PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THE ORAL INTERVIEW

1. You are entering a comparatively conservative field - dress the part. A business suit or business attire is appropriate; however, if you do not own one, dress as professionally as you can. Don't forget that you should dress for an interview throughout the testing process (the physical agility test is an obvious exception). Remember first impressions are important.

2. Always shake hands with members of your interview panel, make eye contact, and smile (if it comes naturally). Be polite; say "Please" and "Thank you", "Sir" or "Ma'am". Speak with all of the raters when answering a question - do not limit your attention to the person who asked the question. Remember, they are evaluating you on your communication skills and professionalism.

3. One-half of communication is listening. Look at raters as they speak to you, and listen carefully to what they say.

4. Be prepared to respond to the following statement: "tell us a little about yourself". This is your opportunity to sell yourself. Tell the panel about any law enforcement experience, military history, or college background, or relevant points of interest. You should limit or not even include personal information such as families, hobbies, etc. The oral board has no way to evaluate this information, and it detracts from the job relatedness of the process.

5. You might be expected to tell the board how you would respond in certain situations. The raters know you have not yet been through an academy, but will expect you to answer as a police officer. The best thing you can do is to listen closely to the scenario, take your time thinking about the situation, and give a broad, common sense-type response. There are no "right-wrong" questions, but merely an opportunity for the board to see your communication skills, attitude and demeanor, as well as evaluate your judgment and reasoning abilities. Having an understanding of crime related issues affecting Salem is helpful as well.

6. You should have an understanding of community policing and the role of a police officer in resolving problems within the community. Be prepared to discuss integrity and ethical issues as they relate to law enforcement. You should be able to give examples of traits and characteristics you possess that fit into the role of a modern day law enforcement officer.

7. It is not necessary that you have law enforcement experience to be hired by our department. However, we want to be assured that you have thoroughly considered what the career entails. Investigate the position, and read the recruitment literature to familiarize yourself with the duties of a Police Officer, visit our website - www.cityofsalemnet , talk with police officers, consider doing a Ride-Along or a tour of the Police Department. Convince the panel that this is not a rush decision for you. Prepare yourself for the job.

8. When the panel tells you the interview is over and asks you if there is anything you would like to ask or add, never say "No". This is your last chance to let them know why you are the best candidate for the position. Use it! Let them know why you should be chosen to continue in the process. Do not simply repeat information you have already given in the interview. This is the time to bring up additional information that would be
relevant to your qualifications. To let this opportunity pass is like saying, "I do not care enough about the job to spend ten seconds "selling myself."

9. As you leave the interview, shake the raters' hands again. Thank them for their time. Leave the panel with a positive attitude about you and your abilities.

QUALITIES THE SALEM POLICE DEPARTMENT IS SEEKING IN CANDIDATES

- Integrity
- Honesty
- Dependability/Stability
- Maturity
- Ability to function within a strict set of rules & regulations
- Ability to work without constant supervision
- Self Control
- Good Judgment
- Ability to communicate in a clear, understandable manner
- Common Sense
- Self-confidence
- Compassion
- Assertiveness
- Motivation
- Enthusiasm
- Self-initiative
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Facilitator
- Ability to form a good impression

"Team Player"
Mastering the Interview

By Sean Bosker

The job interview is your proving ground, the place where you must demonstrate why you are the best person for the job. Making that powerful statement that you're the best of all the candidates requires the three Ps: Preparation, Presentation and Perception.

PREPARE PREPARE PREPARE

When you walk into an interview, the more prepared you are, the better the chances are that you'll succeed. Memorize everything you put on your resume and cover letter and be prepared to explain each item. But you should also be ready to talk about more than just yourself. Get to know your future employer.

Warren Davis, the Director of Recruiting and Employment for RadioShack, emphasizes this point. "Your resume and application are fair game. Candidates should study themselves and the company with whom they're interviewing."

Read industry trade magazines, visit the company web site, and do a company search on Yahoo! Finance to find current news about your prospective employer. Be prepared to demonstrate what you know about the company and the industry.

Michele Stagg, the Director of Human Resources at Banana Republic, says she is consistently impressed when candidates work their skills into the context of company news. "The more an informed candidate can tie past experience to the requirements of the job they are interviewing for, particularly in terms of what the company is doing, the better."

