided ample information about (Name of Company) as a whole.

I am convinced that (Name of Company) is the kind of company I would like to work for—a company with innovation and technical leadership; and with my background and experience, I’m equally convinced that I can make a significant contribution to your organization. I truly enjoyed having the opportunity to interview with you and your colleagues on (date). I was very much impressed by your energetic and talented team. I would be “adjective” if I can be a member of the team. (Name of Company) is a (young and dynamic) company and provides an excellent working environment for career growth. I was interested in (Name of Company) before the interview, but became even more interested after meeting (Number) people who all felt that (Name of Company) was the best company in the (Industry) field in San Diego! It is just the type of company I would love to work for.

Once again, thank you for the hospitality you extended to me. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Your Name

**HOW TO EVALUATE A PROPOSED JOB OFFER**

Just what goes on in your mind while you are evaluating an offer? In order to come up with some accurate and meaningful answers, a national personnel agency retained a consultant with a background in both industrial psychology and personnel. He conducted over 100 interviews with executive search firms, senior personnel people, and other industrial psychologists, and found the following ten points to be universally true. In other words, while you’re “sleeping on it,” these are things you will most likely be thinking about:

1. Do I like the nature of the work I will be performing?
2. Can I do the job or be trained to do the job in a reasonable period of time?
3. Is the reputation of the company good?
4. Is the chemistry between me and the people that I will be associated with?
5. Will the company pay me a fair wage and fair benefits?

6. Is the opportunity for growth in keeping with my career goals?
7. Is the location of the position appropriate?
8. Is the philosophy of doing business compatible (in keeping) with my own?
  - a) Management style
  - b) Approach to planning
  - c) Goals
  - d) Visibility
9. What will this job do for my future marketability?
10. How will working for this company affect my personal lifestyle?

### **PITFALLS OF THE “COUNTER OFFER” or ”BUYBACK”**

You have accepted an offer from a new employer. On giving notice to your present company, they tell you they don't want you to leave. They have great plans for you and, as a token of appreciation; a salary increase is made...you have been given the “Buyback” or “Counter Offer.” Before this happens, you must consider the following:

- 1. ASK YOURSELF, “IF I WAS WORTH X DOLLARS YESTERDAY, WHY AM I SUDDENLY WORTH Y DOLLARS TODAY?”**

Consider this: your present employer could merely be “buying time” until they locate a replacement. The reason you are made a counter offer is because they need you. When this situation is rectified (and they will see that it is), your position in the company will not be strong, and you will be expendable.
- 2. THE COMPANY MAY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE BEEN “BLACKMAILED” INTO GIVING YOU A RAISE.**

If your company really recognized your worth, they would have given you the added income or advanced position without your leaving.
- 3. REALIZE THAT YOU ARE A MARKED PERSON.**

The likelihood of promotion is extremely limited for someone who has given notice. You will always be considered disloyal. According to the NEA, of all persons who accepted buybacks from their company, 80% were not on the job six months later. When economic slow-downs occur, you could be one of the first to go. You indicated intentions once before, so it's only natural that your position may be eliminated in a slack period.
- 4. YOU MAY FEEL FLATTERED IF YOUR COMPANY HAS EXTENDED A COUNTER OFFER, BUT IS MORE MONEY GOING TO CHANGE EVERYTHING IN YOUR PRESENT JOB?**

Carefully review all the reasons why you wanted to make a change in the first place. Does the counter offer really offset these reasons? Has anything changed? Remember the new opportunity (you will be giving up) that looked so favorable when you accepted it.
- 5. REALIZE THAT EVEN IF YOU GET WHAT YOU WANT**

You may have to repeat an intention to leave every time you want a salary increase, promotion, improved conditions, etc.

**We strongly urge you to carefully think over all these facts before making a final decision. It is your career, your livelihood. One important mistake could be costly in terms of your professional growth.**

## HOW TO RESIGN GRACEFULLY

Now that you've made a positive business decision to accept an offer of employment from another firm, it is necessary to resign from your present position. However, don't resign from your present position until you've committed yourself to your new opportunity.

A. The most effective method of resignation follows these steps:

1. Resign to your supervisor at 4:40 - 5:00 p.m., late enough where they can't put a counter offer together until later. Also be sure that you notify Personnel as shown in the sample letter (below).
2. Be positive, state the following in a tactfully written resignation letter (see sample below):
3. You are giving notice.
4. Your last day will be (Date).
5. Thank your supervisor for the time spent working with the firm.
6. Give reasons for leaving only when asked and if that situation should arise, don't prolong the conversation.
7. The \$ figure for which you are leaving should remain confidential. Just say, "the offer was a fair one." It's no one's business but your own.

B. This is not the time for discussion as you have already made the decision to leave.

- ☆ Never burn bridges—it might affect future references.
- ☆ Never give money as a reason for leaving. This complicates a smooth resignation.
- ☆ Never appear as though you are trying to "blackmail" your company. State that the new opportunity better fits your career goals.
- ☆ 4. If they ask you if there's anything they can do to keep you, just reply that you are flattered but would like to focus the next few weeks on transitioning your work to other people. Your assignment at this point is to get your manager to let you focus on the transition, not on how to keep you. Remember, it's his/her job to do whatever he/she can to keep you. Never take his/her reaction personally (good or bad). At the end, they will all give you a goodbye lunch and wish you well.

## SAMPLE RESIGNATION LETTER

Date

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

Please accept this as two (2) weeks formal notice of my resignation from the employ of (Name of Company). My final day of employment will be (Date).

I have thoroughly enjoyed the work environment and professional atmosphere here. Your (management, direction, guidance, counseling, etc.) have/has been the source of great personal and career satisfaction to me. The (experience/knowledge) gained during my association with (Name of Company) have/has provided significant career growth for which I shall always be appreciative.

Thank you for your past consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Name

cc: (Department Manager)  
(Personnel Manager)