JOB SEARCH INFORMATION SERIES

JOB INTERVIEW

Employment
SECURITY

WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

The job interview is a "mutual exploration" between a prospective employer and employee. Your goal is to show that you have the skills and enthusiasm to successfully fit into the organization and its culture. The interview is an opportunity to decide if the position and work environment are right for you.

This is a basic guide to assist you in recognizing and preparing for common types of interviews and different interviewer personalities. It will also explain the components of the interviewing process by suggesting ways to prepare and present yourself.

BEFORE THE TELEPHONE RINGS

- Always keep paper and pen next to the telephone
- Have a copy of your resume or application nearby
- Try to have a responsible person answering the telephone
- Express the importance of keeping telephone lines open
- Your answering machine message should be professional and appropriate
- No telephone? Find a reliable message phone and check with them regularly

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Make a good impression at your interview by doing homework beforehand. The more you know about the company and the position, the better you will appear in the interview. Your interest and motivation will impress an interviewer, and you will be able to explain what you can do for the company.

Find out as much key information as you can about the company, its products and customers. Get the who, what, when, where, how and why about the company. If possible, talk to people who work at the company. The following are research sources:

- Local NH Employment Security Resource Center
- NHES Website: www.nhes.state.nh.us
- Chambers of Commerce
- Local Library
- College Placement Directory
- Company's Annual Report
- Security Exchange Commission
- Internet Websites

Your homework also includes making sure you *know where to go*. Don't be satisfied with just knowing the company's address.

- Be familiar with the traffic flow from your home to the place of employment during the relevant times that would affect your interview and/or employment.

- Note how far it is and how long it takes to get there. Allow extra time for traffic and weather conditions.

- Don't just drive by the company – find the visitor's parking spaces so you will know exactly where to go.

- Observe employees' dress and find the right building entrance for your interview.

LIST THE REASONS THE INTERVIEWER WILL HIRE YOU

Match your skills and experience to the job for which you are applying. Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. On the left side, make a list of what the employer is looking for based on the job description. On the right, make a list of the qualities you possess that fit those requirements.

Position Requirements	My Skills and Experience
Communication skills	5 years experience as intake interviewer, handling 8-10 clients per day and directing them to the appropriate department.

Make sure you give specific examples that substantiate your abilities and work traits. Be able to answer questions based on the

emphasized points of your resume.

Typically, this is how you'll be scored during interviews:
50%... Good chemistry. Can you "fit" into the organization?
30%... Competence and ability. Can you do the job?
20%... Willingness and enthusiasm. Will you do the job?

Top Reasons for Being Hired

Dependable	Mature
Reliable	Tactful
Flexible	Assertive
Team Player	Self-confident
Courteous	Honest
Respectful	Non-judgmental
Well-groomed	Adaptable
Enthusiastic	Conscientious

PREPARING YOUR QUESTIONS

What is the question all interviewers will ask? "Do you have any questions?" Prepare at least five good questions that indicate your interest in the job, the company and the industry or profession. Ask questions that say something about your ability to fit in, do the job and meet the company objectives. Above all, ask questions that show a response to what you have learned from the interviewer. Ask questions about:

- hiring process
- being new on the job
- responsibility
- the organization
- company's projections
- typical day

Don't ask questions that raise warning flags. Don't ask questions about only one topic. Ask to clarify something the interviewer said.

PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

You have thought about the company, the job itself, the questions the employer might ask you and the questions you want to ask the employer. Now you are ready to rehearse the interview.

- Say aloud the answers to questions the interviewer may ask. Some people like to practice with a friend. Others like to practice in front of a mirror. Some like to video tape their practice interview.

- Be sure to practice stating the skills you have to offer and give

concrete examples to back up your answers.

- Think about the questions that you want to ask the employer and formulate them into complete sentences.

- Practice saying them out loud several times.

