

CMA Executive Recruiters
HOW TO CONDUCT A SUCCESSFUL FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW

A. PRESENTATION TO EMPLOYER

1. **Appearance is critical.** Dress properly - It is very important!!
The look is conservative and successful. (men) Conservative suit with tie, white shirt, dark socks, leather shoes (polished), and get a hair cut. (women) Conservative suit, simple hose, polished shoes. Or, with many companies today, proper interview attire for women or men is “Business Casual”, meaning nice shirt or blouse and dress or khaki pants. Find out before you go what they expect.
2. First thing make “**eye contact**” - and maintain eye contact throughout the interview.
3. **Hand shake** - should be firm (not limp or too strong) Try practicing with a friend before you interview.
4. Learn as much about the company before going in as you can; this will impress the interviewers.
5. Take at least one fresh original resume
 - * Job title/starting and ending dates.
 - * Be prepared to discuss each aspect of your career in detail. Know your own resume!
 - * Be able to speak about your duties/responsibilities in depth.
 - * What and how--strong emphasis on your specific duties.
 - * Definitely mention specific Accomplishments, Awards, and Rankings.
 - * State the facts-- be honest - but not modest! Sell your strengths!!
6. Find out what the employer is looking for and describe your past accomplishments relating how they will help him.
Give Examples!!
 - * Maintain eye contact at all times and smile, but don't be phony.
 - * Be positive--eager--at ease
7. When the employer says, “**Tell me about yourself?**” Talk about your professional background, your qualifications, your education relevant to the position, your duties and achievements.
8. Be able to discuss your past experiences in depth and detail. You are the authority.
 - * Come across in a motivated tone. Be enthusiastic; present yourself as a "high energy" person.
 - * Be sincere.
 - * Answer the questions geared to the position for which you are interviewing. (Be careful you don't interview for a different position than the one you were sent on.)
 - * When the employer asks you a question, think about your answers as long as you need to... But, when, you do answer don't be vague--**be decisive and specific with your answers. Be careful to not “over talk” your answers.**
 - * Never say “no”, or “I don't know anything about that”, or “I don't do that”, **instead say**
"Although I haven't, I can do..."
 - * Make the employer comfortable with you as a prospective employee - and as a person!
9. State the reasons for leaving in a very positive manner.
 - * **Be positive about current employer/manager.**
 - * The old saying, “If you can't say anything nice, then don't say anything at all” is very appropriate in the interview setting.

B. POTENTIAL STRESS QUESTIONS

Here are typical ones:

- * What are your short-range objectives?
- * What are your long-range objectives?
- * What do you look for in a job?
- * Why are you leaving your present job? (Be brief and positive)
- * Why did your business fail?
- * What can you do for us that someone else cannot do?
- * Why should we hire you?
- * How is your health?
- * Can you work under pressure?
- * What is your philosophy of management?
- * Tell me about a time when you used influence instead of job position to get something done.
- * Do you prefer staff or line work? Why?
- * What kind of salary are you worth? Why?
- * What were your five biggest accomplishments in your present (or last) job?
- * What were your five biggest accomplishments in your career?
- * Why didn't you do better in college?
- * What is your biggest strength'?
- * What is your biggest weakness?
- * How long would it take for you to make a contribution to our company?
- * How long would you stay with us?
- * How do you feel about people from minority groups?
- * If you could start again, what would you do differently?
- * How do you rate yourself as a manager?
- * What new goals or objectives have you established recently? Why?
- * How have you changed the nature of your job?
- * What do you think of your boss?
- * Why haven't you obtained a job so far?
- * What features of your previous jobs have you liked?
- * What features of your previous jobs have you disliked?
- * Would you describe a few situations in which your work was criticized?
- * Would you object to working for a woman?
- * How would you evaluate your present firm?
- * Do you generally speak to people before they speak to you?
- * How would you describe the essence of success?
- * What was the last book you read?
- * What interests you most about the position we have?
- * Don't you feel you might be better off with a different size organization?
- * Why aren't you earning more?
- * Will you be out to take your boss's job?
- * Are you a leader?
- * How would you describe your personality?
- * Have you helped increase profits?
- * Have you helped reduce costs?
- * Have you hired people before? What do you look for?
- * Have you fired people before? Why?

Q What is your biggest weakness?

A. Well, I really don't feel I have a weakness that affects my working ability. I guess at times, I have a tendency to be impatient and occasionally push people too hard to get a job done. Patience isn't my strongest virtue.

Q. How long would it take for you to make a contribution to our company?

A. Well, I hope to be able to make a contribution in a very short time, obviously it will take some time to get used to certain operating procedures. There are a number of things that I have accomplished before that I may be able to institute once I gain a better understanding of your organization.