Another important part of preparation is making sure you look the part. Choosing what you wear is so important that it deserves its own article - Interview in Style.

PRESENTATION IS PARAMOUNT

Keep in mind that you are marketing yourself to everyone you meet. The more people you leave with a good impression, the better your chances are of being remembered. Project yourself as someone who is thoughtful, helpful, and prepared.

Effective presentation includes being in the right place, at the right time. If you're late for the interview, you could inadvertently tell your interviewer that you're not right for the job.

With 35 years of experience in HR, Peter Ackerson, Specialist Leader at Deloitte Consulting, has been directly involved in hiring hundreds of candidates. When it
comes to job interviews, he's seen it all. "There's nothing worse than getting a call from someone who is hung up in traffic or went to the wrong office," he explains.

Once you arrive, introduce yourself to the receptionist and turn off that cell phone. "Having a phone go off during an interview is a real turn off," says Ackerson.

According to psychologist Albert Mehrabian, more than half of our communication is nonverbal or body language. Stagg agrees. "Body language is exceptionally important. Positive, upright and open body language shows self confidence and interest." During introductions give a firm handshake and then take a seat facing the interviewer.

When you go over your resume focus on your accomplishments instead of reiterating job descriptions. Presenting yourself as an active problem solver will show an employer that you can contribute and succeed in the role. Stagg agrees that this technique can make a fantastic impact. "Give very specific examples of your qualifications. If you have qualifications in financial analysis, give examples of projects you worked on where your analysis was necessary. Describe your experiences that tie in to your skills or qualifications. Even better, tell me how those will help you meet the requirements of the role you might fill in our company."

PERCEPTION IS KEY

The best way to know if your interviewer is getting what he needs is to ask questions. Susan Vobejda, the VP of Marketing at HotJobs elaborates, "When your interviewer asks you a complicated question, don't launch into your answer straightaway. Make certain you understand what is being asked." A clarifying question, or restating the question in your own words saves you from wasting your interviewer's time, and demonstrates that you are a careful listener. Asking the right questions can also demonstrate your ability to think strategically, and help you decide if the position is right for you. To that end, Stagg suggests ending the interview with this question: "What are you looking for in a candidate to fill this role?" If the answer turns out to be something that doesn't match your expectations, then you need to speak up.

Many candidates are so intimidated by the interview, they forget that the interviewer has a stake in seeing the candidate succeed. Peter Ackerson describes his attitude going into an interview as one of "hopeful skepticism." They don't want you to fail; they want you to show them why you will succeed with their company. The sooner they hire you, the sooner the search can end.
How to Deal With Interview Stress

By Caroline Levchuck

To many job seekers, "stress" is synonymous with "job interview."

Job seekers stress over landing an interview. Then they stress over preparing for it. And then they stress over what to wear, what to say, if the interviewer will like them and more.

But the worst stress of all often occurs during the interview. This is the stress that can cause you to blow it. It can make you freeze, panic, chatter aimlessly, lose your train of thought or perspire profusely.

So how can job seekers keep cool when it counts? Relax. A few simple techniques can help calm frayed nerves and soothe interview jitters.

Early Warning

Timing is everything: Don't cause yourself undue stress before a big interview.

Arrive about 10 minutes before the interview is scheduled to begin.

If you arrive too early, you'll sit and wait and worry. And if you arrive too late, you may find yourself racing in the door, your heart already pounding from a last-minute dash.

A ten-minute, pre-interview break will give you an opportunity to catch your breath and acclimate to your surroundings. It's enough time, but not too much time.

Picture This

You can make your dream a reality. Use your imagination to stay calm during a job interview.

Visualization is a relaxation technique in which you create a mental image of a stressful or challenging situation. Then you imagine yourself succeeding in the situation. By doing so, you're mentally preparing to handle the event in real life.

You can practice visualization in the days, hours or even minutes before an interview. Simply close your eyes and breathe deeply. Picture yourself greeting the interviewer confidently and answering tough questions with ease.
Practice succeeding in your imagination, and soon you'll be doing it in reality.