PHYSICAL CAPABILITIES

A person with a disability has to be prepared to present his/her disability in a job interview. Always present the disability in *positive* terms. NEVER use medical definitions to describe the disability and only present the information an employer would *need to know*. You want to stress *abilities*, NOT disabilities! Do not linger on discussing how your handicap limits you; explain how well you can perform the functions of the job. You want to provide examples of how you have successfully performed in past positions. These examples should be related to the job for which you are applying. For more information about this subject, contact the NH Commission for Human Rights at 603-271-2767.

APPEARANCE COUNTS

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression."

How do you look?

- ☺ Hair and make-up should be neat and not attract attention
- ☺ Trim or shave beard / mustache
- ☺ Wash hands and trim nails
- ☺ Shower and use deodorants
- ☺ Avoid using perfume or aftershave
- ☺ Brush your teeth
- ☺ Cover tattoos and, if necessary, remove body piercings

"More than half of the first impression is based on appearance."

What do I wear?

- ☺ Jewelry should be simple
- ☺ Clothes cleaned and pressed
- ☺ Conservative and neat, neutral colors
- ☺ Clean and shine your shoes

Rule of thumb: Dress one step above what is required for the job.

What do I bring?

- Briefcase or purse – not both
- Two pens and a pad of paper
- Extra copies of resume/application, references, transcripts
- Name of person doing the interviewing
- Your interview questions and notes about the company
- Two forms of Identification (social security card, license, passport)
- Diplomas, professional licenses or certificates
- Examples of your work
- Reading glasses

Caution! These are "turn-offs"

- Chewing gum or cough drops
- Smoking and drinking alcohol
- Wearing sunglasses
- Forgetting your reading glasses
- Wearing headphones
- Body piercings
- No cells phones or pagers
- Don't curse

Other Important Concerns

- Come alone!
- Have reliable transportation
- Arrive 15 minutes early (call if you will be late)
- Have dependable child or adult care
- Be sure to eat breakfast
- Get a good night's sleep
- Do final mirror check

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Telephone Screening Interview

This interview saves the employer time by eliminating candidates based on essential criteria such as employment objective, education or required skills. Since these interviews will often occur unexpectedly, it is important that copies of your resume/application and references are organized and kept where you can reach them at a moment's notice. This is a good reason to have a dedicated place in your home for your job search.

Screening Interview

A screening interview is meant to weed out unqualified candidates. Providing facts about your skills is more important than establishing rapport. Interviewers will work from an outline of points they want to cover, looking for inconsistencies in your resume and challenging your qualifications. Provide answers to their questions, and never volunteer any additional information. A telephone interview can also be used as a screening interview.

Selection Interview

At this one-on-one interview it has been established that you have the skills and education necessary for the position. The interviewer wants to see if you will fit in with the company and how your skills will complement the rest of the department. Your goal in this type of interview is to establish rapport with the interviewer and show him/her that your qualifications will benefit the company.

Work Sample Interview

This interview is done to allow the applicant an opportunity to "show their wares." It could be the place for a graphic artist to display his/her portfolio. A salesperson may be asked to make a sales presentation. An office worker may be asked to complete a business letter using a specific type of computer software program.

Stress Interview

A stress interview introduces you NOT to an interviewer, but to an interrogator. The interview is one in which you're treated as though you are the enemy. The "interrogator" asks you a number of offensive questions that are designed to deliberately make you uncomfortable. The interview may also lapse into silence at some point during the questioning. Recognize this as an attempt to unnerve you. Keep your cool, take your time in responding to the questions and, when it is all over, reward yourself. Do not take it personally. This is usually a test of how you will handle stress on the job.

Peer Group Interview

This interview is an opportunity for you to meet and to talk with your prospective co-workers. Just as in other interviews, the peer group will be evaluating you, determine how you fit in. The goal of this group interview is to see how you interact with others and how you use your knowledge and reasoning powers to win others over.

