

## STEP 5: SORTING

### *Interviewing and Evaluating*

Interviewing and evaluating is a two-way street. While employers are learning about you, you should be learning about them too. Both you and them are gathering and sorting information about one another – looking for a match of what you do and like best with what they need most.

Successfully sorting through interviewing and evaluating depends on you being prepared with both questions and answers. Do your homework on the employer as well as the job. Think in advance not only about what you will say, but also what you will ask. Let your listening and hearing guide answering and talking. Remember that God gave you two ears and only one mouth, therefore be thoughtful...

*...everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger...*  
James 1:19

To help you prepare, practice and pray through this step, we will share with you about...

- ❖ Types of interviews
- ❖ The interview process
- ❖ Referencing and testing
- ❖ Compensation and benefits

#### **TYPES OF INTERVIEWS**

##### ***Qualifying or Screening Interviews***

These interviews usually are relatively short and may be done by telephone or in person. They may be as short as ten minutes, and they rarely last more than an hour. Recruiters or someone from the company's human resources department often conduct them. The interviewers usually focus on your experience and education, your personality and values, and/or your specific technical experience and expertise.

The interviewer may ask about your salary history and compensation expectations. You should try to delay discussion about money until later so you can gain a better understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of the position. If you must declare what compensation you need or want, give as broad a range as possible since so many factors are unknown at this point.

Be sure to ask questions that are important to you, but realize that the screening interviewer may not know some of the answers. The interviewer may know very little about the details of the position you're interviewing for. Try to find out what the company is looking for, who the hiring manager is (so you can try to network to him/her by personal referral), and what the next steps are.

If the screening interview is done by telephone, be prepared, and don't have any distractions around you. Have your resume and notes on the company with you by the phone. If an interviewer calls without an appointment and you're not ready, ask for few minutes that will allow you time to get ready.

##### ***Behavioral Interviews***

Because increasing numbers of employers are using behavior-based methods to evaluate candidates, understanding how to excel in this interview environment is becoming a critical job-hunting skill. The idea behind behavioral interviewing is that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations.

The interviewer identifies job-related experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities that the company has decided are desirable in a particular position. The employer then structures very pointed questions to elicit detailed responses aimed at determining if the candidate possesses the desired characteristics. Questions (often not even framed as a question) typically start out: "Tell about a time..." or "Describe a situation..."

Your response needs to be specific and detailed. Candidates who tell the interviewer about particular situations that relate to each question will be far more effective and successful than those who respond in general terms. Review your **STAR** accomplishments from Step 2 to prepare for behavioral interviews (see page 3-6, Self-Assessment Accomplishments Exercise).

### ***Hiring Manager Interviews***

This interviewer is usually the person to whom you will report if you are hired. They normally have the most influence on whether or not you're hired. Their success depends on selecting the right person, but they may or may not be the best interviewer.

When you meet them, seek to get know them, their background and current position. Ask questions to discover what this person wants to accomplish through the job and how he/she wants the job done. Take notes and ask follow-up questions. Be alert for opportunities to connect relationally by mentioning things you have in common. Be prepared to tell this person about your accomplishments that parallel their needs. Try to show how you can help this person succeed at his/her job.

### ***Other types of interviews***

- ❖ **Sequential Interviews**: It's not unusual to have a series of interviews scheduled with a variety of people in the organization—not only the hiring manager and human resources representative, but also employees in and around the position to be filled. All of them are important! Be responsive to their interests and to their perspectives on the job, to what needs to be accomplished through the job, and to the hiring manager. Be sure to make notes on each person you meet, and get each person's business card if possible.
- ❖ **Introduction Interviews**: You may meet senior executives or business owners. The hiring and human resources managers may already have agreed that they want to hire you but need to let senior management get a look. This "chance" meeting is a wonderful opportunity to get perspectives from top management on both the company and the position for which you are interviewing.
- ❖ **Presentation Interviews**: For some jobs and organizations, you may be asked to give a presentation followed by a Q&A time. This approach is common in sales organizations. This type of an interview provides an interviewer with an opportunity to evaluate your ability to sell. It also gives you a chance to show your abilities—consider this a great opportunity! While you want your presentation to be memorable, avoid using gimmicks or being too cute. If you're in the room while other candidates are making presentations, be attentive and courteous.
- ❖ **Stress Interviews**: Sometimes one of the interviewers may have the assignment of putting you to the test by asking you difficult questions in hard ways to see how you'll respond. No matter how awkward, frustrating or intimidating, don't lose your cool. Do the best you can, and be firm and friendly. If the interviewer needs to be confronted, do so with tact, speaking the truth in love.
- ❖ **Team or Panel Interviews**: Sometimes you may interview with two or more people at the same time. While potentially intimidating for you, this type of interview saves time for them. The advantage to you is that you have a chance to see how they interact with one another, giving you a feel for the chemistry and the culture of the organization. Be sure to address your answers to everyone in the room. Pay particular attention to the quietest person; this person is often the final decision-maker.

## THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

### *Preparation*

Start with your heart. Fill it with positive thoughts about how you can serve the employer's best interests with what you do best and like most. Imagine yourself working for the prospective employer with sincerity of heart. Remember, whatever is in your heart will show up on your lips.

*"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good;  
and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil;  
for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."*

Luke 6:45

Research the company by reading news articles, brochures, and annual reports. Visit the company's website; print and read the pertinent information. Call people in your network who may know about the company and the people who manage it. Find out about the company and where the position you're interviewing for fits into the company. List the questions you have about the company, and try to find answers. Also, make a list of questions to ask during your interviews.

Eat right, exercise, and get plenty of rest before the interview. Leave yourself enough time to get ready. If you need a haircut, schedule an appointment for one. If you need new clothing, make sure you buy it. Look your best—conservatively. Proper attire will vary depending on the organization and the job. Find out what is appropriate in that particular workplace. If you don't know and can't find out any other way, call and ask the person with whom you're going to interview. Wear little or no jewelry, with the exception of a watch, a wedding ring, and (for women) conservative earrings. Do not wear cologne, perfume, or other scents. Be sure that your hair is in place and off your face. You want to look professionally well-dressed so the focus will be on what you have to say and not on how you look. Before you leave your home, check yourself in the mirror. Brush your teeth, and take along breath mints.

Men	Women
If it's a formal business setting, men will probably wear a suit with white or blue shirt and conservative tie or business casual attire.	Women might wear a suit with skirt below the knees or tailored pants.
Men should wear conservative business shoes and dark socks.	Women should wear low- to mid-heel pumps with skin-toned hose.

Be sure you know the location of the meeting. If you are not sure and have time, make a test run so you can find the building. You can get a map off the Internet. Take money for parking.

### *References*

Be ready to provide references when asked; this request usually comes after an interview or two. Ask the interviewer who they'd like to speak with. Have a master list of references already prepared so you can pick the ones best suited for a particular opportunity. Call or email the people you've chosen to let them know a potential employer will be calling. See Master Reference Worksheet 6-11.

Ask the potential employer for references as well. You would like the names of people you can talk with about the company and the position. Remember that the selection process is a two-way street; you're evaluating them while they evaluate you. You might ask to talk to people who currently work in the department, people who used to work there, customers, or vendors. Make some calls on your own to people you know in the same business, and ask what they know and think about the company.

### **Testing**

Testing is a common tool employers use to assess whether or not you have the skills or personality to fit the position they have to fill. Being asked to take a test is good news because it suggests that hiring the right person for a job is important to the employer. If the testing shows that your skills or personality do not fit the position, consider that as good news. You don't want to be in a position or a company that is not a fit for you and where you're likely to fail or be unhappy.

The key to taking tests is the same as the key to interviewing: eat right, exercise, and get plenty of rest beforehand. You'll want to be as energetic and relaxed as possible. You can't prepare for these tests, and you can't fool them either. Be as honest as you can with your answers. Answer only what is asked of you.

### **Compensation and Benefits**

Discussions about compensation and benefits do not have to be stressful or worrisome. These discussions help you qualify the opportunity and evaluate whether or not it meets your criteria. These following suggestions should help you handle discussions about compensation.

