

*Career Renewal Ministry*  
*St. Anne Church*



# **Comprehensive Preparation for a Successful Job Search**

## **G. Interview Preparation**



We gather with our sisters and brothers in need.

We are aware of the struggles in our economy that we all face and share.

We recognize that we are called to help one another.

We reach out to our heavenly Father to acknowledge the many gifts that we have been given and understand that God is always there for us.

# Comprehensive Preparation for a Successful Job Search

## Basic Tools for a Job Search

- A. Accomplishments
- B. PARs
- C. Power Stories
- D. Resumes & Cover Letter
- E. Networking Bio & 2-Minute Elevator Speech
- F. Web Presence
- G. Interviewing Preparation**
- H. Networking

# What Will I Learn and Do?

- ▶ How to prepare for an interview
- ▶ The difficult questions you will be asked
- ▶ The questions you should ask in an interview
- ▶ How to establish a relationship with the interviewer
- ▶ Never turn down an interview! –You need the practice!!
- ▶ When and how to bring up and negotiate compensation
- ▶ How to improve your chance of success after the interview



# Prepare a game plan




- ▶ Read and understand the job description
- ▶ Research the company & staff
  - History, locations, products/services, mission/vision, performance, prospectus, company culture, etc.
- ▶ Write questions based on your resume AND answers
- ▶ Create a checklist of key points you MUST make before the interview ends
- ▶ Rehearse your answers
- ▶ Plan your arrival at the company

# Research the company thoroughly

- ▶ **Know the company and their competitors**
  - ▶ Mission, Core Values, Plans, Latest Performance, Problems
    - ▶ What will you bring to help improve results?
    - ▶ Study their company website
    - ▶ Use other internet resources
      - ▶ LinkedIn [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com)
      - ▶ Yahoo <http://finance.yahoo.com/>
      - ▶ Google [google.com](http://google.com) , google reviews, google alerts
      - ▶ Glassdoor [glassdoor.com](http://glassdoor.com)
      - ▶ Yelp [yelp.com](http://yelp.com)
- ▶ **Thoroughly research company leaders**
  - Check them out on LinkedIn and Facebook
- ▶ **Find out with whom you will be interviewing**
  - Check them out on LinkedIn
  - Network with people who work or worked there

# Questions... and Answers

## You should write down in advance

- ▶ Hot Button issues for this position
  - Job description requirements + organization fit
- ▶ Selling Points you **MUST** make in this interview
  - What do you bring to the company?  **RESULTS**
- ▶ Questions for you to ask
- ▶ Your 5 Toughest Questions
  - You certainly know what is most difficult to explain!
- ▶ 3 Personal Strengths
- ▶ 3 Personal Weaknesses

# Hot Button issues for this position

- ▶ These “requirements” from the company should be available in writing
  - In the ad
  - In the job description
- ▶ Make sure that you write an answer to each one (This includes the ones where you don’t meet the requirement –you need to know what to say, whether you use it or not)



# Create a checklist of key points

## **Selling Points you MUST make in this interview”**

- ▶ Make it concise
- ▶ Focus on results
- ▶ Type or print (for quick reference, keep it private)



## **Use these points to influence the direction of the interview**

- Tell Power Stories to answer their questions, but still make your point
- Have your resume in front of you

# Questions for you to ask

- ▶ To truly understand the key hiring issues for this position
  - ▶ What is critical to this interviewer?
- ▶ To change direction so you can make your selling points
  - ▶ Ask questions that allow you to respond with your results
- ▶ To make clear that you have prepared, understand the company and are highly interested
  - ▶ What are the next steps in the decision process?
  - ▶ What is the company culture?
  - ▶ Can you describe my career path?
- ▶ To get answers that you really need to make a decision

# The Toughest Questions for you to answer (You know what they are!)

- Why did you leave the last job?
- Why are there gaps in your resume?
- Why have you been out of work so long?
- ▶ **Some may be unspoken... But not out of mind**
  - Aren't you overqualified / underqualified for this position?
  - Why have you had so many jobs?
  - Will you pass the background check?
- ▶ **Just because it isn't legal to ask, doesn't mean they aren't thinking about it**
  - Aren't you... too old -ready to retire?
  - Aren't you... going to raise my insurance premiums
  - Aren't you... going to get pregnant and leave

**You need to write the answer to each one**

# How should you handle inappropriate or strange questions?

- ▶ **Do NOT get emotional**
  - Maybe they're trying to see how you react under stress?
- ▶ **If you're offended or unwilling to answer, then....**
  - Respond with a polite question
    - Would you please explain your reason for asking?
    - How would my answer impact my chances of getting this job?
- ▶ **If you've got a good answer and don't have a problem, then answer it in a neutral way**
  - This could be one member of the team who is out of line



# 3 Personal Strengths

- ▶ **A traditional question for which you must be prepared**  
If asked, it's a great opportunity for you to hit one or more of your key selling points, use Power Stories
- ▶ **Write out the answers –This is key communication**
  - Project presence and competence
  - Project clarity in knowing who you are
  - Listen to needs that may be expressed in the way the question is asked or in the body language response to your answers

