



INTERVIEW

CHECKLISTS

THAT GET YOU

HIRED

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Interview Checklists That Get You Hired

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Chapter Checklists

Chapter 1: [Read Me First](#)

- My online presence is consistent with my resume.
- My phone is set up to take calls from prospective employers.
- I have established a phone log.

Chapter 2: [Your Portfolio](#)

- My portfolio represents the value I bring to a future employer.
- I have compiled a digital portfolio (if appropriate).

Chapter 3: [Business Cards](#)

- I have professional-looking personal business cards.
- My business cards communicate my brand.

Chapter 4: [Researching the Company](#)

- I am familiar with my target company.
- I am conversant in terminology relevant to my future position.
- I am current with the latest news pertaining my target company and position.
- I can relate my personal experience to the needs of the target company.

Chapter 5: [Your Branded Sound Bite](#)

- I have a branded sound bite with a supporting sound-bite story.
- I have a network version of my sound bite.
- I have mastered my sound bite.

Chapter 6: [Making Eye Contact](#)

- I establish and maintain good eye contact.

Chapter 7: [Knowing Your Body Language](#)

- I have videotaped myself as I deliver my sound bite.

- I have reviewed my body language.
- I have adjusted my body language to match the message of my sound bite.
- My body language creates the perception of sincerity and confidence.

Chapter 8: [Telephone Strategies](#)

- I am prepared to take an employer's pre-screening call.
- I have rehearsed my telephone script.
- I can close an invitation for an interview.
- I am prepared to reschedule a pre-screening interview call.

Chapter 9: [Dressing for Success](#)

- I have observed the attire of employees at the target company.
- My attire is one level of formality higher than that of the position I seek.
- I am confident that my attire is appropriate for the occasion.

Chapter 10: [Traveling to Your Interview](#)

- I have researched the best method of transportation to the interview.
- I have planned and tested my route to the interview.
- I have arranged for reliable transportation to the interview.
- I have prepared for a worst-case scenario in getting to the interview.

Chapter 11: [Identifying Types of Interviews](#)

- I am familiar with the purpose of each of the interview types.
- I can identify each interview type and choose an appropriate strategy for each.
- I can deliver an effective response to a question using the CAR technique.
- I am prepared to deal with the special issues involved with video conferencing.

Chapter 12: [Testing for the Right Candidate](#)

- I am familiar with the purpose of tests and assessments.
- I can choose an appropriate strategy for each type of test and assessment.
- I sampled the pre-screening test in [Appendix 7](#).
- I have considered taking a free online assessment at Brainbench.com.

- I am familiar with my rights and responsibilities as a test taker.

Chapter 13: [Brand vs. Fit](#)

- I have determined that I would be a good fit with the target company's culture.

Chapter 14: ["Tell me about yourself"](#)

- I have identified the needs of my target employer.
- I have identified my relevant skills, strengths, and accomplishments.
- I can succinctly describe my unique promise of value to the employer.
- I have prepared my "success" stories.
- I have rehearsed my response to "Tell me about yourself."

Chapter 15: [Strategic Responses to Employer's Questions](#)

- I can identify each category of question.
- I can choose an appropriate strategy for each type of question.
- I have rehearsed my responses to the sample interview questions.
- I can deliver a response to a question within two minutes.

Chapter 16: [Illegal Questions](#)

- I can recognize an illegal question.
- I have considered how I would respond to an illegal question.
- I have rehearsed my responses to various illegal questions.

Chapter 17: [Questions You Might Ask](#)

- I understand the benefit of asking questions to the interviewer.
- I have prepared a number of relevant questions to ask.
- I know what not to ask.

Chapter 18: [Analyzing Your Interview](#)

- I understand the benefit of reflecting on my interview performance.
- I have recorded my thoughts and impressions after the interview.
- I have considered whether the position and company are right for me.

- I have analyzed my interview performance.

