

## **F - Verbal Pre-brief**

OK, it's not "verbal," but we're sharing it with you for your upcoming interview. You might want to read this over a couple of times. It's good stuff, and there are only five points to cover.

POINT ONE: There is one reason and one reason only that anyone should EVER go on a job interview, and that reason is to get an offer. Notice I didn't say, "to get a job," but "to get an offer!" The reason is simple: you're in control - in the driver's seat - when you receive an offer. You can accept an offer, negotiate an offer, or for that matter, decline an offer. But without an offer, you can't do anything. You must go to every interview with this goal in mind: obtain the offer. (And now, if you buy off on that one, we can go to the next point.)

POINT TWO: Employers tend to divide their emphasis equally when hiring: about 50% to the technical capability of the candidate to DO the job, and about 50% to PERSONALITY or CHEMISTRY. In a university study tracking 1,000 perfectly qualified individuals who didn't receive offers, the hiring authorities were asked this question: "WHY didn't you hire this perfectly qualified person?" To paraphrase 90% of the answers: "I didn't see any interest or enthusiasm." This is strange, because most of the candidates claimed gobs of both. "What we have here," to use the famous line from Cool Hand Luke, "is a failure to communicate." If you are genuinely interested or enthusiastic, let the interviewer know! These don't have to be declarations; they can be instead simple examples of "active listening" such as, "That's something I find incredibly interesting," or even a "Wow!," now and then, if that fits your personality. Most folks try to be a little too polished or too cool in an interview. Have a good person-to-person meeting instead. (By the way, the asking of questions, not just the answering, makes you a more interested candidate.)

POINT THREE: Selling oneself in the interview is as old as ancient Egypt, where the Pharaoh undoubtedly interviewed people for Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, etc. Frankly, it hasn't changed much since. The interview is a unique social experience because it occurs infrequently, yet on it depends much of one's existence. While participating in an interview, know that in all the world, you are unique; there is nobody else with your exact education, work and life experiences, your ambitions. In an interview, the idea is to wrap all this up in a nice package and put it out there on the desk where you can talk about it! Here's the point: in the interview you have to be proud and vocal regarding your past accomplishments. Don't expect the resume to do it for you. Bring them up and talk about them! But remember the "proud" part - you don't want to sound as if you are bragging. "I'm proud of having accomplished....," sounds a heck of a lot better than "I'm the greatest in existence!" You don't talk about your accomplishments at old fashioned church suppers or at Super Bowl parties - but you certainly talk about them in the interview situation. Two 'don'ts: First, don't say anything that denigrates any person or company with whom you worked previously. Nothing will make a candidate look worse than "knocking" a previous employer. And, second, don't start asking about pay, benefits, retirement or such in a first in-person interview. Plenty of time for that stuff later.

POINT FOUR: Closing in the interview. If you know a sales manager, you may have asked him or her this question: "When it comes right down to it, how does a salesperson actually obtain an order?" The answer, about 98% of the time, will be: "the salesperson just has to ASK for it." Well, for the purposes of the interview, you are a salesperson with a great product: yourself. Now you're faced with closing for the OFFER. Perhaps you've sensed that the interview is winding down, or maybe the decision-maker is looking at her watch? Right then and right there is the best time for a remark such as this: "Jill, I think I could work well with you and with this company, and frankly, I would appreciate an offer." It's not hard to do. Asking for the offer is the best indicator of INTEREST and ENTHUSIASM (Point Two), and, at the same time, invites

the offer. You probably won't receive one right then and there, but the fact that you asked separates you from the thundering herd.

POINT FIVE: CALL YOUR FRIENDLY RECRUITER as soon as you come out of an interview. The main reason is a quick "debriefing" to allow the recruiter to accumulate information that might be useful in the upcoming conversation with the employer. When impressions are fresh in your mind, when questions you have are uppermost, the recruiter gets "good stuff" that allows him or her to help close the hiring company for an offer. In other words, you help yourself when you call your recruiter as soon as possible after an interview.

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