



Lancaster General
College of Nursing
& Health Sciences

Interviewing: Hiring the Best Candidates for Your Team



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January 30, 2009

Interviewing: A Mixed Bag of Good and Evil!

Reliability and Validity Issues in Applicant Selection Process

1. Validity increases with a team approach.
2. Negative information tends to be weighed more heavily than positive information.
3. The same standards should be used for all applicants.
4. Selection should be based on established criteria, not value judgments.
5. Personal bias should be minimized, because the negative feelings likely have no relation to the criteria necessary for success in the position.

Limitations of the Interview

1. Subjectivity
2. High interview rating \neq high job performance
3. Mixed reliability and validity
4. Negative information more impact than positive information
5. Earlier in interview, the greater the negative effect.
6. Most decisions made in first 30 to 60 seconds.
7. Unstructured interviews = interviewer does 80% - 90% of talking.
8. Structured interviews = interviewer only does 50% - 60% of talking.
9. Difficult for many interviewees to relax and be natural
10. Poor communication skills of interviewer.
11. Physical appearance of interviewee.
12. Interviewers ask questions that demonstrate a self-fulfilling prophecy regarding their first impression of the applicant.

Overcoming Limitations of the Interview

1. Team approach.
2. Structured interview format for each job classification.
3. Scenarios to determine decision-making ability.
4. Multiple interviews.
5. Training in effective interviewing techniques.

Illegal Questions in an Interview

1. Age
2. Marital status
3. Children
4. Race
5. Sexual preference
6. Financial or credit status
7. National origin
8. Religion

Questions to Ask the Applicant During the Employment Interview

1. Tell me about yourself.
(Prepare a 2 minute summation of qualifications and positive qualities. This should not be your life history or long-range plans for self-improvement. Give examples.)
2. What do you know about this institution?
3. Why do you think you might like to work for this institution?
4. Why should we hire you over the other candidates for the job?
5. What are your major strengths and weaknesses?
(Remember, nobody is perfect. You might want to use this opportunity to show how you've corrected a weakness. Your honesty will be appreciated!)
6. What are your plans for the future?
(Address concerns that you aren't going to leave for better pastures after your orientation; you can state that you plan to continue your education part-time in the future.)
7. What clinical areas are you interested in and why?
8. Describe your clinical experience...what were the high points?...what were the problems?
9. What lessons did you learn from your clinical experience?
10. What courses did you like the best? Least? Why? What clinical rotations did you like the best? Least? Why?
11. What are your future career plans? Where do you expect to be in two years? In five years?
12. Do you have plans for getting an advanced degree?
13. Describe how you handled a difficult situation with a patient....with a co-worker or peer? ...with a supervisor?
14. Why did you choose your particular field of work?
15. Do you feel that you have received a good general education? Why? What aspects of (nursing, ultrasonography, radiography, surgical technology, etc.) were stressed in your program?
16. What qualifications do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in this position?
17. What do you think determines an employee's progress in a good health care setting?
18. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your chosen field?
19. What jobs have you enjoyed the most? The least? Why?
20. What is your idea of how our health care system operates (should operate) today?
21. What are the disadvantages of your chosen field?
22. What have you done which shows initiative and willingness to work?
23. What specifically have you done while in college that has enhanced your leadership qualities?
24. What other work experiences have you had? What skills did you acquire in those experiences that would be useful here?
25. If you have not yet taken your licensing or registration examination, how are you preparing for it? How do you think you will do?

Job Interview Tips for the Applicant

1. Preliminary Steps

- ◆ Did you call or make the appointment in person?
- ◆ If you haven't filled out an application, go prepared to fill out application on the spot
- ◆ When you receive an appointment for an interview, make sure you know who is going to interview you (Personnel Director, Department manager, supervisor, etc.; it influences your approach to the interview.)
- ◆ Find out what kind of interviewing style he/she has if possible
- ◆ What are the interviewer's key concerns?
- ◆ Be informed about the organization
 - Ask people about the organization in advance
 - Know the mission and goals and core values of the institution
 - Find out about the mode of patient care delivery, leadership or management style used and the structure of the department in which you want to work.
 - Find out about the organization's hottest issues, such as patient population, growth plans, cross-training, customer service or quality initiatives, etc.
 - You will need to show employer how well you fit into the scheme of things.
- ◆ Read and think about all the information that was sent or given to you before the meeting.
- ◆ Take your personal inventory
 - Write down your strengths and weaknesses
 - Identify your best attributes (well-rounded, always give 110%, integrity)
 - Have examples for your attributes
- ◆ Prepare a list of questions about information you would like - better not to ask about salary; wait to be given this information; if you are not given salary information, ask about it at the end of interview but DO ASK!
 - Hours, shift, positions available, usual staff- patient ratio or number of procedures or patients per shift.
 - Benefits (many times a printed sheet - see job worksheet!)
- ◆ Role play with a friend or teacher