Chapter 19: [Post-interview Action](#)

- I understand the importance of sending thank-you letters.
- I have written each interviewer a thank-you letter using notes from my interview.
- I have addressed all key points for writing a thank-you letter.
- I have considered methods of sending of my thank-you letter.
- I have asked my interviewer for a frank assessment of how to improve my candidacy.

Chapter 20: [Negotiating Your Salary](#)

- I have researched the fair market value of salaries for my target position.
- I have learned the ten points to a successful salary negotiation.
- I will defer discussion of salary until receiving a formal offer of employment.

Chapter 21: [You're Hired—Now What?](#)

- I have established a record to document the progress of my career.
- I have developed a plan to increase my online presence and thought leadership.
- I am building my network for a future position.
- I am READY!

Chapter 1: Read Me First

Benefit of pre-planning: Controlling your message

Be consistent

Your interview process begins long before you sit across the desk from the employer. It begins the moment you submit your resume or job application!

The moment you submit your resume, you are committed to living up to the ideal created by your resume. Employers will scrutinize your resume and online presence for inconsistencies in your image, so you must protect and promote this image with everything you say and do.

Your Internet presence

The number of employers using online sources to look into the background of job candidates grows daily. Companies like Social Intelligence offer social media screening and investigative services that include employment background checks and corporate due diligence.

Be proactive when defining your online identity. Before publishing your resume:

- **Clean up your digital dirt:** check for inappropriate images, comments, associations with others, etc.
- **Update your LinkedIn profile:** ensure the information on LinkedIn matches your resume.
- **Create your online portfolio:** use a personal website or a blog to support your resume.
- **Check your email settings:** create a branded signature.

You never know who's calling

From the moment you publish your resume, your next incoming phone call could be from an employer. The telephone number on your resume (and other methods of contact) should connect to your private phone (i.e., cell phone or home phone), where you have sole access to incoming calls.

Your job search is a business activity. Thus, please consider making adjustments to your telephone practice.

Job-search telephone practice:

- **Record a new voicemail:** use your 15-second sound bite.
- **Set up Call Waiting:** callers would rather wait on hold than have to call you back.

- **Be prepared to answer calls 24/7.**
- **Avoid taking calls when you are tired.**
- **Keep a phone log:** record who called, when, and what was said (see [Appendix 5](#)).
- **Don't rely on Caller ID:** recruiters and employers can call you from anywhere.
- **Treat every caller with respect:** you never know who the caller may be.

More information about how to handle the pre-screening interview can be found in [Chapter 8: Telephone Strategies](#).

Checklist

- My online presence is consistent with my resume.
- My phone is set up to take calls from prospective employers.
- I have established a phone log.

Chapter 13: Brand vs. Fit

Benefit of recognizing brand vs. fit: Communicating the right message

If you are true to your brand, and have a strong brand image, you will know by researching your target company whether you would be a good fit.

The nature of fit

People often confuse brand with fit. Your brand is the vehicle that carries the message of your value to the employer. Your fit is the degree to which you are compatible with the company's corporate culture.

Employers invite you to interview because they hope that your implied promise of value (as represented by your brand) will meet their needs. Once they meet you in person, it's your job to convince them of just two points:

- You can meet their needs.
- You are a good fit.

Employee turnover represents a major source of the cost of doing business. Candidates who lack certain skills can be trained on the job; however, no amount of training can overcome a poor fit. Astute employers will hire you if they are confident that your temperament is well-matched with the company, even if you lack certain skills they need.

Communicate your brand and convince the employer that you will not become an employee-turnover statistic.

Your interview goals

- **Be yourself**

Of course, you want the job, but more importantly: you must be true to yourself. If you are sincere about expressing who you are, you will be more relaxed during the interview. Discovery during the interview that you would not be a good fit could save you from probable job dissatisfaction and unemployment sooner than later.

- **Communicate your brand**

The interviewer wants to see how your skills and attributes have led to your achievements. In responses no longer than two minutes, tell [CAR](#) stories using vivid language to show who you are and what you can do.

