

The 3 'P's for easier job interviews

Next to resume and cover letter writing, going through an interview is another grueling part of job-hunting that many of us dread. Job interviews are different every time. Not only do you meet new people every time, you are also required to market yourself and skills while trying to give the best impression possible through a barrage of questions.

But fret not. Proper preparation can help to assuage your fears and stress involved in job interviews. Simply keep in mind the 3 'P's.

PREPARE

- **Find out about the job and company.** It is a good way to find out how you fit in the organisation. This would help to craft your answers in the interview.
- **Ready a set of questions you would like to ask the interviewer.** These questions should be related to the organisation or position you are applying for. But as a general rule of thumb, do not raise the subject of salary or perks unless the interviewer initiates it. (Refer to *Appendix 1* for a suggested list of questions to ask)
- **Prepare the necessary documents.** Have a set of relevant documents typically needed by interviewers organised, e.g copies of your education and professional certificates as well as resume, just in case.

PRACTICE

- **Practice makes perfect.** Do a mock interview with a friend or practice in front of a mirror.
- **Rehearse the most frequently asked questions interviewers ask.** Some of the more common questions include work experience, personal strengths and weaknesses and career plan. (Refer to *Appendix 2* for a list of questions usually asked by interviewers)
- **Review your resume.** Be prepared to answer questions about its contents.

PROCESS

- **Engage your interviewer.** Listen carefully to his/her questions and make appropriate eye contact. Respond clearly and concisely, and with sufficient details.
- **Mind your language.** Your body language plays a major role in communication (55%), followed by tone of voice (38%) and lastly, the words you use (7%).
- **Follow up.** Send a thank you note promptly after the interview, reiterating your interest while you are still fresh in their minds. If you have not heard from them after a few days, make a follow-up call.

Appendix 1

List of possible questions to ask the interviewer:

- Is there a written job description?
- What kind of responsibilities does this position entail?
- To whom will I report to?
- Why is this position available?
- When will a decision/offer be made?
- What career prospects/professional developments are available?

Appendix 2

Frequently asked questions by interviewers

- Discuss work experience
 - Duties and responsibilities; skills and abilities
 - Likes and dislikes
 - Reason(s) for leaving previous employer
- Career plan
 - What are your short and long term goals?
 - Where do you see yourself in 3, 5 or 10 years?
 - How do you plan to achieve your goals?
- Personal
 - What are your strengths and weaknesses?
 - What motivates you?
- What are the examples of key business decisions have you made in your career?
- What are the factors which led to the decision made, the causes and effects, the information available and what was learnt?
- Name some innovative approaches you have used to accomplish work tasks.
- What are the specific goals you have set for yourself, another individual or group (business or personal)?