Group or Committee Interview

Sometimes referred to as a panel interview, it usually consists of three or more members of the company who have a say in whether you are hired. When answering questions from several people, speak directly to the person asking the questions but try to maintain some eye contact with the other members of the group. The committee may outline a situation and ask you to formulate a plan that deals with the problem. The interviewers are looking for how you apply your knowledge and skills to a real-life situation.

Luncheon Interview

This type of interview assesses how well you can handle yourself in a social situation. This is a business lunch and you are being watched carefully. Follow their lead in both selection of food and in etiquette. Select easy things to eat so you can answer questions and pay attention to the conversation. Use the lunch interview to develop common ground with your interviewer.

Video Conference Interview

Some companies today use video conferences to conduct meetings or carry out other aspects of their business. Conducting an interview via video conference enables a company to save travel costs and still have a "person-to-person" interview. If the thought of facing a camera during the interview frightens you, practice before a video camera or a mirror.

Follow-up interview

Expect to be called to not just one interview but to a second, third or even fourth interview. Follow-up interviews help companies arrive at a hiring decision if they are having difficulties choosing among the short-listed candidates. You may find yourself facing the same hiring manager, in which case focus on strengthening ties and emphasizing what you have to offer and your interest in the position. Make discreet inquiries about the internal company culture and work environment. Be prepared to engage in a salary negotiation.

EMPLOYER INTERVIEWING STYLES

The "ALL BUSINESS" Type

Direct, hard-nosed, in a rush
Not interested in what you can do
Interested in what you have done and your accomplishments

Keep your answers brief, stick to the facts, numbers and specific data

The "ABSTRACT" Type

Wants to know how you think
Not interested in what you have done
Wants to know how you did it or how you might
do something in the future

Be methodical, logical, clear and concise when answering questions

The "GOOD GUY" Type

Warm, friendly, likeable
Wants to know if you can do the job
Can you fit in with the team

Emphasize you are a team player. Use the pronoun "we" instead of "I" when talking about your accomplishments.

The "INDECISIVE" Type

Disorganized, unfocused
Uncomfortable in making decision
They'd rather talk about themselves

Let them talk. Feed their need for attention: respond with lots of enthusiasm and interest

Surviving A Layoff
Dahlstrom & Company, 1994

IT'S SHOW TIME!

The interview starts as soon as you are on company property. Be courteous to *everyone* you meet. Introduce yourself and inform receptionist that you have an appointment.

What to do while waiting for your interview:

- Read your resume
- Review notes about the company
- Take some deep breaths to relax
- Read some affirmations *

Remember that a little nervousness is expected and that the employer may be nervous too.

* AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations can help you obtain your goals and dreams. If you repeat positive statements several times a day about yourself you will believe them and not fall into negative self-talk and actions. It will help you stay focused, motivated and create ways to achieve your goals. Choose one affirmation each day to use in all your activities. Write your own unique affirmation and add it to this list.

- ¬ I am in charge of my own life and fully able to change.
- ¬ I am talented and capable.
- ¬ I am capable of meeting any challenge.
- ¬ I am happy, healthy and calm.
- ¬ I am full of enthusiasm and vitality.
- ¬ I focus on my strengths, accomplishments and goals.
- ¬ I succeed by making the most of my time.
- ¬ I am relaxed, confident and creative.
- ¬ I am successful because I believe in myself.

Since your thoughts and beliefs influence your actions, you will feel good, look confident and have a sense of control over your future.

BODY LANGUAGE

This is a silent form of communication. More than 50% of your communication is nonverbal. Your posture, walk, dress, facial movement, energy, gestures and eye-contact are all nonverbal signals.