Relax

A relaxed job candidate is a confident job candidate.

Show the interviewer that you're calm, composed and in command during an interview. He's likely to assume that you'll be rock-solid on the job too.

Use these tips to stay relaxed during an interview:

- Breathing deeply and slowly (and quietly, of course).
- Sit up straight and don't cross your legs or arms.
- Speak slowly and pause for breath often.
- Keeps your hands and jaw relaxed; no clenching.
- Smile -- it really is contagious!

Pause, Don't Panic

In every interview, there comes a moment that doesn't go according to plan. There's an awkward silence. You stumble over your words. You flub a tough question.

Don't panic. Now's the time to put your relaxation skills into overdrive.

It's much easier to control fear and panic as it starts to build than to calm yourself down once they've begun to spiral out of control.

When you feel yourself starting to panic and lose focus, pause. Tell yourself silently that you can do this. Take a deep breath. Refocus. And then resume interviewing.

A quick ten-second pause can be all you need to regain your composure and get back in control. And the interviewer likely won't even notice.
Minor Matters That Make Your Interview

By Erin Hovanec

Preparing for an interview can be stressful -- and time-consuming. You can spend days researching a company, brainstorming answers to "trick" questions and preparing your portfolio.

With so much to do, it's easy to forget the practical details that can distinguish a successful interview from a tragic one.

This article focuses on the minor matters that job seekers often overlook before they sit down in the interview hot seat.

Getting Your Interview Gear Ready

Lay out your clothing in advance. You don't want to be frantically searching for a missing sock or clean shirt on the day of the interview.

Make sure your outfit is clean and neatly pressed and take care of other time-consuming chores (polishing your shoes, trimming your nails) the day before the interview if possible.

Also, gather all the other important materials you'll need for the interview in one place, where you will be sure not to forget them. You might include copies of your resume, references and directions.

Just Call Me "Dragon Breath"

Your parents were right: You don't do as well on an empty stomach.

Make sure you eat before the interview. You don't need to have a huge meal. In fact, a heavy meal or one loaded with carbs can make you feel sluggish and lethargic. But a light meal or snack will ensure that your stomach doesn't start rumbling loudly just as you're about to discuss your most brilliant accomplishment.

If your interview isn't until later in the day, steer clear of stinky bards, such as onions and garlic.

Whatever you plan to eat before the interview should be followed by some mouthwash and a good brushing.
Have Interview, Will Travel

The day of the big interview is not the time to try out a new shortcut or investigate an unfamiliar area.

Make sure you know how to get to your interview in advance. Make a practice run the day before if necessary.

Also, find out exactly where you'll need to go when you arrive at the company.

If you're lucky, you'll walk through the front door and find the receptionist waiting. If you're not so lucky, you'll need to find your way to Lot 8, Building 9, Floor 10, Suite D, Room 125 -- so be sure you know how to get there.

Eyes and Ears Are Everywhere

When it comes to interviewing, a little paranoia can be a good thing.

Your interview starts in the parking lot, so be conscious of your surroundings. Any onlooker could be one of your interviewers. Act accordingly.

Be courteous and professional to everyone you meet, from the security guard to the receptionist. If you make small talk with strangers, be positive and pleasant. This isn't the time to complain about the "funny smell in the lobby" or a long wait for an elevator.

Lastly, turn off your cell phone.
Six Common Job-Interview Questions

Try These Sample Questions to Help Get Ready

By Tom Musbach

One of the easiest ways to build confidence before a job interview is to prepare answers to questions you might be asked. Whether you're applying for a position as a web programmer, accountant, or legal secretary, interviewers often use some general questions to assess candidates, so you'll increase your chances for success if you prepare for them in advance.

Six common questions are listed below, along with insights from several recruitment professionals about how to answer. As part of your interview preparation, take the time to formulate answers to each question, focusing on specific tasks and accomplishments.

"What are your strengths and weaknesses?"

This is one of the most well-known interview questions, and interviewers often ask it indirectly, as in, "What did your most recent boss suggest as areas for improvement in your last performance review?"

