

Instructor's Guide

for

Expert Job Search Strategies for the Ex-offender DVD Series

Interview Techniques

Video 3 of 3

"Nothing succeeds like the appearance of success." -- Christopher Lasch

Overview

Your interview is your chance to make a good first impression. How you look is important. Find out what the company dress code is and then dress slightly above it. What you wear should fade into the background so that your personality, how you communicate, and what you have to say can come through. No matter what job you are interviewing for, wear business attire. This shows that you're serious about the opportunity and know how to behave professionally.

Never be late for an interview. Make sure your car or other transportation is dependable and try to imagine any possible obstacles to getting there on time. If you are unavoidably late, call and explain honestly, and ask if you can reschedule the interview.

Be prepared for your interview by researching the company and practicing your interview with a friend. Try to display confident posture and make eye contact with the interviewer. Avoid showing nervousness. Think through your answers to likely questions. Don't elaborate about your abilities or skills. Try to stay on task and avoid rambling. Always think in terms of selling yourself and never try to hide an important point about your work history or skills. If asked about your incarceration be honest, say you made a mistake and you paid for it and are ready to move on.

An interview will show an employer how you will interact with him or her and the staff as well as customers. This combined with your past performance in jobs will influence the hiring decision. Applicants who have done their research and show enthusiasm about the job can impress the interviewer. Before the interview ends ask when you might expect to hear from them. When that date comes, follow up. If they still have not decided ask for another date when you might follow up again.

After the interview, follow up. Write and send a follow up letter the same day. Thank the interviewer for his or her time, and summarize why you are the right person for the job, but don't go overboard. Avoid using e-mail for follow up: although it is efficient, it is less personal. You can also ask for the next step at the end of the interview. If the company doesn't have a timeline, set your own timeline for follow-up. Always present yourself as a valuable commodity.

Presentation Suggestions

Display this statement: People make a decision about you in a matter of seconds.

Ask students to briefly discuss what this means in relation to how they need to prepare for job interviews. Give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to viewing the video.

Show the **program**. Encourage students to make changes to the answers they gave in the Anticipation Quiz while watching the program.

At the conclusion of the program, ask students to discuss any changes they made to the answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of watching the program.

Follow up the discussion with the Activities.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from the students.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and review the quiz questions as a group.

Assign the **Take-Away Activity**, if desired.

Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You will revise your answers as you watch the program.

1. How should you dress for an interview?
2. How can you prepare for your interview?
3. How can you follow up after an interview?
4. Should you ever hide information about your incarceration?

Answer Guide:

1. Find out the company dress code and dress slightly above it.
2. Research the company and practice your interview to think through your answers ahead of time.
3. Send a follow-up note the same day; ask at the end of the interview what the next step is.
4. No.

Activities

Activity #1

Title: Dressing for the Job

Format: individual

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Magazines and scissors

Bring old magazines to class or ask students to each bring a magazine. List these four jobs:

1. Cook
2. Mailroom assistant in a large corporation
3. Warehouse worker
4. Truck driver

Ask students to browse through the magazines to find images that they feel fit the way they might dress when applying for one of these jobs and cut those pictures out. Have students share the images they found and explain to the class why they feel the picture they cut out of the magazine would be appropriate for a job interview for one of these jobs.

Activity #2

Title: Practice, Practice, Practice!

Format: Groups of two

Time: 25 minutes

Materials: None

Break the class up into small groups and tell them they will role play an interview for a job as a telemarketer. First one person will be the interviewer and then they will switch and the other person will be the interviewer. Specifically, have the groups practice:

Making eye contact

Assuming a confident posture

Working through their answers to questions about their time in prison

When each group has done the role play twice, with each person acting out both the interviewer and the applicant, have the class discuss what they learned about preparing for an interview.

Discussion Questions

1. Why would making eye contact with an interviewer be important?
2. Why is your appearance so important to getting a job? Should it be?

3. What can you do if you feel the interview isn't going well to take control of it?

Quick Quiz

You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise. If you read the quiz, write responses on the board/overhead.

1. What two things should you do in a follow-up note?
2. What can you do to avoid being late for an interview?
3. If you are running late for an interview, what should you do?
4. T or F: You should give a detailed accounting of what crime landed you in prison.
5. How many days should you wait before you mail a follow-up letter?

Answer Key

1. Thank the person for his or her time and summarize why you are the right person for the job.
2. Make sure your car/transportation is dependable and try to anticipate any obstacles to getting there on time
3. Call the company, be honest, and ask if you can reschedule.
4. False. Don't ramble, don't elaborate. Be concise and stay on point.
5. Zero. Mail it the same day as the interview.

Take-Away Activity

Have students write a follow-up letter thanking an employer for a job interview for a position as a shipping/receiving clerk at a large department store. Remind them that they should thank the interviewer for his or her time and summarize why he/she is the best person for the job.

See www.jist.com for many other career and job search resources, including books, assessments, videos, and more.