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Interview Ready!

Supplement Packet / Exercise Sheets

(<http://www.wa.gov/esd/training/toolbox.htm>)

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Are you the Ideal Job Candidate?

- 1) Why you are passionate about the work?**
- 2) How would you serve as an asset to the company?**
- 3) How can your capabilities, expertise & your knowledge allow you to succeed on the job?**
- 4) Do you have examples to show or tell that demonstrate your good work & judgment?**
- 5) Why are you are excited to be part of the organization?**
- 6) Are you a good fit? Will you be compatible with the team & culture of the company?**

REMEMBER:

The other, and equally, important side of the interview is to determine if this is the right company and supervisor for you!

Preparing for the Interview

Start your preparation activities as soon as possible.	Completed
Review job description. Highlight skills and experience that you have.	
Research the company. (See page 5 of this packet.)	
Review material (resume, cover letter, etc) you sent to the employer.	
Go to www.onetonline.org to compare job tasks and skills that you may have.	
Go to www.worksourcewa.com and go to Career Tools tab and click on "Labor Market Information."	
Go to www.glassdoor.com to read employee reviews of a company and access potential interview questions.	
Get directions to the interview site. Do a practice trip to the interview location.	
Practice interviewing questions.	
Try on your interview outfit.	
Items to Bring to the Interview	
Printed copy of directions.	
Notepad and pen.	
Research you found on the company.	
At least 4 copies of your resume (for you and interviewers to reference)	
At least 4 copies of a separate reference sheet	
Copies of any certifications, licenses, etc. that the employer has asked you to bring or would be relevant for the job.	
Work samples	
Proper I-9 documentation (Social Security Card, Driver's License...etc)	
Leave chewing gum at home; use a breath mint if need be.	
Make sure you have enough fuel in your vehicle.	
Leave emergency snacks and water in your vehicle.	
Grooming tools	
Other:	

Researching the Company

Target Employer Name

1. What is the company's mission statement?

2. What are the company's core values?

3. What are the company's strategic goals?

4. What is the purpose of the organization? What does it do?

5. What is unique about their business?

6. How many divisions, departments does the company have?

7. Who are the company's major customers? What are their needs?

8. What is the company's history? Is it owned by another firm? Is it a public or private organization?

9. Does the company have any direct competition in your area?

10. Have there been any recent layoffs or significant changes within the company's structure?

11. What is the average salary for the job title you are applying for in your region? Does the employer pay above or below that average?

12. What acronyms and language (key words, industry specific speak) does the company use?

13. What do you offer the company that fits its profile and will make you stand out at the interview?

STAR Method / Behavioral Interview

The **STAR** method is used to map your course through behavioral interview questions. This type of interview question is based on the premise that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.

Keep in mind there is no right or wrong answer to a behavioral question. The employer simply is trying to understand how you have handled a given situation.

Exercise Question:

- **Explain a situation where there was conflict and how it was resolved.**

Part of Method	Your Responses
Situation: A situation generally involves – a person, group of people etc., (Tell the story here)	
Task: What was the task / activity causing the conflict?	
Action: What did you do to work through the conflict?	
Results: What was the outcome of the conflict? And, what did you learn?	

Common Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.

This is an open-ended question often asked to help "break the ice" in the interview. The important thing to remember is to keep the answer job-related. The employer does not want to know details about your personal life! You can say things about your education, career goals, volunteer experience, and skills.

2. Why are you interested in working for this company?

This will show the employer that you have done your "homework." State the positive things you have learned about the company and how they fit with your career goals. This shows the employer that you cared enough about the interview to prepare for it.

3. Tell me about your education.

Even though your resume includes this information, some employers like to have you expound on the subject. Remember to include all classes, seminars, workshops, and on-the-job training you have attended that support your job goals.

4. Why have you chosen this particular field?

This is one way to discover your enthusiasm and dedication to your career.

5. Describe your best/worst boss/teacher.

This could be a trap. Do not present a negative picture of any past employers or teachers. If given a choice, always talk about your best boss/teacher. If pressed to describe the worst boss/teacher, pick a work-related characteristic that can be stated in a positive way, e.g., "I had a supervisor who was vague when issuing assignments. I learned to ask questions so that I knew what was expected."

6. In a job, what interests you most/least?

This will give the employer another gauge for measuring how well you will fit the job opening.

7. What is your major weakness?

Always turn this into a positive! State a weakness and turn it into a positive by showing how you overcame the weakness. "In the past, it has been difficult for me to accept criticism from my peers. However, I have learned to value and ask for this input and it has improved my job performance."

8. Give an example of how you solved a problem in the past.

It is important to be able to show the process you go through when presented with a problem. State the problem and the steps you followed to reach the solution.

9. What are your strengths?

This is the time to describe the skills you have identified that will most effectively "market" you as an employee.

10. How do others describe you?

Another way for the employer to ask this would be, "Tell me how you would fit into this work group?" If you are not comfortable with this question before the interview, call some friends and/or ask people you have worked with how they would describe you.

11. What do you consider the most important idea you contributed or your most noteworthy accomplishment in your last job?

Give examples of ways in which you saved the company time or money or developed a procedure that improved efficiency.

12. Where do you see yourself in three years? Telling the interviewer, "In your job!" is not a good idea. Do indicate that you hope to acquire sufficient skills and knowledge within that time to make a positive contribution to the company.

Common Interview Questions continued...

13. Think about something you consider a failure in your life, and tell me why you think it happened.

Failure implies error. Answers that point to a negative should conclude with a success. For example, "In my last volunteer experience, I was given the responsibility of greeting people and giving them registration packets when they arrived at the door. After the first few people came, I realized I didn't know enough information about the events to direct them to the right places. I learned to ask questions and do my research in advance when given an assignment I'm unfamiliar with. I am more prepared and less stressed. I haven't had the problem since."

14. How do you think you will fit into this operation?

This is the time to express your interest in the job and knowledge of the company. The more you know about the operation the easier this question will be to answer.

15. If you were hired, what ideas/talents could you contribute to the position or our company?

Another great opportunity for you to sell your skills. By giving examples of past accomplishments, the employer can visualize your contribution to her/his company.

16. Give an example where you showed leadership and initiative.

Even if you haven't had the title of lead worker, supervisor, or manager, give examples of when you recognized a job needed to be done and you did it.

17. Given an example of when you were able to contribute to a team project.

Team work is used in sales because both parties have to state their needs and expectations, then negotiate the sale. Families, community activities, and school all require team work.

18. What have you done to develop or change in the last few years?

This shows a willingness to be challenged and to improve. Employers are looking for people who are willing to continue learning. Talk about formal and informal educational opportunities you have pursued. Mention books and magazines you have read related to your field of interest.

19. Do you have any questions for me?

By asking questions, you again show interest in the job. Following are some suggested questions.

Remember to keep your answers brief & job-related!

Questions YOU CAN ASK in an Interview

- Would you describe an average day on this job?
- What is the history of the position? Why is it vacant?
- As you think about the position, what aspects of this job would you like to see performed better?
- What are the key challenges or problems of this position?
- Where can I go from here, assuming that I meet/exceed the job's responsibilities?
- How would you describe the ideal candidate?
- What are the company's short and long range goals?
- What's the common denominator in your successful employees?
- What are some outside influences that affect company growth?
- How will I be evaluated, and in what time frames? What performance standards will be used?
- What is the department's environment like?
- When will a decision be made about this position?