Positive Body Language

- Firm handshake (if hand is offered)
- Sit up comfortably in your chair
- Act interested and look alert
- Listen carefully
- Sit with uncrossed legs
- Nod your head slowly now and then
- Speak clearly, slowly and in a positive manner
- Maintain eye contact but don't stare
- Smile when appropriate
- Be yourself

Negative Body Signals

- Staring
- Slouching
- Looking down
- Overuse hand gestures
- Rambling
- Crossed or folded arms
- Fidgeting
- Frowning
- Frozen smile
- Biting your lips
- Fiddling with pen, tie, etc.
- Doodling on notepad

THE INTERVIEW

An initial evaluation is made of you in 12 to 15 seconds. The decision to hire or continue to the next level is made within the first third of the interview.

An employer is interested in your attitude, personality, appearance and work habits.

- Smile politely
- Introduce yourself and confirm the purpose of the interview
- Firm hand shake, if offered
- When invited, be seated
- Sit upright and alert
- Keep your answers focused and to the point
- Never talk negatively about previous employers or co-workers

These four important categories for selling yourself are the characteristics employers are looking for during an interview. Sweaty Palms

**** Enthusiasm, Sincerity, Tact and Courtesy ****

EMPLOYER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

All interview questions are really the same questions:

"WHY ARE YOU THE BEST PERSON FOR THE JOB?"

An interview may begin asking common-ground questions about shared interests, the weather or your travel to the interview. Although these questions are asked to make you feel more comfortable, still be cautious about how you answer them.

Rule of Thumb: You can expect 15 to 25 questions per hour at an interview.

The Most Common Questions

"Tell me about yourself."

HINT: Briefly introduce yourself. State your key accomplishments, your key strengths and the importance of these strengths to your prospective employer. Do not talk about your childhood, family or hobbies unless there is a direct relationship to the skills required for the position.

"What do you know about the company?"

HINT: Share what you have learned about the job, the company and the industry through your own research. Talk about how your professional skills will benefit the company.

"Why did you leave you're last job?"

HINT: If you were *laid off*, your answer is simple: "There was a company reorganization and my position was eliminated." If you *quit* the job, there are different approaches to take based on your situation. However, in your answer, you do not want to complain about the hours, people, or salary as reasons for quitting the job. If you don't have any acceptable answer, try framing your reply with any of these answers: you wanted more challenge; you relocated; there were too few advancement opportunities. If you were *fired*, it is very important to keep your answer brief. A good example: "We agreed to disagree," or, "There was a change in supervisors and in job expectations." Discuss the circumstances from the employer's point of view, then offer your side.

"Why do you want to work here?"

HINT: Show the interviewer your interest in the company. Relate your skills to what you know about the company.

"Why should I hire you?"

HINT: "As I understand the requirements of the job, you are looking for a _____. My training, education and background are a great match. For example, in my job as a _____, I . . . . . ."
Use examples from your education, training and work history to show just how you meet or exceed the job requirements.

"What is your major weakness?"

HINT: Present any "weakness" as something that can be seen as a strength. "Sometimes I tend to take on too much responsibility and risk overloading myself. I have to be careful and delegate tasks to others instead of trying to do it all myself."

"What strengths would you bring to the company?"

HINT: If you have sufficiently researched the organization, you should be able to imagine what skills the company values. List them, then give examples where you have demonstrated these skills.

"Where do you see yourself in five years?"

HINT: Indicate ambition and confidence in your abilities, but be careful not to appear to be threatening to the employer's own position. The interviewer wants to know if your plans and the company's goals are compatible. Talk about your desire to learn more and improve your performance, and be as specific as possible about how you will meet the goals you have set for yourself and how that would benefit your employer.

"Give me one word that best describes yourself."

HINT: "*DEPENDABLE*" Don't forget to have an example to back up your statement.

"Tell me why I should *not* hire you?"

HINT: You should NOT give them a reason. Emphasize that you are qualified and capable of performing the tasks of this position.

"What are your salary expectations?"

HINT: It is important to know what the salary range is for that profession. Never mention a salary figure before the employer does. To do this may underprice or overprice yourself. Once the employer mentions a figure, you can agree or disagree with it. Negotiations, if there are to be any, should be attempted when the job is offered to you. Then the balance of power between you and the employer is more in your favor, when the job has been offered to you and the pressure of being interviewed is off. "I am interested in career potential, so I would be willing to consider whatever your firm usually pays new people in this position."