- **Determine your comfort level with the company's culture**

Know whether the culture is compatible to you. See [Appendix 11](#) for evaluation of the position.

- **Mimic the corporate culture**

If you know in your heart of hearts that you would be a good fit, show it! Your attire, body language, jargon, and attitudes demonstrate who you are. These variables invite comparisons of your fit within organization's corporate culture.

Checklist

- I have determined that I would be a good fit with the target company's culture.

Chapter 16: Illegal Questions

Benefit of recognizing illegal questions: Knowing how to answer them

Federal and state laws prevent interviewers from asking you discriminatory questions. Usually employers know which questions are legal to ask at the interview or on application forms. However, occasionally interviewers may be either unaware that the questions they are asking are illegal, or they may deliberately ask such questions despite the laws.

Samples of lawful and unlawful questions are in [Appendix 9](#). Please note that guidelines for gathering personal information are different for employment with the federal government and for positions requiring security clearances.

Strategy to deal with inappropriate questions

As mentioned above, some interviewers may inadvertently ask illegal questions. How should you deal with an inappropriate question without hindering your chances for landing the job?

Your strategy in general:

- Determine whether the question is truly inappropriate before simply ‘rejecting’ it.
- Decide how you would answer an inappropriate question.
- Conduct a background check on yourself (see below).
- Remain calm as you respond.
- Respond without saying more than you need to.

Examples of ‘rejecting’ expressions:

- Please help me understand why would you like to know this information.
- Would it not be more valuable to discuss how I can contribute to the success of this company?
- I’d like to ask how my answer to your question is relevant to the position for which I am applying.
- May I suggest that we discuss my career? I am sure it will be of interest to you.

Sample illegal questions

Illegal questions on the application form:

Do not answer illegal questions. Write N/A, enter a dash in the space, or simply leave the space blank.

Example:

Interviewer: I see that information about your age is missing from our application. May I ask why?

You: The answer to this question has no bearing on my qualification for this position.

Age:

Example:

Interviewer: There is no information about your age on our application. What is your age?

You: I can assure you that my age will not affect my productivity, attendance, or job performance.

Arrest versus conviction:

Interviewers may ask about previous convictions for a felony or misdemeanor, but may not inquire about prior arrests. Nevertheless, because companies occasionally deal with less-than-honest employees, the interviewer might ask whether you have a criminal record.

If you've never been arrested, then you may reply, "I have never been convicted of a crime," and leave it at that. If you have a criminal past, then you might follow the steps below to lessen the impact of your past on the decision whether to hire you.

Your strategy:

- Conduct your own background check if you are concerned about what might appear.
- Reveal that you've been arrested before the company performs a background check.
- Accept the responsibility for your crime, and express that you have remorse for past mistakes and poor judgement (Example 1).
- If you have a conviction, include in your answer some remedial steps you have taken (Example 2).

Example 1:

Interviewer: To be honest with you, I am rather concerned about hiring someone with a criminal record.

You: I understand your concerns. What I did occurred a long, long time ago, and long ago I repented. I made a mistake, but am a better person for it.

Example 2:

Interviewer: Were you ever convicted of anything in the past?

You: Unfortunately, yes I have. About six years ago, I was convicted of driving under the influence of alcohol, but I deeply regret it. Since then, I haven't touched a drop of alcohol.

Citizenship:

Example:

Interviewer: Hmm, you have an interesting accent. What is your citizenship?

You: I am authorized to work in United States.

Disability:

Be prepared to answer questions about your disability if they relate to your ability to carry out the tasks assigned to the position for which you are applying. Answer with emphasis on your ability to performing tasks without difficulty, citing examples of your past performance. However, if you feel the question is not appropriate, diplomatically decline to answer it, as in Example 2.

Example 1:

Interviewer: Have your communication skills ever been impaired by your eyesight?

