



INTERVIEW PREPARATION: A Comprehensive Guide

A. Objective of the Interview

An interviewer has one objective: to decide whether or not to make you a job offer.

While the interviewer will examine your work history and educational background, your strengths and accomplishments will also be an important criterion. They are also interested in evaluating your level of **motivation, values, attitude, and personality**. In other words, to find out if you're the right person for the job, your potential for promotion, and whether or not you will fit into the company environment.

While it's true that an interview is an important screening tool for companies, it allows you to learn those things you need to know about the position and the company so that you can make an intelligent decision about the job. Therefore, always approach an interview focused on your objective: **getting a job offer**.

As with many situations, **preparation is the key to success**. The job market is very competitive, and you may be one of many qualified candidates for a position. Therefore, the **deciding factor may be how you present your skills and qualifications relevant to the position and how well you present yourself during the interview**.

Your BEST Executive Recruiter has made this booklet available for your use. It will help you prepare for and succeed at the interview. Take the time to review the material in this booklet. The tips and techniques outlined have been tested, and they work! They will improve your chances of receiving a job offer. Please advise your recruiter if you have questions about your upcoming interview, the company, the opportunity, or the suggestions in this booklet.

B. Interview Overview & Preparation

Know Yourself

Can you honestly visualize resigning from your current position?

What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?

What are your short and long-term goals?

Evaluate yourself in terms of the position you seek.

Formulate responses by asking the question: "Why should they hire me?"

Remember that you're there to sell yourself and secure a job offer.

Research the Company

Research online or at the library to review annual reports, trade magazines, and newspaper articles.

The Internet offers a wealth of company information and industry statistics. Know the company's products and services.



C. Arrival at the Interview

Items to Bring to the Interview

References:

- Use three former supervisors who are familiar with your work.
- Include their name and companies as well as home and work phone numbers.
- Always consult with references for their approval and to ensure that their remarks are positive.

Resume:

- Review your resume thoroughly and be prepared to discuss all points.
- Always bring a resume copy identical to the one supplied to the interviewer.
- **Bring along samples of your work**, if possible. **Never discuss or show proprietary information.**

Other items:

- Bring a notepad and pen to the interview to jot down notes.
- Prepare and review your questions as well as specific responses.
- Bring directions to the interview location and the interviewer's phone number in case you are running late.
- Bring your recruiter's phone number to give immediate feedback after the interview.

Arrival Timing:

- Arrive no earlier than fifteen minutes before the interview (but **no later** than five minutes before the interview).
- Allow adequate time for traffic, parking, and a last-minute appearance check. If possible, scout the location the day before the interview to avoid any last-minute problems.
- Review your notes and go in with confidence.
- If asked, complete an application:
 - Complete the application in full and leave no blanks.
 - Do not write "see resume" to respond to any application question.
 - Respond to questions about your prior or current salary by clearly and positively stating your expectations of base salary for the role. (Note: Many states now prohibit asking about your current or previous salary)
 - List references if requested. Your recruiter's name should be your response to any "referred by" questions.

D. Appearance

Your appearance at interviews should reflect your professionalism and alignment with company culture.

Male Candidates:

- Fingernails should be short and clean (manicured if possible).
- Hair should be clean, well-groomed, and freshly trimmed. Use a dandruff shampoo if necessary, and always comb your hair with your jacket off.
- Inquire about dress code expectations before any interview. If a suit is not required, consider business casual and inquire what this may look like for the prospective employer. However, if a suit is appropriate for some positions. If a suit is appropriate, here are some guidelines:
 - A navy blue or dark gray suit is appropriate for most positions. Be sure it's clean and pressed. Men with stout builds should avoid three-piece suits.
 - Shirts should be white, freshly laundered, and well-pressed.
 - A quiet tie with a subtle design and a hint of red is suitable for a first interview. Avoid loud colors and busy designs.
- Jewelry should be kept minimal. A watch and a wedding or class ring are acceptable. Don't wear jewelry or pins that indicate membership in religious or service organizations.
- Use deodorant and avoid colognes or fragrances altogether.
- Footwear should be appropriate to the dress code for the interview. For example, business casual may not require formal hard-soled dress shoes. However, if a suit is appropriate, shoes that are black and freshly polished (including the heels) are a safe choice for an interview. Socks should be black or blue and worn over the calf.
- For good posture, cross your legs at the ankles, not at the knees.
- Maintain good eye contact.