ALWAYS MAKE SURE YOU GIVE EXAMPLES TO SUPPORT YOUR STATEMENTS.

Here are two great resources that offer more interviewing questions and sample answers.

www.nhes.state.nh.us
and
NHES Resource Center Library

APPLICANT QUESTIONS

Listening is one of the least used skills in a job interview. There are few better ways to make an impact with a prospective employer than by catching the details of what the interviewer is saying, and then spinning those points into observations or well-crafted questions. Smart employers see curiosity as a valuable trait, and you accentuate your curiosity by listening intently. Turn on your listening and intuitive skills, and read between the lines.

- What is your hiring process?
- When is the decision going to be made for this position?
- If I haven't heard from you, may I contact you on _____?
- I am very interested in this position. Can I provide you any other information that would clarify my qualifications?
- How would you describe a typical day?
- May I see a copy of the job description?
- Is this a newly created position?
- What qualities are you seeking in a person for this job?
- Where does the job fit into the organization?

WRAP UP

- If you really want the job, let the interviewer know!
- Be sure to thank the interviewer(s) for their time!

EMPLOYEE'S LEGAL RIGHTS

Questions asked in an interview should focus on your qualifications for the job. Although recent legislation helps ensure that you are not asked illegal questions, occasionally these questions come up on an application or in an interview.

Human Resource personnel are usually aware of what's legal and illegal. Others involved in the hiring process may not have the same awareness.

It is your right to withhold information unrelated to the job. However, research shows that refusing to answer questions may hurt your employment prospects. Think through possible illegal questions ahead of time and decide how you will handle them.

Understand what is really being asked. Find ways to address the concerns behind the question. Remember that a question should be job related.

If it does not bother you to answer a question, go ahead and answer it. If the question does bother you, be prepared to address it in a way which will not offend the interviewer. The key to effectively handle difficult questions is to prepare suitable answers well before the interview.

For more information about employees' legal rights, call the NH Dept. of Labor 1-800-272-4353 or go to their website www.state.nh.us/dol

ILLEGAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

The following chart lists examples of questions, depending on how they are asked in relation to the job, which may be legal or illegal. For more information, contact the NH Department of Human Rights 603-271-2767.

INQUIRY AREA	ILLEGAL QUESTION	LEGAL QUESTION
National Origin/ Citizenship	• Are you a U.S. citizen? • Where were you/your parents born? • What is your "native tongue"?	• Are you authorized to work in the United States? • What language do you read/ speak/write fluently? (This is okay only if this ability is relevant to the job.)
Age	• How old are you? • When did you graduate? • What is your date of birth?	• Are you over the age of 18?
Marital/Family Status	• What is your marital status? • Whom do you live with? • Do you plan to have a family? When? • How many kids do you have? • What are your child-care arrangements?	• Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? • Would you be able and willing to travel as needed by the job? (This is okay if it is asked of all applicants.) • Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (Again, this is okay only if it is asked of all applicants.)
Affiliations	• What clubs or social organizations do you belong to?	• List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.
Personal	• How tall are you? How much do you weigh? (Questions about height/weight are not acceptable *unless* minimum standards are essential to job performance.)	• Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?
Disabilities	• Do you have any disabilities? • Please complete the following medical history. • Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list them and give dates when these occurred. • What was the date of your last physical exam? • How. s your family. s health? • When did you lose your eyesight? How? • Do you need an accommodation to perform the job? (This question can only be asked after a job offer has been made.)	• Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? (This question is okay if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.) • Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions? • As part of the hiring process, after a job offer has been made, you will be required to undergo a medical exam. (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on exam results.)
Arrest Record	• Have you ever been arrested?	• Have you ever been convicted of _____? (The crime named should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)
Military	• If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?	• In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve? • What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

Taken from: "Handling Illegal Questions." Kaplan, Rochelle. *Planning Job Choices 1998.* National Association of Colleges and Employers, 1998, pp. E61-2.

