Interview Etiquette

Guidelines – Before the Interview

1. Research, research, research
   - **Self Assessment – Know yourself!**
     - Skills, talents, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, interests, education, values, goals
     - Know your resume inside and out; have your stories ready
     - Career goals – What do I want to do?
     - Types of work you enjoy and types you do not enjoy
     - Use the internet and research the organization’s webpage
     - Work environment or conditions in which you are comfortable and those in which you are not comfortable.
   - **Employer Research**
     - Use research tools at the library – business directories, annual reports, databases of newspaper and periodical articles
     - Ask those in your network who may be familiar with the company
     - Talk with current or former employees

2. Practice makes perfect
   - Familiarize yourself with common questions
   - Be prepared to give examples of your personal characteristics, accomplishments, failures, reactions under stress or difficult circumstances
   - Practice with friends and family. Also practice in front of a mirror.

3. Prepare employer questions

4. Choose professional attire

5. Call to confirm your appointment one (working) day in advance

6. Review directions & parking

7. Prepare copies of your resume and reference page (minimum of 3)

Guidelines – During the Interview

1. Beginning of Interview
   - Allow plenty of time to arrive five minutes early
   - Make sure that all cell phones and pagers are turned off
   - Bring something career-related to read while you wait
   - Bring extra resumes and reference pages
   - Bring pen, professional notepad or portfolio (with questions for employer)
   - Always be courteous, polite, and professional to everyone
   - Introduce yourself with a smile, eye contact, and a firm handshake
   - Use your interviewer’s name
   - Interviewer may begin with small talk; work to find something in common
2. **Middle of Interview**
   - Maintain good posture and eye contact; avoid fidgeting
   - Listen! (and give visual and verbal cues; use positive body language to show your interest)
   - Project your voice and speak clearly
   - Use correct grammar and diction (do not use slang)
   - Use your action verbs
   - Don’t “think,” “guess,” or “feel” about things (indecisiveness signals lack of confidence)
   - Give clear, concise answers that offer **specific examples** (do not ramble and do not give one word answers)
   - Sell yourself; be confident and enthusiastic
   - Do not dominate the interview; follow the interviewer’s lead
   - Remain positive (negativity will leave a negative impression; do not whine, complain, gripe, or bad mouth)
   - Be honest (do not lie or exaggerate)
   - It’s okay to pause and regroup if you are feeling flustered

3. **End of Interview**
   - Ask (3 – 5) insightful questions at the appropriate time
   - Phrase your questions so that you sound confident
     (“What would my duties be?” instead of “What are the job duties?”)
   - Find out what happens next and reaffirm your interest
   - Thank the interviewer for her/his time
   - Ask for the interviewer’s business card (if you do not have contact information for your thank you letter)

**Guidelines – After the Interview**

1. Write & carefully proofread a thank you letter
   - Type and print on quality resume paper
   - Send by mail (and email if you have the address) immediately following the interview
   - Address to the individual who interviewed you
   - If you have multiple interviewers, you should a thank you letter to each of them
   - Express appreciation for opportunity
   - Reaffirm things you liked &/or ways you’ll meet their needs
   - Add important things that you forgot
   - Thank them and decline if you don’t want the job
   - If you want the job more than ever, show enthusiasm

2. Make follow-up call when appropriate
3. Record or log notes on interview including name of interviewer(s) and your analysis of the experience (what went well, what you could improve upon)