Female Candidates:

- Fingernails should be clean (manicured if possible). Choose subtle, low-key colors over bright fashion colors if nail polish is used.
- Inquire about dress code expectations before any interview.
 - If a suit is not required, consider business casual and inquire what this may look like for the prospective employer.
 - Caution – avoid a business casual dress that is too revealing or may potentially be perceived as such.
 - If a suit is appropriate, wear a suit or tailored dress in basic navy or gray. Blouses should also be tailored and color-coordinated. Don't wear big bows or ties.
- Avoid exotic hairstyles and excessive makeup. Hair should be neat, clean, and brushed with your jacket off.
- If wearing makeup, it should be light and natural looking.
- Use deodorant and avoid colognes or fragrances.
- Jewelry should be limited and subtle. For example, don't wear jewelry or pins that indicate membership in religious or service organizations.
- Footwear should be appropriate to the dress code for the interview. For example, business casual may not require formal hard-soled dress shoes or pumps. However, if wearing a suit, a closed-toe



pump color-coordinated with your outfit is appropriate for an interview. Avoid open-toed shoes or sling-backs.

- For good posture, cross your legs at the ankles, not at the knees.
- Maintain good eye contact.

For All Candidates

- **Refrain from taking portable phones into an interview (or turn them off).**
- If you use a tablet (such as a Surface or iPad) to take notes during interviews, turn all notifications off. Use the “Do Not Disturb” setting in the notifications pane or device settings.
- If the business is in an industry where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may be necessary, inquire as to what, if any, will be provided or if you should wear anything environmentally specific.
- Having recently gone through, or may still be in, a pandemic or regional epidemic, inquire about the need for or comfortability of masking. If you are in a high-risk health category, do what is best to protect yourself or others. If you feel ill or are symptomatic in any way, please reschedule the interview with as much advance notice as possible.

E. The Interview

Typical sequences of events are:

- Interview with the Human Resource Manager (general questions, review of the company, and overview of their benefits).
- Interview with the immediate supervisor and peers.
- Interview with the hiring authority (manager, etc.).
- Shake hands firmly and maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- Maintain a high energy level. Sit up with your back straight. No coffee (to spill) and no smoking or vaping before or during the interview.

It is to your advantage if a subject of mutual interest arises, but do not fake knowledge.

Be yourself. Poise, confidence, and self-respect are of great importance.

If both parties are interested:

- Testing (physical, drug test, written test, and proof of employment eligibility).
- Offer extended.

Human Resource Managers will usually provide company information and available benefit overviews. However, a thorough review and questions concerning benefits should be addressed after the interview. Remember, the interviewers are trying to see how you can contribute to the company. Conduct yourself with confidence and determination to get the job. Of course, you have other options, and your interviewer knows this but wants to think you want a career with this company. Don't play coy. Sell yourself. This is your first meeting, and the position and future promotions may depend on your presentation. Are you going to sell them on the idea of hiring you, or will they sell you on the idea that this job is not for you? You must present a positive attitude to the prospective employer. You must **NOT** seem disinterested or appear to be job shopping.



The interview should be a two-way conversation. **Ask questions of the interviewers.**

The questions you ask show your interest in the company and the position. They also enable you to gather the right information to make an intelligent decision afterward. In addition, the questions you have prepared can be asked to the different people who interview you.

Remember, the objective of the interview is to obtain an offer. Therefore, you must gather enough information concerning the position during the interview to make a decision.