2. Prepare reference information to take with you

- ◆ Names, including titles
- ◆ Addresses, phone numbers
- ◆ Permission of individuals
- ◆ References should be people who can attest to your knowledge, abilities and skills as a professional (not family doctor, neighbor, good friend - but teachers, employers, counselors!)

3. The Interview

- ◆ Be on time - allow plenty of travel time; if emergency call ASAP (have a cell phone with

- you if at all possible and have a contact phone number to call); know where you are going
- ◆ Look purposeful while waiting to be interviewed (review your resume or prepared questions.
- ◆ Don't forget to take your portfolio with you that contains three copies of your resume and a neatly typed list of references. Be sure to give the interviewer a copy. Don't assume he/she has one.
- ◆ Appearance
 - Be neat, clean, well groomed
 - Don't chew gum or smoke
 - Wear suit and tie (men) or suit/dress (women)
 - Suit is better in this part of country because of conservative climate; makes the best impression
 - Cut down on make-up
 - Eliminate perfume or cologne
 - Wear simple jewelry (men: remove earrings)
 - Cover any tattoos
 - Stand up straight...have good, confident posture
- ◆ Introduce yourself with a smile and a firm handshake
- ◆ Scan the interviewer's office for something you can comment on, such as a picture or the view. Good ice breaker and puts you both at ease. Or...talk about the weather or other pleasant topic.
- ◆ Keep direct eye contact with interviewer
- ◆ Represent yourself in a positive, confident manner
- ◆ Many things that impress others + or - , will be things you are unaware of
- ◆ Recall the names of at least some people you met or had been in contact with previously
- ◆ Be prepared to talk about your background and position desired
- ◆ Stress that you can help the institution with goals and objectives based on your education or experience (e.g. instituting the quality process or serving on a particular committee; working with certain equipment)

4. Concluding the Interview:

- ◆ Thank individuals for their time and consideration
- ◆ Compliment the organization.
- ◆ Give a brief summation of your abilities
- ◆ Reassuring interviewer of your interest in job (you can always turn it down later).
- ◆ Leave on a positive and assertive note
- ◆ Inquire about follow-up communication (who should you hear from, when should you hear, how will you hear)

5. Interview Follow-up

- ◆ Follow-Up Letter
 - Thank individuals for their time and consideration
 - Communicate in writing...personal hand-written note or typed letter, not email.
 - Indicate again your desire for employment there
 - Reiterate time you should be hearing from them ("I will look forward to hearing from you by...")
 - Keep copy of all correspondence for yourself

- If you don't here from employer, you make the follow-up contact!
- ◆ Don't Close Doors
 - Don't limit yourself to one position (e.g. 11-7 in CCUM)
 - You will be working 3-11 or 11-7, with rare exceptions or other shift patterns that may not be your first choice.
 - There may not be openings in your first choice (have three choices at least)
 - People who are getting hired are those who indicate they can or are willing to work in many areas or different schedules—flexible.
 - If you refuse the position, follow-up with written letter, stating that circumstances are leading your career in another direction, BUT you appreciate the time spent with you and the courtesies extended to you. (You never know when you may have to come back to this employer as your career progresses).

6. For Now..

- ◆ Keep absenteeism down - potential employers usually ask about your attendance record.
- ◆ Make valuable contacts with staff, managers and community organizations.
- ◆ Be active and involved in school and community; volunteer for committees, community projects; serve as class officer
- ◆ Do your best clinically and academically; the best jobs go to the best people!

Questions for the Applicant to Ask During an Employment Interview

Tips

1. Always prepare questions to ask. Having no questions prepared sends the message that you have no independent thought process.
2. Some of your questions may be answered during the course of the interview, before you are offered the opportunity to ask. If so, you can simply state something to the effect that you were interested in knowing about ..., but that was addressed during the interview. You could ask for additional clarification if applicable.
3. Do not ask questions that are clearly answered on the employer's web site and/or in any literature provided by the employer to you in advance. This would simply reveal that you did not prepare for the interview, and you are wasting the employer's time by asking these questions.
4. Never ask about salary and benefits issues until those subjects are raised by the employer.