# 3 Personal Weaknesses

- ▶ **A traditional question for which you must be prepared**
- ▶ **Turn weaknesses into selling points**
  - Show that you really know yourself and are honest
  - Be clear that you recognize the weakness and have already figured out how to compensate
  - Give examples of how you have kept them from affecting your performance and what you learned from your experience
- ▶ **Write out the answers –This is key communication**
- ▶ **Do not appear emotional**
  - Do answer succinctly and move on

# Plan your arrival

- ▶ **Identify the route on Google Maps**
  - Practice run at the right time of day, if necessary, to be sure you leave adequate time
- ▶ **Arrive early (15 minutes is good)**
  - Avoid increased anxiety from rushing
  - Appear punctual
- ▶ **Dress appropriately for the company**
  - Dress up, not everyday
  - Be well groomed
- ▶ **Make yourself enthusiastic!**
  - Make yourself believe today that this is the one you really want!
  - It's OK to change your mind after the day is over and you've seen what they're all about

# Thou shalt not....

- Criticize past employers
- Project aggression or hostility
- Appear defensive
- Be indecisive





# Rehearse your answers

## ➤ Practice

- In front of a mirror
- On video
- With your Accountability Partner
- With your spouse or friend or coach

## ➤ Bounce ideas off key networking contacts

## ➤ Review all your written questions and answers before the interview

# Recognize that this is a sales call

The key to success is building a relationship

- OPENING

- Get them to like you / Be social
- Quickly identify style of interviewer and adjust to it

- MIDDLE

- Make your selling points
- Use good listening skills

- CLOSE

- Define next steps in decision process and timeline
- Leave with everyone's contact information  
(business cards)

# Keep the focus on what you can do for the company

- ▶ Make sure that every person you meet sees you as positive and a contributor
- ▶ Do NOT talk about what you want, (unless asked)
  - If you are asked, assume that it's a trick question and keep the focus on what you can do for them when you answer
- ▶ Do get your questions answered
  - Just don't position these questions as demands or concerns
  - Ask clarification questions if necessary
- ▶ Make yourself enthusiastic!
  - Make yourself believe today that this is the one you really want!
  - It's OK to change your mind after the day is over and you've seen what they're all about

**The only time you get to make a decision is AFTER you get the offer**

# After the Interview

- Follow-up with a short thank you email that day to all the people you met, including the hiring manager
- Mail handwritten thank you note if you wish
- Check back, stay assertive... but not annoying
- Evaluate what you did well, and how you might improve



# Never turn down an interview opportunity

You need the practice!  
The only time you get a choice is after they make an offer!

# Negotiation Rules of Thumb

**(Be realistic about your own expectations)**

**It's very unlikely that a company will pay substantially more than your current employer**

A 10–20% reduction is reasonable

**It's highly unlikely that a company will negotiate for more than the upper range as published**

Bigger companies generally have well-defined salary ranges that can't be exceeded without a specific exception

**Job applicants are to be provided with a pay scale of the position upon reasonable request**

# What should you do with an offer

- **Keep the offer on the table and go home to think about it**
  - Thank them enthusiastically!
  - Talk it over with your spouse and others who understand your real value to a company

# Celebrate with the written offer in your hand!

- **Until you have the written offer, DO NOT:**
  - Agree to a start date
  - Quit your current job
  - Stop your search
  
- **Make sure that it includes the perks and benefits that you have separately negotiated**
  - Get it in a separate letter from the decision-maker if necessary



Questions?

# Action Plan

1. **Select a company to interview with and research this company.**
2. **Prepare the following for this company:**
  - List of Hot Button Issues for this position
  - Create a checklist of Key Points to make for this position
  - List 5 toughest questions to answer for this interview
  - List Personal strengths and weaknesses.
3. **Prepare Interview Plan for this company**
4. **Bring a job posting and your resume for that posting to the next session**
  - **Set an appointment for a Mock Interview**

# Interview Preparation

## Initial Notes . . .

- ▶ Select a company and position to prepare for an INTERVIEW:  
-----
- ▶ Where to research / know this company and industry:  
-----
- ▶ Where to find someone who knows someone at this company and/or in the industry?  
-----
- ▶ Where to uncover information about:
  - ✓ This position: -----  
-----
  - ✓ Whom you will be interviewing with :  
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# Interview Preparation –Start your list . . .

List Hot Button Issues for this position:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Create a checklist of Key Points to make for this position:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

List 5 Toughest Questions for you to answer:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

List Personal Strengths ... ..

and Weaknesses:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

# Interview Preparation–Draft Content

Plan arrival to this interview:

Directions: \_\_\_\_\_

Appropriate Dress: \_\_\_\_\_

Attitude/Demeanor: \_\_\_\_\_

Create Sales Call tone:

Opening \_\_\_\_\_

Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Closing \_\_\_\_\_

After Interview Follow-up:

Thank You Note to: \_\_\_\_\_ Key Points: \_\_\_\_\_

Check back by: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluate–

what went well: \_\_\_\_\_

what didn't go well: \_\_\_\_\_