Typical interview questions and responses

- It would be best if you gave **complete but brief and relaxed answers to questions**. When possible, use questions as a basis for developing information that you want to make sure is presented. Continue to sell yourself positively.
- Describe jobs in terms of duties and give good performance indicators such as raises, sales volume, and promotions.
- **Include short stories about problems or challenges and how you solved or overcame them. Describe the results you achieved.**
- Many types of questions may be used. However, the BEST interviewers will use Behavior-Based Interviewing techniques. And the BEST format for answering behavior-based interview questions is the **S.T.A.R.** (**S**ituation, **T**ask, **A**ction, **R**esult) method:
 - Describe the **Situation** that the company, department, team, or related group was in relative to the question asked.
 - Tell what you were **Tasked** with doing. What were your role, responsibility, and the specific challenge that faced you?
 - Share the specific **Actions** that you took. And be SPECIFIC. Sharing generalities or hypotheticals tells interviewers that you have yet to be in the situation to overcome the challenge related to the question. Sharing your specific actions explicitly tells interviewers you have been there and done that.
 - And don't forget to reveal the **Results!** This is the most commonly forgotten component. All the actions in the world would not mean anything if they did not lead to or achieve the desired result. Results identify the magnitude of your accomplishments. Share results with pride and a smile!

1. Exploring your Background Questions

Tell me about yourself.

Answer these questions **in terms of the qualifications required for the position**.

Keep responses concise and brief. Avoid being derogatory or negative about previous jobs and bosses. Developing a good 30-second resume is an excellent way to prepare for this commonly asked question.

“Tell me about yourself” means, “Tell me about your qualifications.” Prepare a one-to-two-minute discussion of your qualifications. Start with education and discuss your experiences. Next, describe your performance (raises, promotions, innovative designs, sales volumes, increased profits, etc.).

**What are your greatest strengths?**

Interviewers like to hear abstract qualities. Loyalty, willingness to work hard, eagerness, technical skills, politeness, and promptness, expressed in concrete terms, are good examples. Avoid simple generalizations. For example, “I like people” or “I’m a people person” are not good answers.

What are your greatest weaknesses?

Don’t be intimidated. The interviewer probably wants reassurance that hiring you won’t be a mistake. This is not the time to confess all your imperfections. (Do not state “not being able to go work on Mondays” or “coming in late,” etc.). Instead, this question looks to see how self-aware you are, how you work to overcome your weaknesses, and how the company can help you grow professionally. A hiring win-win is when you can help the company as much as the company can help you. Authentically sharing where you would like more professional development and how you are currently pursuing this development is likely the BEST way to answer this question.

2. Personality Questions

What do you do in your spare time?

Workaholics are not always the best employees. Present yourself as a well-rounded person. Your answer gives you dimension. Name some hobbies.

3. Motive Questions

Answer motive questions enthusiastically. Show the interviewer that you are interested in the position and that you really want the job. Remember to ***maintain eye contact and be sincere.***

How can you contribute to this company?

Be positive and sell! Strong technical skills, enthusiasm, and desire to complete projects correctly and efficiently are good responses.

Why should I hire you for this position?

Explain your qualifications and how they fit the available position. Address your interest in the job and the field and why you enjoy this style of work. Emphasize your ability to successfully perform the duties required.

Why do you want to work for our firm?

Make a compliment about what the company does, its location, or its people. Other positive remarks might be about the company’s product or service, the content of the position, or possibilities for growth or advancement. But, again, research about the company is important here.

Where do you hope to be in five years?

Speak about conservative growth positions that clearly show you plan to be there in five years and that their investment in you will pay. Be sure you know what can and cannot be achieved by the ideal candidate in this position. Never tell the interviewer that you feel you will be more successful than they are but ***do show a strong desire for promotions.***

**What interests you most about this position?**

Teasing the interviewer with a truthful one or two-word answer, such as “the challenge” or “the opportunity,” will force them to ask you to explain. Here again, you have the chance to demonstrate your knowledge of the company.

How long do you plan to be with the company?

As with marriage, most employers expect a till-death-do-us-part attitude, but they can be equally attracted to the candidate with ambition and candor. “As long as I continue to learn and grow in my field” is a reasonable response.

What are your career goals?

Your answer should depend on a specific time frame:

- **Short-term:** “I want to be the best in my current position while gaining additional responsibilities. This will assure my commitment to the firm and raise me to the next level of responsibility and promotion. I want to stay technical but learn the necessary skills to lead people and projects.”
- **Long-term:** “After proving my abilities, I see myself in a firm with the possibility of moving into a level of management that allows me to keep my skills sharp.”