REFERENCES: MAKE THEM WORK FOR YOU

Your references and what they say about you may make the difference between getting a job or finishing out of the running. Here are some tips for making references a stronger part of your application.

Brief Your Contacts

Make sure the people you are using as references know about your current, as well as past, activities. Make them aware of the kind of work you seek. One of the best ways to do this is to provide them with a complete current resume, supplemented by notes on things that they may wish to mention.

Get Their Permission

It goes without saying that you should always request permission to use a person's name as a reference. Many people combine the request to use a reference with the process of briefing as cited above.

You're Judged by Who You Know

To the extent that persons you list as references are well known and respected in your community, what they say about you will carry more weight. Ideally, references should be people who are leaders in an organization at the management or professional level.

Provide Details on Your References

When you list references, give the name of the person, his or her job title, place of employment, address and phone number. It's best to use a work rather than home address but first get your reference's permission to call them.

Pick the Right Kind of References

What relatives, ministers or rabbis, personal friends and certainly therapists say about you isn't going to do much for your job candidacy. Conversely, what former employers, community officials, and other known leaders say about you will help your cause.

Pick People Who Know Your Best Achievements

Were you honored in high school, college, or in your community for a particular achievement? Did you do something outstanding in a prior position? If you have had some major achievements in life, but don't want to tout them too highly yourself, use as references someone who knows and can report on them.

After They Have Helped, Inform and Thank References

When you know they have given a reference for you, be sure to thank them and tell what happened. To the extent that they become interested in your job campaign, they are more likely to give a more favorable report next time.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Before leaving the company, make sure you have the correct titles and spelling of names. Ask the receptionist on your way out or call for the information when you get home.

EVALUATING THE INTERVIEW

No interview is over until you have assessed the interview. It is important to take the time to review how the interview went in order to improve the next interview. Ask yourself these questions:

1. How did the interview go?
2. Was I on time?
3. Did I dress appropriately?
4. Did I bring all needed information? (resume/application, references, etc.)
5. What was my attitude?
6. How did I feel at the beginning of the interview? At the end?
7. What was discussed the most?
8. How did I "sell" myself? What skills did I mention I had?
9. Were there any questions I was unable to answer?
10. Did I learn all I needed to know about the job?
11. Was I too assertive? Not assertive enough?
12. Did I mention how much I would like to work there?
13. Did I have good eye contact with the interviewer?
14. Did the employer seem interested in me as a person? Why or why not?
15. What could I have done to improve the interview?

THE POWER OF A "THANK YOU"

***Thank You* is a powerful statement. Unfortunately, it is seldom heard.**

"Thank you" may be said in person, by phone, in a formal letter or informal note. The best approach will depend upon the circumstances, personal style and preference.

Thank You notes show courtesy and respect. It gives you an opportunity to reiterate points you made or forgot to make during your interview. Every "thank you" is an opportunity to sell your qualifications and leave a positive impression on the reader. Send a Thank You letter or note to employers, employment contacts and references whenever they have extended themselves.

Basic Parts of a Thank You

1. Statement of appreciation for the interview.
2. Expression of interest in employment.
3. Brief restatement of qualifications.
4. Final "Thank You".

Sample Thank You Note

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for the interview for the accountant position today. I appreciate the information you shared with me and enjoyed meeting Ms. Smith from the Accounting Department.

My interest in working for Lord's Industries is stronger than ever, and based on your description of the position, I know I can do a great job for you.

I will contact you by Tuesday of next week to learn of your decision.

Sincerely,

NEGOTIATING TIPS

This is a very important part of the interviewing process. It can set the tone for your work life and experience with the company. These are some suggestions to consider when you receive a job offer. Negotiating is a two-way street. Try to achieve a win-win situation. It is up to you to decide the tips that will work best for you.