Q. How long would you stay with us?

A. As I mentioned to you, I'm looking for a career opportunity, however, I'm a realist. Obviously, if I don't do the job you won't want me around, and if there is no opportunity for me, it won't be the type of environment I'd enjoy.

Q. What do you think of your boss?

A. He's an outstanding man. I have a great deal of respect for him and have enjoyed working with him very much.

Q. What interests you most about the position we have?

A. I am anxious to take on added responsibility. In addition to enjoying my work, I'd like to expand my knowledge. Frankly, these opportunities don't exist in my present position, but do in the one here.

10. The Salary Discussion

* **Try to avoid the salary discussion like the plague!** If asked, "What are you looking for?"

The correct answer is, "My present salary is \$\$, \$\$\$, if you like me, and I like you, I'm sure we can work the numbers out."

* **Don't come up with a specific number...** you might ask for \$2,000 more than they can pay or \$2,000 less than I can get for you.

* First, let's see if both parties want to buy before we determine what it costs.

C. CANDIDATE ASKING PORTION OF THE INTERVIEW

The asking of thoughtful and probing questions should not be confined to the employer.

Candidates should be prepared to ask as well as answer. It is perfectly acceptable to take out a pad and take notes.

Don't just sit there like a log. Draw conversation. The greatest way in the world to become known as a good conversationalist is to ask a leading question and let the other person speak. **Do not interrupt.**

* What kind of projects would I work on?

* What kind of plans does the company have to increase business?

* What are the opportunities available in the company (department)?

* Tell me about the people I will be working with?

* (If appropriate) what are the people like I will be working with?

* What about the company convinced you to join and stay through the years?

* How did you get to where you are now?

* What authority (if appropriate) will I be given?

* What will you expect of me?

* What is there about the position that has not been mentioned to me that could cause me to decline a job offer?

* What happened to the last person in this job?

* How would you define the management philosophy of the company?

IF TIME IS SHORT AND YOU CAN ASK NOTHING ELSE, AT LEAST ASK THE FOLLOWING:

* **What do you want me to accomplish?** (Tell mini-war stories of similar accomplishments)

* **What obstacles will you need me to over-come?** (Tell mini-war stories of where you have overcome similar obstacles)

D. CLOSING ---- * ASK FOR THE JOB * DO IT!!

A basic of human nature: "People like people who like them in return"

- * When you see the interview is *over*... When the employer pushes down on his chair...
- * When he thanks you for coming in...
- * **Tell the employer why you can do the job and that you want the job!**
 - o This separates the men from the boys / The women from the girls / The pros from the amateurs / The people who get the job versus the people who came in 2nd best.
 - o Say "I can do this job because ..."

If you want the job, find out where you stand, and ask one of the following:

- * **What concerns do you have about me that would prevent you from making me an offer or endorsing me for hire? When he/she states a concern, overcome the concern with a further explanation- then ask if there are any other concerns, and repeat until there are none. --OR--**
- * Is there any reason you would not make me an offer? --OR--
- * On a scale of 1-10, where do I fit?

Overcome any concerns with concise explanations.

E. AFTER THE INTERVIEW IS OVER

Go to the nearest telephone and call me. I can't talk to the employer until I speak with you to find out "how it went". We will go over some specific questions. You should be able to tell me who you met with; how long you spent with the person; and specifically what was discussed. At that time, I will need you to give me one of three possible answers:

1. "No, I don't want the position." --OR--
2. "Yes, I want the position. --OR--
3. "I need more information" If this occurs, either I will get the information, or set up another interview for you.

Do the best you can, and remember; all you can do is the best you can. Either you will get/want the job or not. If you grab the brass ring/get the golden prize--- we will celebrate---if not---you will be the same good person as before the interview.

Just do your best! Good luck, and call me when you finish the interview.

F. WRITE AND SEND A THANK YOU LETTER IMMEDIATELY

SAMPLE "THANK YOU" LETTER TO SEND AFTER AN INTERVIEW

Dear _____

1. Thank you for taking the time to ...
2. Touch on company hot buttons and how you can solve their problems or help them achieve their goals.
3. Confirm next step (e.g. - Next interview, next phone contact, etc.)

TIPS

- ◆ **Be brief and to the point.**
- ◆ **Use your spelling proofreader and grammar-checking program.**
- ◆ **Fax, E-mail, or regular mail the letter A.S.A.P. after interview.**
- ◆ **Use hiring authority's business card to properly address letter.**
- ◆ **Email is fine, but follow it with an original sent in the mail.**