You: Two years ago I was rewarded for retaining one of the top four highest accounts. I used my enhanced communication skills such as listening for subtle messages embedded within diction and intonation. My customer service is unsurpassed. So I must say that rather than being a liability, my disability has enhanced my communication skills.

Example 2:

Interviewer: Has your being deaf hindered your social life?

You: What?

National origin:

Questions about your national origin may arise, especially if you have a foreign accent. One reason for the interviewer's concern is whether your level of English is satisfactory for effective communication with the company's staff, which could affect their and your job performance. Hopefully, the command of English you demonstrate during the interview will mitigate further employer apprehension.

Whether to answer questions about your origin is up to you. There may be no malicious intent behind a question that some might consider an illegal question, so you will have to decide at that moment how to respond.

Race or color discrimination:

Employers may not ask questions about race or skin color, unless appearance is a "bona fide occupational qualification" such as a job as a model. However, some employment applications may include a blank space where you voluntarily indicate your race.

Example:

Interviewer: In what ways do you deal with cultural diversity?

You: In my past job, I successfully supervised a culturally diverse team made up of workers representing America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Our diversity made us the strongest team in our division.

Religious discrimination:

With one narrow exception (see note below), employers cannot ask about your religious affiliation. Employers must accommodate religious practices unless doing so would be extremely burdensome; nevertheless, they may be concerned with the loss of productivity caused by employees taking time off for observance of religious holidays.

If religious practices are important to you, consider how you would address questions concerning the employer's need for you to work on days you normally reserve for worship.

Note: Employers may not inquire about your religious affiliations, denominations, or religious holidays observed, except when the employer is a religious organization. (See *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School vs. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission et al.*)

Example:

Interviewer: What church do you belong to?

You: Please help me understand why this information is relevant to this position.

Sex:

If you feel there are reservations about hiring you because of your gender, voice your concern by presenting an argument to support your candidacy.

Example:

Interviewer: We've got some pretty grumpy mechanics out there...

You: I get the impression that you are concerned about my ability to supervise men. In my previous position, I managed large teams of both men and women, with an enviable record of success.

Marital status:

People in turbulent relationships or are going through divorce typically have a higher number of sick days and absences, as well as loss of productivity.

Example:

Interviewer: Have you recently gone through a divorce?

You: I can assure you that my personal affairs will not affect my productivity, attendance, or job performance.

Spouse's occupation:

Often people had been rejected from the job because their spouse worked in a company that had a reputation for frequent transfers of personnel.

Example:

Interviewer: What does your wife do?

You: My wife works in the computer field. (You need not to identify her employer.)

Children:

The reason an employer would be concerned about your having children is he or she wants to know if you'd be missing work often to care for them.

Example:

Interviewer: What kind of daycare or other arrangements have you made to take care of your children when you are at work?

You: Rest assured that my child is well taken care of during my work days. I would not pursue a career without proper arrangements for her care.

Veteran status:

You may encounter questions pertaining your military service especially if the interviewer served in military. If you were honorably discharged, you may feel comfortable to simply state that you were honorably discharged. However, if you had General Discharge, or were discharged with OTH, BCD, or DD, consider some of the strategies below to mitigate the impact on the interviewers decision to hire you.

Your strategy:

- Use a background-checking firm to find out what employers can learn about you.
- Address issues that could potentially halt your employment.
- Accept the responsibility for any misconduct or crime. Express remorse, and mention remedial steps you have taken.
- Bear sole responsibility for your discharge; avoid blaming someone else.
- Focus on your unique promise of value and the benefit your bring to the employer, such as your military training and education, discipline, order, schedule, etc. as it relates to the employer.

Example:

Interviewer: I see on your application that you are a veteran. So tell me, why did you leave the military?

You: I had a medical discharge.

Checklist

- I can recognize an illegal question.
- I have considered how I would respond to an illegal question.
- I have rehearsed my responses to various illegal questions.

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