



Your Job Interview Part 1

by Alan A. Malinchak (1984-2004)

(Editor's note: This month's Your Second Career column focuses on the importance of preparation for a job interview. Next month's column will provide tips for success in the actual interview.)

If you are asked to come to a job interview it means you are GENERALLY qualified for that position. Through the interview process, the company will then determine which candidate is MOST qualified for the position. Companies use the interview process to drill down into the depth and breadth of your experience compared to other candidates. This is a weeding-out process and there are tricks to stay on the shortlist and make it to the finish line.

Typically a company will interview multiple people for a position. Each applicant can probably expect three or more interviews before the company makes a decision. Bottom line? The interview process may take as short as two weeks or as long as a year — recall the length of time from when you applied to the FBI to when you entered on duty. Also some companies conduct personality or skills assessments to ensure a deeper look into whether you are going to have an organizational and cultural fit. During your FBI career you may have taken various personality diagnostics (e.g.-DiSC) to learn more about yourself — information that you could use to help understand how you communicate when you were interviewing or interrogating others. Unless you are applying for an investigative or security related position, interrogation is out. But, the need to understand how to communicate with the hiring manager conducting the interview is essential. Bring all your knowledge and experience to the interview process as you traverse the pre-interview, the interview and the post-interview phases in the very competitive interview process.

Pre-Interview Preparation

Once invited for an interview, you need to prepare and conduct as much research about the organization — your future employer — as possible. Many Web sites can provide both formal and informal information about the company, and possibly about the hiring manager who will be conducting the interview.

First, determine if the hiring manager has a LinkedIn account and consume every detail about that person. Data-mine the hiring manager's connections to learn more about

who he or she is as a person and a professional. You should know more about the hiring manager than the hiring manager knows about you. Prepare a list of questions for the hiring manager. Ask about:

- The company.
- The position for which you are applying.
- The peers, subordinates and superiors for the position.
- How long the hiring manager has been with the company.
- What drew the hiring manager to the company?

Let the hiring manager talk, you LISTEN and respond accordingly.

Next, use various Web sites to research the company, its culture and its current employees (who may be posting what they love or dislike about the company). Some Web sites to use include www.glassdoor.com and www.vault.com. Incorporate this information into possible responses to questions you may be asked or into questions you may have the opportunity to ask. If you know someone employed at the company, reach out and engage them in a conversation — first-hand information is always the best.

Finally, review the company's Web site — dissect every page. Read its annual report, read the *Wall Street* analyst reviews, read the biographies of key executives and highlight reasons why you want to work for this company. You will impress the hiring manager if you can speak to why you are attracted to working at that company.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Prepare for the interview by practicing your verbal skills and improving your body language. Although you are the one being interviewed, you can impress the hiring manager with your confidence and knowledge of the company. After you have developed a list of practice questions regarding the company and the job, write out your responses. Concentrate on HOW and WHAT in your anticipated questions and answers, and anticipate a behavioral-based interview.

Self-practice the interview. Practice your verbal reply, noting your voice control, confident tone, and whether or when your voice cracks (a good indication that you are not confident in your response).

Practice sitting and leaning in — mirroring

the behavior of the hiring manager. We all dressed professionally during our FBI careers — and it is as important now as then. If necessary, update your wardrobe — you are not dressing for this position, but for the next position beyond. Of course, if the hiring manager advises you to dress casually, do so — it may be a hint to the cultural environment of the organization. Verify it through your research.

There is a great article written by Alison Green titled “The 10 Most Common Job Interview Questions,” which is a great start to assist you in anticipating and preparing questions for the interview. To see Green’s article and her 10 questions, go to <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-career/2011/01/24/the-10-most-common-job-interview-questions>

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This and other career articles have been added to the Society’s Web site, www.socxfbi.org. Go to the Web site to review these articles at the Career Center and to use a fast link to references.)

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New Agents Class #8-Nov. 18, 1963 (Submitted by Daniel F. Sughrue 1963-1989). Counselor — Philip F. Enlow (deceased). Class (in alphabetical order) — M. Thomas Clark, John R. DeWitt, II, Maurice L. Evans, Edward C. Finney, III, Henry Garcia, Edwin F. Greenwald, Edward M. Hargrave, James J. Heaney (deceased), David Paul Johnson, Alvin W. King (deceased), Edward V. Knartzer (deceased), Orlin D. Lucksted, James J. Mahoney, Herbert E. Mason, Jerome D. Maynor, Joel H. Moore, Howard H. Rice, Stephen P. Riggin, Daniel F. Sughrue, Roland D. Swanson, Arthur D. Thatcher, Jr., Philip G. Tannian