What are you doing to achieve your goals?

“I look at continued learning as the key to success. As you can see from my resume, I continue my education by taking company educational courses, when offered, and college courses. I also read books, trade publications, and magazines to keep me informed about the current and future directions in my field. When possible, I participate in professional organizations in my field.”

4. Job Satisfaction Questions

Why did you leave your previous employer?

NEVER speak poorly about a former employer. Instead, be pleasant, be positive and be honest. Your answer will probably be checked. Mention your desire to work for a more progressive company that offers more growth opportunities and recognition.

What did you like most about your previous job?**What did you like least about your previous job?**

An employer can evaluate the type of worker you will be by the items you choose. Cite specifics. You are also providing clues about the environment that you seek. What you liked most could include a strong teamwork atmosphere, a high level of creativity, and attainable deadlines. What you liked least should consist of any situations that you are unlikely to encounter in your new position.

Why are you looking for another job?

Again, be positive. “I have to say that I have really enjoyed my years at _____ Corporation. There are a lot of good people over there. But I am looking for a more progressive organization with greater growth opportunities and recognition. I am looking for a team to join where I can make real contributions and advance my career.”

**What do you think your employer's obligations are to you?**

Interviewers listen for employees who want a positive, enthusiastic company atmosphere with the opportunity to advance. Such a person, they surmise, has the motivation and staying power.

Are you applying for any other jobs?

In your answer, show that your search is geared for similar positions. This demonstrates a well-defined, focused objective. Make it known that your talents apply to other businesses, that you have explored ways to maximize your potential, and are serious about finding the perfect opportunity. Don't indicate that you are just shopping.

5. Past Performance Questions

(To determine future behavior based on past examples)

What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you?

Again, be truthful and admit that not everything comes easily. However, be careful what you do admit so as not to instantly disqualify yourself. Explain that you try to gather as much information and advice as possible to make the best decision.

What causes you to lose your temper?

Everybody has a low boiling point on some particular issue. Pick one of yours (something safe and reasonable). People, who are late to meetings, blame shifting, broken appointments, and office "backstabbing" are suitable responses. Don't say that you never fly off the handle. You won't be believed.

What are your greatest accomplishments?

Be ready to recite one or two stories that demonstrate strong capabilities or achievements that will make you attractive to your new employer. A special project that you pioneered at your previous job, cutting department expenses, increasing productivity, or receiving frequent promotions.

How do you feel about a younger male/female boss?

A question like this usually means that your boss will either be younger or of the opposite sex or both. Note that you will probably not be hired if you register any concerns. Explain that their age or sex is of no importance to you. You are only interested in their capability and what you can learn from them.

What kind of worker are you?

Again, no one is perfect. However, showing that you tackle every assignment with all of your energy and talents is admirable but mention that you also learn from your mistakes.



6. Salary Questions

Salary discussions should be avoided, if possible.

What type of salary do you have in mind?

Do not state a starting figure. Instead, a suitable reply is: “I am looking for the right opportunity, and I am confident that if you find me the best candidate for this position, you will extend to me your best and most competitive offer.”

What is your current salary?

NOTE: Many employers are prohibited from asking questions about salary history depending on the state where the job is located. However, do not point this out during the interview and answer along the lines of what you expect in the new position. Remember that “salary” signifies your base salary. Bonuses, commissions, benefits, and vacations, as well as sick days and personal days (total rewards), should also be mentioned. Also, if you are due a raise in the next three months, state the approximate percentage you expect.

7. Other questions you should be prepared to answer truthfully:

Are you willing to relocate?

May we check your references?

May we run a background check on you?

Answer a question to the best of your ability and then relax. Stay calm if there is a period of silence before the interviewer asks the next question. Interviewers often use silence to see if you can handle stress and maintain poise.

F. Questions for You to Ask

Interviews should be two-way conversations. You must ask questions and take an active role in the interview. This demonstrates the importance you place on your work and your career. Asking questions gives you a chance to demonstrate your depth of knowledge in the field and establish an easy flow of conversation and a relaxed atmosphere between you and the interviewer. Building this kind of rapport is always a plus in an interview.

