



How to Interview

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BEFORE the interview: Prepare a portfolio to bring with you that includes directions to the interview site, your resume (bring a couple extra), references, and a list of accomplishments. Use the resume during the interview so that the dates you mention match the resume they have in their hand, the references in case you need to leave them or fill out an application and the list of accomplishments so that you can glance at it quickly as needed during the interview (more on that later).

You are not going to one interview you are going to three interviews.

- **First 10 Seconds:** Please realize that you can lose the job in the first 10 seconds. Prepare for the first 10 seconds by being on time, dressing professionally, checking your appearance in the bathroom before you meet them, dry your hands on your clothing just before you shake their hand, look them straight in the eye and act confident.
- **First 10 minutes:** The first 10 minutes make or break most interviews. Prepare for the “So, tell me about yourself” question, it occurs in almost all interviews as one of the first few questions. Here is the correct way to answer that question.
 - First, give a one sentence summary of your **professional background** (do NOT answer with personal information.) e.g. LAN/WAN administrator with mid-sized companies for the last 8 years
 - Second, a one or two sentence accomplishment that is easy to quantify and shows how you have made or saved money for an employer, one that is compelling enough to invite a follow up question e.g. in my last job, I helped lead a successful Domino conversion, and as a result we saved \$80K by doing in-house, and not going outside ... (*be prepared for...*”tell me about that?”)
 - Third, one sentence for **what you want to do next** and it MUST match this position!! e.g. In my next position I’m looking to...
 - Last of all YOU should ask the interviewer this question (*do this with all the people you interview with*) “Although I have some understanding of this position (from the ad, recruiter, whatever), I was hoping that before we started the interview you would briefly explain **in your own words** the position and what you are looking for, so that I can make sure what I talk about in my background is relevant and applicable”
- **Rest of interview:**

- Make sure you are positive, especially about previous supervisors and employers.
- Bring accomplishments into your answers
- Ask questions.

There are only two kinds of questions asked in an interview.

- What are you going to accomplish for me?
- Why do you want this job?

Unfortunately they never ask those questions directly and sometimes they do not even know that is what they are asking. In most interviews they will only tell you what you will do and what you have done so it is up to you to find a way to answer these questions during the interview and to do it over and over again.

How should you answer questions during an interview?

- Length. General rule is to keep your answers to a paragraph. Question: Do you have experience machining with tight tolerances? Wrong answer is “yes” or to go on and on. Instead answer for about a paragraph and then if you have more that you can tell them - ask them if they need more information. “There is more I can tell you – do you want to know it OR did that tell you what you needed to know or do you need to know more?”
- Ask questions back during the interview. The way to do this is they ask you a question, you answer their question and weave in an accomplishment during the answer; then you ask them a related question. So for the above question you tell them about your machining experience, if you have an accomplishment you can weave in about how you improved the machining then weave that in, then ask them a question back that is related about their process, or did they experience a problem with xxx, etc.
- What kinds of questions should you ask during an interview? Here are some ideas.
 - Questions that show your knowledge of their manufacturing processes or their industry
 - Questions that show that you have researched their company
 - Questions about the interviewer (their history with the company, why they like to work there)
 - Questions about the career track
 - Questions about the responsibilities
 - DO NOT ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT SALARY, BENEFITS, ETC. Wait for them to bring it up.

Tours are a very important part of the interview process. Pay attention, ask intelligent questions during the tour, mention previous experiences that tie in with parts of the tour, pay attention and remember because you will not be taking notes here.

Would you like to stand out from almost everyone else they interview? Then ask for the job at the end of the interview; at least tell them you are interested and that you would love to go to the next step. Hardly anyone does this and this will really make you stand out.

Assorted information:

- **Be positive, be enthusiastic.** Many, many times throughout the years I have had candidates come back from interviews really interested in the position they interviewed for. When I followed up with my clients they turned down my candidate because the candidate did not show any enthusiasm during the interview. So show them that you love what you do for a living, that you would be interested in working for this company and this person.
- **It is OK to take notes during an interview,** I highly suggest it. Just do not overdue it.
- **Know yourself, act confident.** Spend time now getting to know yourself, your personal strengths and your business accomplishments. Look up typical interview questions on the internet (Google) and practice them.
- **Follow up after the interview.** During the interview ask about the time line and follow up as is appropriate. Send thank you notes by snail mail or email and proof them carefully for mistakes in grammar and spelling.

This article and others like it are available on QCI's web site at www.qcitech.com.