Lindsay Olson, founder of Paradigm Staffing Solutions, a firm specializing in hiring public relations professionals, suggests tailoring your "strengths" answer to skills that will benefit the prospective employer. Though you may have a knack for building gingerbread houses, it might be of little value for the job at hand.

When it comes to weaknesses, or areas of growth, Olson recommends building on your answer to include "how you have improved, and specifics on what you have done to improve yourself in those areas."

"Why did you leave your last position?"

"Interviewers will always want to know your reasoning behind leaving a company, particularly short stints," says Olson. "Be prepared to tell the truth, without speaking negatively about past employment."

"Can you describe a previous work situation in which you ... ?"

This question comes in many forms, but what the interviewer is looking for is your behavior on the job. Your answer could focus on resolving a crisis, overcoming a negotiation deadlock, handling a problem coworker, or juggling multiple tasks on a project.

The theory behind this type of question is that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior, according to Yves Lermusi, CEO of Checkster, a company
that offers career and talent checkup tools. "The key to responding well is preparing real job examples, describing your behavior in specific situations that demonstrate important skills that the job requires."

"What is your ideal work environment?"

This question is not about whether you prefer a cubicle or an office, so think broadly to include ideas about supervision, management styles, and your workday routine.

Bob Hancock, senior recruiter for video game publisher Electronic Arts, says that he uses this question with candidates because it can give "a sense of their work habits, how flexible they are with their schedules, and how creative they are."

"How do you handle mistakes?"

The best strategy for this general question is to focus on one or two specific examples in the past and, if possible, highlight resolutions or actions that might have relevance to the job you're interviewing for.

"Employers want to know they're hiring someone with the maturity to accept responsibility and the wherewithal to remedy their own mistakes," says Debra Davenport, a master professional mentor and columnist for the Business Journal in Phoenix.

"What is your most notable accomplishment?"

Paradigm Staffing's Olson suggests that candidates think of three or four accomplishments and quantify what their actions meant in terms of increasing revenues, saving resources, or improving resources.

"Being able to quantify your achievements in your career will launch you ahead of the rest," she says, "and demonstrate your ability to do the same as a future employee."
How to Answer the Toughest Interview Questions
By Caroline Levchuck

You know they're coming: Those seemingly unanswerable questions that pop up during job interviews.

You can't clam up. And you don't want to stutter and stammer. So what's a job seeker to do?

The 'Future' Question

Otherwise known as the "big picture" question, the future question goes something like this: "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

The best tactic: Talk about your values.

Don't get too detailed about your specific career plan. Instead, discuss things that are important to you professionally and how you plan to achieve them. If growth is a goal, mention that. You can also talk about challenge, another value that employers prize in their employees.

The 'Salary' Question

Most people will tell you that whoever answers this question first loses. But that's not necessarily true.

When an interviewer asks your salary requirement, try first to gently deflect the question by inquiring about the salary for the position.

If the interviewer presses you for a number, give a range. To decide on a range, think about the salary you want, your salary at your most recent position and the industry-standard salary for the job.

The bottom line: The salary question is one of the most important, so you should prepare for it in advance and plan what to say.

The 'Why' Question

There's a fine line between boastful and confident. And you need to learn it.
When an interviewer asks you why they should hire you, you're going to have speak confidently and honestly about your abilities. But you should avoid sounding overly boastful.

Aim for earnest and prepare by practicing. That's right: Stand in front of the mirror and acknowledge your abilities and accomplishments to your reflection. Tell yourself: I have a very strong work ethic. I have integrity. I have excellent industry contacts. I aggressively pursue my goals.

It's sometimes hard to praise yourself, but after a few sessions you'll sound sincere.

**The Seemingly Silly Question**

If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be? What if you were a car? Or an animal?

These type of questions can bring your interview to a screeching halt.

First, don't panic. Pause and take a deep breath. Then remind yourself that there's no "right" answer to these questions. The job isn't hinging on whether you choose to be a spruce versus an oak.

Interviewers usually ask these questions to see how you react under pressure and how well you handle the unexpected. It's not so important what type of tree (or car, or animal) you choose as that you explain your choice in a way that makes you look favorable.

So, be a spruce -- because you want to reach new heights in your career. Or be an oak -- because you plan to put down roots at the company. Either way, you'll get it right.