Remember, you are not just there for the interviewer to determine if you are right for the position, but your questions can help you determine if this position is right for you. Therefore, some of your questions should evolve from the research you’ve done on the company in preparing for the interview. Following are some guidelines for your questions, as well as some examples.

Don’t cross-examine the employer.

- Ask questions requiring an explanation. Questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” are conversation stoppers.



- Don't interrupt when the employer is answering **YOUR** question.
- **Ask job-relevant questions.** Focus on the job--the company, products, services, and people.
- Before the interview, write your list of interest questions and take them with you.
- Ask about your potential peers, subordinates, and superiors. Take notes.
- Ask the employer how they got where they are today.

1. Interest Questions

Questions on the future of the organization

Knowing what the organization's current leaders expect in the short and long term can help you decide whether or not the organization is good for you.

Possible questions include:

- Where do you see the company five years from now?
- What are the company's long- and short-range goals?
- What is your vision of the company's future?
- What opportunities and threats do you see facing the company in the near term?
- To what extent has the company met its projected goals?
- What, in your opinion, is the company's strongest asset for ensuring a prosperous future?

Questions on the future of the position:

- Is the role crucial to the success of the organization?

Possible questions include:

- Why was this position created?
- In what ways does the person in this position contribute to the company?
- Under what circumstances, if any, might this position be eliminated?
- Where have the people who have had the position in the past gone from here?

Question on expectations:

- What are your expectations of me in this position, and what are the company's expectations of me, you, and our team/group?

Possible questions include:

- What would a typical day in this position be like?
- *What is the basis on which you judge success in this position?*
- What would be the criteria for a raise or promotion in this position?
- What are the standards for rewards, and what are the rewards?

Attitudes about change, growth, and organizational development.

Possible questions include:

- What kind of growth do you see for the company in the near future?
- Who do you see as your chief competitor?



- *What key factors will determine the company's growth?*
- *In what ways do you think this company and working in it will change in the near future?*

Why do you want someone for this job?

Have the interviewer explain why one of his current employees can't do this job. The answer may give you a valuable job description.

2. Job Satisfaction Questions

Ask questions that relate to the responsibilities, importance, and authority of the position, as well as those investigating the rewards for a job well done and the long-range career opportunities.

Past Performance Questions

Why isn't this position being filled from within the company?

You may discover there isn't anyone in the organization that wants this position, or the company lacks someone with the necessary talent for this position.

How many people have held this job in the last five years?

Were they promoted, or did they leave the company?

If the turnover has been high, you have a right to suspect that the job may leave something to be desired. On the other hand, it could also mean that you could expect to be promoted quickly.

How did you get started in the company?

An excellent way to get to know the interviewer better and gain insight into the promotional path the company follows.

What are examples of the best results produced by people in this job?

Here you may discover you are overqualified or in a position to ask for considerably more money.

3. Additional Questions

- **What would my responsibilities and duties be?**
- **What are the most challenging aspects of the position?**
- **Describe a typical day on the job.**
- **Describe the department's/company's growth in the next two years.**
- **What is the philosophy on training and development here?**
- **Has there been downsizing within the company? How is it handled?**
- **What projects would I be involved in now? In the future?**
- **Whom would I be working for and with?**
- **What is the person doing who used to hold this position?**
- **When would you need me to start?**
- **May I see my work area? May I meet some of my future co-workers?**



G. Conclusion of the Interview

If you are sincerely interested in the position and are satisfied with the answers given, you should ask the interviewer if they feel you are qualified for the position. This gives you another chance to review points that may need clarification. Illustrate confidence in your abilities and convince the interviewer that you can handle the position successfully.

Ask for the job. Make a positive statement about the position. Emphasize that this is precisely the type of opportunity you've been looking for and would like to be offered the position. Ask when you should expect an answer. A typical conclusion might be:

"Thank you for this meeting, _____. I like what I've heard today and want to join your team. I know I'd be an asset to you/your department because you need someone who can _____ and _____. As you know, I have [match your qualifications with the employer's "hot buttons"]. Before I leave, do you have any more questions about my background or qualifications, or can I supply you with more information? On a scale of 1 to 5, how do I compare to the other candidates you've interviewed? I can start as soon as you need me." The farewell should also include a smile, direct eye contact, and a firm but gentle handshake.