* Try and find out the salary range for the position before the interview. Does it compare with your experience and the industry wage standards? Contacting the interviewer's secretary, the personnel office, NHES staff or a networking contact that works in the company may be helpful.

* Consider if the job description is clear. Note your reporting relationships, authority and advancement potential. Keep asking questions until it is clearly understood. Careful thought and consideration will only gain you respect.

* It is not usually recommended to accept an offer on the spot. Express your appreciation and strong interest in the job. Request at least 24 hours to consider it, even when saying, "YES!" Ask any questions you need clarified.

* Assess the job offer in terms of your needs, benefits and long-term career and life goals. Talk it over with someone you respect. Make a list of the pros and cons of the job offer.

* If you want the job, make it clear that it is the job you want. If you are uncertain, state there are some items you would like to discuss before you can accept the job. Suggest meeting further to talk about the offer.

* Begin the negotiation with reasonable requests. Those requests could include more money, benefits, tuition, training, more vacation time or flexible time, stock options, company car, on-site daycare, parking privileges, etc.

* Negotiations should never become emotional or hostile. Use your value, skills, experience, and education to negotiate. Do not use your need for the job to negotiate.

* Listen carefully. If the offer is less than you expected, let them know that, but state you are still interested in the position if they want to reconsider their offer. Don't assume the first offer is fixed. Even if the interviewer tells you it is – it rarely is.

* If the same figure is offered a couple days later, it probably is the last offer. In that case, you can ask for a salary review in six months to evaluate your performance and value, or you can turn it down, asking that they keep you in mind for any future openings paying more money.

* Even when saying "no," leave the door open to negotiation. Do not use this to negotiate a higher wage. When you say "no," be ready to lose the job forever.

* If the offer was made verbally, a verbal response is sufficient. If the offer was made in writing, a written response is required. It is a good idea to request a written job offer, particularly if you are relocating for the job or if there is a time delay before actually starting work.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET TURNED DOWN

- Let the interviewer know that although you are disappointed, you are still interested in working for the company.
- Be sure to thank them for their time and interest. Re-emphasize the fact that if future openings occur, you would be interested.
- Find out if there are, or might be, other openings they could suggest or other persons you could contact.
- Many times the person selected ends up turning the job down or does not work out. Keep the communication line open, positive and professional. This keeps your name in their mind for the next opening or future opportunities.
- Ask if you could contact them every three or four months to find out about future job openings.
- Stay positive. Congratulate yourself. You did get the interview, which means the employer was interested in you. Use positive self-talk.
- Learn from the experience. Ask for feedback from the interviewer on what you could improve or do differently.
- Keep trying. This is not the time to stop. Forge ahead. Stay in control of your job search.
- Remember the salesperson's motto: "No" is another step closer to "Yes."

A turn in the road is not the end of the road unless you fail to make the turn.

CONCLUSION

Studies show that the average person will change jobs more frequently than in the past. This is due, in part, to the fluctuating economy and fast-paced technological and scientific advances. Job search skills need to be constantly maintained and updated throughout your work life – even when you are employed.

Whether you are new to the labor market or have been working for several years, do not wait until you need job seeking skills. A recent study has shown that once you have acquired these jobs seeking skills:

- Your confidence increases and your fears about looking for a new job are reduced.
- You improve your ability and skills to interview and present yourself.
- You have more knowledge and are better prepared to move up the career ladder.
- You are more employable to potential employers when employed.
- You know more about the needs and trends of the labor market.
- You are more aware of your value and worth to your employer and the labor market.
- You gain freedom and independence from government programs.
- You know how to highlight your skills and abilities to stay ahead of the competition, achieve upward mobility and negotiate successfully.

Best of Luck in your Interview!

Remember. . .
"Luck is *opportunity* meeting *preparation*."

"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure." *General Colin Powell*