- ❖ Ask the potential employer how they've budgeted for the position.
- ❖ Be careful about ruling out a job because it doesn't pay enough. After they meet you, the company may pay more money than they'd planned, or they may have another job that would be a better fit for you.
- ❖ If you are told the salary, ask if it is the *hiring* range or the *position* range. The position salary range is likely to be broader than the hiring salary range. Most organizations want to hire you at less than the mid-point of the position salary range so they can increase your salary later without having to promote you.
- ❖ If you are asked for your current salary or salary history, try to delay providing that information. Ask if it can be discussed later. If asked for this information on the job application, leave the space blank or write in "negotiable." Tell them that you are considering several factors and that you'd like to delay the compensation part of the consideration until you have a better understanding of the position and its responsibilities and expectations.
- ❖ If they really insist on knowing, and you can often determine this insistence by the tone of voice used, give them a broad range. You might want to hold back your absolute minimum in case negotiating becomes important later on.

### **The Interview**

On your way to the interview, be thinking about this key verse...

*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*

Ephesians 4:29

Allow plenty of time to find the location and get into the building. Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. Take time to go to the restroom for one last check; make sure your hair is neat, your clothes are straight, your shoes are clean, and your confidence is in place with a smile on your face.

Present yourself to the receptionist 5 minutes before the appointment. Be polite and courteous to the receptionist. If offered something to drink while you wait, simply decline. Look around the waiting area for new information on the company, and be ready to meet the interviewer. Be especially thoughtful of and friendly to administrative and support people who may not be interviewing you but will be making observations; these people may be asked what they thought about you when you met.

Greet the interviewer with a warm smile and a firm handshake. Make good eye contact, and show interest in this person. Use the first few minutes of the interview to build rapport between yourself and the interviewer. Make the interviewer comfortable with being with you.

Answer the interviewer's questions honestly. Remain relaxed and confident. Give accurate information and be direct. Don't answer more than is asked. Limit answers to 10 to 30 seconds, and absolutely no more than 1 minute; the interviewer will ask for more if he/she wants to know more. Feel free to pause to arrange your thoughts; if you do not understand a question, ask for clarification. Always be positive in your answers. Never say anything negative about a previous employer. Focus on your accomplishments by describing a Situation you faced, the Task to be accomplished, the Actions you took, and the Results you achieved.

Be sure to ask your questions about the job, the company, and the person interviewing you. Ask questions about the interviewer's role in the company, and ask questions to determine what the interviewer/company wants to accomplish through the job, what they expect, and how you can help if you get the job. Try to learn what they want accomplished by the person who does this job.

Before the interview is over, ask if you may summarize your understanding of the job and what needs to be accomplished. Then, as you give them feedback, also summarize your accomplishments relevant to what they need done. Try to connect for them what you do and like best with what they need most.

When closing the interview, thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration. Say that you enjoyed the interview and learning about the company. If you're interested in the position, make sure to say so, but if you think you're not interested, don't say anything at this time. Ask about next steps, and take notes on what you find out.

Work through and share with a friend or group the "Interview before the Interview" exercises on pages 6-6 through 6-10 and the "Dress for Success" devotional on page 6-12.

### ***After the Interview***

Whether or not you want the job, write thank you notes to the interviewers on nice personal or professional stationery, as well as send an email of appreciation.

If you don't hear back from the company by the agreed upon date, make a follow-up call and/or send an email to underscore your interest in the company. If you hear nothing back, keep following-up once a week for seven weeks. If you still hear nothing, then assume it is not the job for you, and God has something better for you.

During the interview process, we strongly recommend you continue searching for and sorting through new opportunities. Don't get stuck on one or two possibilities and quit looking. Keep networking online and on-the-ground until you get and accept the offer that's right for you.

**INTERVIEW BEFORE THE INTERVIEW****EXERCISE #1**

The following chart includes some of the most commonly asked interview questions and some tips for answering each one. It's important to use your own words and style when answering questions and to give honest answers.

It's better to have "talking points" in mind rather than trying to memorize answers. Trying to memorize answers creates unnecessary stress for you and may give the appearance that you're not being yourself. For each question, write down some points you'd like to make as you answer. Include work-related accomplishments (situation-action-result) whenever appropriate.