H. Follow-up/Post Interview

Example Thank-You Letter

Immediately following the interview, call your executive recruiter. It is important to convey your impressions of the position and the company. Let the recruiter know whether you are interested in the position or not and if there were questions you should have asked at the interview, express them at this time. We contact the employer for theirs only after we get your feedback about the interview and the company. After we have received the employer's feedback, we will follow up with you to share their thoughts about the interview.

It is always a good idea to send a short note of appreciation to thank the employer or interviewer for their time. First, reiterate your interest in the position, the company, and your ability to do the job. Then, be sure to email your correspondence by the following day. This is an excellent way to keep your name current in the interviewer's mind. Following is a sample thank-you letter that you can adapt to fit your specific needs:

Subject Line

"Re: Interview for the Position of (title) on (date)." This illustrates the content of the letter.

Greeting

"Dear Mr./Ms. (last name):"

"Miss" or "Mrs." should not be used unless you are sure that person does so. Likewise, do not use a first name in the greeting unless you have established a strong rapport.



Opening

"It was a pleasure meeting with you (day) to discuss the opening in (department) with (company)."

"I appreciated meeting with (name) and yourself in your office on (day) to discuss the (title) position with (company)."

"Thanks for taking the time to see me regarding the opening in (department)."

Again, comment or add something discussed during the interview that will allow you to restate your qualifications and confidence in performing the job.

Body

"From our discussion and the fine reputation of your organization appears that the (title) position would enable me to fully use my background in _____."

"I was particularly impressed with the professionalism evident throughout my visit. (Company) appears to have the kind of environment I have been seeking."

"The atmosphere at (company) seems to strongly favor individual involvement, and I would undoubtedly be able to contribute significantly to its goals."

Closing

"While I have been considering other opportunities, I have deferred a decision until I hear from you. Therefore, your prompt reply would be greatly appreciated."

"It's an exciting opportunity, and I look forward to hearing your decision very soon."

"The (title) position and (company) are exactly what I have been seeking, and I hope to hear from you within the next week."

Salutation

"Sincerely,"

"Very truly yours,"

"Best regards,"

Example Resignation Letter

Informing your current employer of your resignation takes tact and discretion. For example, if they inquire as to whom your new job is with, it is best to tell them that you can only disclose that information once your new employer announces it within their own organization. The following sample letter is suitable correspondence to announce your resignation.

(Date)

Dear _____:

Please accept this letter as my formal resignation as (Title) for (Company) to become effective as of (Date). I have accepted a position in (Location).

This position will offer me more challenges and opportunities for advancement, as well as allow me to broaden my own experience and knowledge.



Thank you for your time and efforts in my training and advancement during the past (Time). In addition, the support and concern shown by you and the rest of the management team have been deeply appreciated.

I leave (Company) with no animosity or ill will and wish you and your company continued success.

My decision is irrevocable, and any counteroffers extended by you and (Company) will be rejected.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

I. Dealing with Counteroffers

Beware of the Counteroffer

Quitting a job is always challenging. Career changes are tough enough, and the anxieties of leaving a comfortable job, friends, and environment for an unknown opportunity can easily cloud anyone's judgment. But what should you do when your current employer "muddies the waters" even more by asking you to stay?

A counteroffer is an inducement from your current employer to get you to stay after you've announced your intentions to accept another job elsewhere. And, in recent years, counteroffers have practically become the norm.

If you are considering a counteroffer, remain focused on your primary objectives. Why were you looking for another job to begin with? If an employee is happy with their current job, employer, and/or salary, they're usually not paving the road with resumes. So, often a counteroffer that promises more money never really remedies the real reasons for wanting to move on in the first place.

Apart from a short-term bandage on the problem, nothing will change the company, and when the dust settles, you can find yourself back in the same old rut. Recruiters report that more than 80% of those who accept counteroffers leave, begin looking for another job or are "let go" within six to twelve months after announcing their intentions.