Samples

If you are having trouble developing questions, consider the following samples as food for thought. However, don't ask a question if you are not truly interested in the answer; it will be obvious to the employer.

2. What would be my duties and responsibilities?
3. Where does this position fit into the organization?
4. Is this a new position?
5. What kind of person are you looking for?
6. What are some of the skills and abilities necessary for someone to succeed in this job?
7. How will my responsibilities and performance be measured? By whom?
8. When was the last person promoted?
9. How much guidance or assistance is made available to individuals in developing career goals?
10. What is the best experience and background for this position? Please tell me your ideal candidate.
11. To whom would I report?
12. What are your expectations for the chosen candidate?
13. May I talk with present and previous employees about this job and organization?
14. What problems might I expect to encounter on this job (efficiency, quality control, declining profits, temporary nurses)?
15. What has been done recently in regards to .
16. How are raises and promotions normally determined?
17. How do you measure and reward performance?
18. What does the future look like for this hospital?
19. What are the company's strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition?
20. How important does upper management consider the function of this department/position?
21. What is the organization's plan for the next five years, and how does this department

fit in?

22. Could you explain your organizational structure?
23. Could you describe your management style and the type of employee who fits well with it?
24. What is the hospital's policy on providing seminars, workshops, and training so employees can keep up their skills or acquire new ones?
25. What particular computer equipment and software (technology) do you use?

Creating the Portfolio

Definition

The portfolio is the complete compilation of all records pertaining to your healthcare career. It contains valuable documents that you may need to:

1. supply proof of courses completed, licensure, registration and malpractice insurance to a potential employer.
2. provide continuing education information to show professional development
3. provide evidence of your accomplishments and qualifications when you are seeking a new or advanced position.

What is in a Portfolio?

Credentialing

1. Copies of your current resume or curriculum vitae (education)
2. Professional credentials
 - a. Licenses, registration certificates
 - b. State board or registration examination scores

Scholarship

1. Publications
 - a. Citations
 - b. Abstract and copy of articles
 - c. Letters of critique
2. Student projects (teaching pamphlet, care plan, protocol, poster or model (picture of project))
3. Student scholarly papers (care study, issues paper, ethical analysis)
4. Awards, Honors, Academic Scholarships
 - a. award letters
 - b. certificates
 - c. newspaper clippings

Professional Development

1. Certifications
 - a. Description, requirements, expiration date
 - b. Certificate/letter
 - c. Recertification requirements and supporting data
2. Exemplars
 - a. Anecdotal writing that documents your practice
 - b. Focuses on your decision-making, critical-thinking, patient-advocacy, communication skills, etc.
 - c. Demonstrates professional growth (novice to expert)
3. Professional Organizations
 - a. Membership (Name of organization, dates of membership)
 - b. Activities (committees, officer duties, newsletter, etc)

Service

1. Service to School
 - a. Student organizations (role, activities)
 - b. School or program committee participation
 - c. Recruitment activities
2. Volunteer and community activities
 - a. Organization and description
 - b. Functions, achievements and offices held

Professional Records

1. Malpractice Insurance
 - a. Policies
 - b. Claims
2. Medical records (optional)
 - a. Immunization and titers
 - b. Include dates and types
 - c. Examples: TB, Hepatitis B, Tetanus, Rubella

General Guidelines

Purchase a folder, box or notebook; (accordion-type works best) to collect documents

Use a white binder with clear sheet protectors for your portfolio

- a. Create an attractive, professional cover that includes your name and profession
- b. Use an index and tabbed sections to organize the documents
- c. Sheet protectors will keep your documents clean, neat and intact and will enable you to keep multiple copies of documents in your portfolio (resume, cover letter)

Make photocopies of your original professional records and store them in a safe-deposit box or safe.

Start now to create your portfolio and take it with you when you go for your interviews.

Update your portfolio as you collect additional documents.

Put your portfolio in a safe place where you can easily find it.



"He came in for an interview 3 hours ago, and I made the mistake of telling him to make himself comfortable."



"I looked over your resume and the good news is I like the paper it was typed on. Do you really want to know the bad news?"



"I'm looking for a workaholic who feels the great job he does is compensation enough."



"I think I'm right for this job because I'm a real people person. Now, are you going to hire me or not? I don't have all freakin' day!"