Question	Tips and Talking Points
<p><i>1. Tell me about yourself.</i></p>	<p>Give work-related information. Include such things as education, experience, and 3 to 4 strengths. Include an accomplishment.</p>
<p><i>2. What do you know about our organization?</i></p>	<p>Do your research. Check out the company's website, and talk to anyone you can find who works at that company. Include such information as what business the company is in, products, markets, size.</p>



## INTERVIEW BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

## EXERCISE #1 (continued)

Question	Tips and Talking Points
3. <i>What are your strengths?</i>	Give 3 to 4 work-related strengths. Give examples of accomplishments to illustrate.
4. <i>What are your weaknesses?</i>	Be prepared to talk about a time when you failed to achieve your goals. Mention only one fairly insignificant thing. Keep it brief. Don't elaborate. Tell what you've learned or done to improve.
5. <i>What has been your greatest accomplishment?</i>	Make it work-related, even related to this position as much as possible. Don't hold back. This is your chance to shine.

## INTERVIEW BEFORE THE INTERVIEW



## EXERCISE #2

Here are some more questions to think about before you go to an interview:

Question	Tips and Talking Points
<p><b>1. What are you looking for in salary?</b>  <b>What was (is) your last (current) salary?</b></p>	<p>Defer this question until later if at all possible. State that you are interested in the total compensation package, not just salary. If you feel you must answer, talk in terms of total compensation and a salary range.</p>
<p><b>2. What are your career goals?</b>  <b>Where do you want to be in 5 years?</b></p>	<p>Relate your answer to the position you're interviewing for. Talk about your desire to grow in your field and to contribute to the company you're working for.</p>
<p><b>3. Why should we hire you?</b>  <b>What contributions can you make?</b></p>	<p>Give 3 to 4 strengths supported by examples of accomplishments. Relate them to the needs of this company/position.</p>

**INTERVIEW BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**  **EXERCISE #2 (continued)**

Question	Tips and Talking Points
<p><b>4. <i>Why do you want to work for us?</i></b></p>	<p>Using what you know about the company and position, focus on their needs and how you can address them.</p>
<p><b>5. <i>What do you find most attractive about the position we are discussing?</i></b></p>	<p>Talk about the challenges of the position and needs of the company, and then talk about how your strengths relate.</p>

## INTERVIEW BEFORE THE INTERVIEW



## EXERCISE #3

This chart has the most commonly asked interview questions and some tips for answering each one. Remember, it's important to use your own words and style when answering questions and to give honest answers.

Question	Tips and Talking Points
<p><b>1. How long will it take you to be a contributor to our team?</b></p>	<p>Be reasonable here. While you are a quick learner and a hard worker, realistically it will take you six months to a year to be fully contributing.</p>
<p><b>2. How would you describe your management style? (if interviewing for a management position)</b></p>	<p>Show that you involve your team, communicate well, and hold people accountable.</p>
<p><b>3. Why did you leave/are you leaving your last/current position?</b></p>	<p>Talk about your goals and your plans for meeting them. DO NOT say anything negative about any past employer or supervisor.</p>



READ & WRITE DEVOTIONAL



DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:11; 14-17

Draw a picture of yourself wearing the full armor of God. Here are the items:

- 1. Belt girded with **truth**
- 2. Breastplate of **righteousness**
- 3. Shoes gospel of **peace**
- 4. Shield of **faith**
- 5. Helmet of **salvation**
- 6. Sword **Word** of God

Large empty rectangular box for drawing.

Which piece of armor do you wear the most? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The least? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How will each piece of armor help you to stand firm? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Remember to put on the full armor of God every day. Leave no chinks in your armor. Spiritual “innerwear” is more important than physical outerwear. Post a copy of this devotional where you will see it every morning while you dress. The full armor of God—don’t leave home without it.

**GO ONLINE**

Log in and on the Career Explorer landing page, point to and select Career Tools – Sorting

**SESSION****For the Next Session: STEP 6 – SELECTING**

Be ready to talk about what you have learned. Make sure you've gone online to read articles and browse sites that are particularly relevant to your interests and issues right now.

**PRAYER JOURNAL**

Use the space below—or your own journal—to take some notes about your specific prayer requests or insights that you have at this point for yourself or others in your group.