Counteroffers are undoubtedly flattering and make employees question their initial decision to leave. But often, they are merely stall tactics used by bosses and companies to alleviate an upheaval a departing employee can cause. High turnover also brings a boss's management skills into question. His reaction is to do what's necessary until he's better prepared to replace you.

The things they will say:

- "You can't leave— the department really needs you."
- "We were just about to give you a raise."
- "I didn't know you were unhappy. Why didn't you come to me sooner? What can we do to make things better?"

Again, stay focused on your decision and your opportunities.

You need to ask yourself:

- What kind of company do you work for if you have to threaten to resign before they pay you what you're worth?
- Where did the money for the counteroffer come from?
- Is it your next raise or a promotion given early?
- Are future opportunities limited now?
- Will you have to threaten to leave again for another raise or promotion?

You've demonstrated your unhappiness and will be viewed as having committed blackmail to get a raise. Your loyalty will also be questioned come promotion time. Well-managed companies rarely make counteroffers since they view their employment policies as fair and equitable.

If you consider being "bought back," obtain the offer's details in writing and a one-year "no cut" contract from the employer. If they refuse, as two-thirds of counter-offering employers do, your decision to leave is made.

Look at your current job and the new position as if you were unemployed, and then decide based on which holds the *real* potential. Of course, it's probably the new job, or you wouldn't have accepted it in the first place.

J. Pre-employment Physical

The use of drug testing as part of a pre-employment physical examination is becoming more prevalent. Some firms are testing for drug use as part of a pre-employment physical without telling the applicant that he/she is being tested for drugs, *Personnel Journal* reports.

Some over-the-counter products can produce positive drug test results. Among them are Alka-Seltzer Plus, Allerest, Bronkaid, Contact, Donnagel, Nyquil, Primatene, Promlamine capsules, Sinutab, Sudafed, and Triaminic. Poppy seeds in your food can also produce a positive drug test result.

You should not take any medication 48 hours before your pre-employment physicals, but if you must, list all drugs taken and advise the examiner.

K. Ten Reasons for Rejection

1. **Poor Attitude.** Many candidates come across as arrogant. While employers can afford to be self-centered, candidates cannot.
2. **Appearance.** Many candidates should consider their appearance more. First impressions are quickly made in the first three (3) to five (5) minutes. Review the appearance checklist.



3. **Lack of Research.** It's obvious when candidates haven't learned about the job, company, or industry before the interview. Visit the library or use the Internet to research the company, and then talk with friends, peers, and other professionals about the opportunity before each meeting.
4. **Not having questions to ask.** Asking questions shows your interest in the company and the position. *Prepare a list of intelligent questions in advance.*
5. **Not readily knowing the answers to interviewers' questions.** Anticipate and rehearse answers to tough questions about your background, such as a recent termination or an employment gap. Practicing with your spouse or friend before the interview will help you to frame intelligent questions.
6. **Relying too much on resumes.** Employers hire people, not paper. Although a resume can list qualifications and skills, it's the interview dialogue that will portray you as a committed, responsive team player.
7. **Too much humility.** Being conditioned not to brag, candidates are sometimes reluctant to describe their accomplishments. However, explaining how you reach difficult or impressive goals helps employers understand what you can do for them.
8. **Not relating skills to employers' needs.** A list of sterling accomplishments means little if you can't relate them to a company's requirements. Instead, reiterate your skills and convince the employer that you can "do the same for them."
9. **Handling salary issues ineptly.** Candidates often ask about salary and benefits packages too early. If they believe an employer is interested, they may demand inappropriate amounts and price themselves out of the jobs. Candidates who ask for too little undervalue themselves or appear desperate.
10. **Lack of career direction.** Job hunters who aren't clear about their career goals often can't spot or commit to appropriate opportunities. Not knowing what you want wastes everyone's time.

From all of us at BEST Human Capital & Advisory Group, we wish you the Best in your interview process, and the most important piece of advice we can give is to just be yourself. Your career achievements and accomplishments speak for themselves. You are a strong candidate, and many of the heavy questions have already been covered by the information you submitted. Good luck!