

I LOVE IT WHEN
I CAN SERVE
THE LORD AND
NETWORK AT
THE SAME TIME!



The Spiritual Component of Work

I believe very strongly that one of the main reasons that each of us come to this earth is to discover our talents and skills and then to figure out how to put those to their highest and best use to benefit as many people as possible. If we believe that our Heavenly Father loves us and wants us to be happy, why would He NOT want us to have jobs that contribute to that?

My personal philosophy regarding my own career is best stated by a passage from *Proverbs*:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths. Commit thy works unto the Lord, thy thoughts shall be established.”

Because I believe this so strongly, I have never really worried about my own job search process. I believe that whenever an opportunity comes up, I'll know what to do and say when I need to and that, if it doesn't work out, even though I might be a little disappointed, I've always had faith that whatever happened regarding my career was in my best interest.

Early in my career, I was interviewing for my second job out of college. I was by far the youngest candidate of the pool and I was scared stiff to go into this big boardroom with sixteen executives sitting around the table, even though I knew I was qualified for the job.

Sensing my panic, an older and much wiser friend, told me that, in his early years, when world-famous insurance executive and motivational speaker Napoleon Hill had to give a speech, he got so nervous that he would become physically ill. At the time, a friend of *his* asked him, “Do you believe that the people you are speaking to have come because they think you have something important to say to them?”

Hill answered, “I suppose so.”

The friend continued, “And, do you believe that you do, in fact, having something important to say to them?”

Hill responded that he had worked very hard on his presentation and truly believed that people's lives would be better if they applied the advice he was about to share.

Finally, the friend asked, “Do you believe that, if we ask Him, God will help us through the times we feel we can't make it alone?”

Hill emphatically agreed that he did indeed.

“Well, then,” said the friend, taking a nickel from his pocket, “take this nickel and put it in your shoe. Every time you feel your foot pressing against it, let it be a reminder to you that these people need to hear what you have to say to them and that what you have prepared to say could make all the difference in their lives...and, remember-on the nickel, it says, 'In God We Trust.' He will be with you to help you when you need it.”

Finishing the story, my friend dug a nickel from his pocket and said, “Here—put this in your shoe and remember that *you* have something uniquely important to offer, and that God will be with you.” And, you know what? He was.

I want each of you to set aside a special nickel for this reason. Every time you have an interview, I want you to put in your shoe as a reminder that *you* have something uniquely important to offer *any* company that hires you and that, with the education you are receiving here, coupled with the Gospel, you have all the tools you need to succeed in whatever career it is that you choose. ●

Ten Things to Do Before an Interview

So you got the call—they want you to come in for an interview. Yes! This is your chance to grab the job. But if you're stressed, you won't impress. Here's a checklist of ten things to do before you arrive at your job interview. A few days before the interview, you should:

Research the company. Look online to get a feel for who they are and how they operate. Interviewers won't like it if you ask "So, what does your company do?"

Anticipate your interviewer's questions. Interviewers love to keep you on your toes by asking you tough questions. Some of the simplest ones are the hardest, like "What's your greatest weakness?" Come prepared with answers. (Hint: they don't really want to know that your greatest weakness is leaving dirty dishes in the sink. The ideal answer will include a solution, like: "I can be disorganized at times, which is why I write down all my important tasks.")

Think of your own questions. Interviewers always, always ask "So, what questions do you have for me?" Saying nothing looks bad. Think of at least one smart question to ask, even something as simple as "What's an average day like in this job?"

Practice with a friend. It may feel silly to sit on the couch with a buddy and talk about your career aspirations. But doing a mock interview can help relax you — because now, you know what to expect.

Have everything you need. Directions to the place, a printed copy of your application or resume, phone numbers of references, a shirt without ketchup stains. Got all that? Then you're good to go.

On the day of the interview, you should:

Show up. Never, never be a "no-show." That's just disrespectful. If you are unable to make an interview or if you're no longer interested in the position, make sure you give advance notice to the interviewer so that he or she has time to change plans.

Dress to impress...but don't try too hard. Leave the powder blue tuxedo in the closet unless you're applying to be a wedding singer. Smell nice. Not strong. Don't apply heavy perfume or cologne right before the interview. A breath mint is good insurance. Gum, not so much—or at least get rid of it before you walk into the office.

Arrive 15 minutes early. Better to be way early than even a few minutes late. If you can't make it to the interview on time, managers will assume you'll be cruising into work 15 minutes late every day.

Relax. You're a champ! You're qualified. You're responsible. You need to believe that they're going to be lucky to have you. You're gonna do fine. ●

Traditional Employment Interview Questions

Here is a list of sample interview questions job-seekers can expect, especially at first, more traditional interviews. It's best to be prepared with answers to these questions ahead of time, so you don't get caught off guard and say something that is not completely true or irrelevant. There is no need to memorize your answers. In other words, be prepared for these questions and have an outline or script ready, but don't worry about remembering your answers word-for-word.

Traditional General Interview Questions

- What can you tell us about our company?
- What interests you about our products?
- What do you know about our competitors?
- What attracts you to a career with us?
- How do you see your studies, skills, experience and personal qualities contributing to the work of the organization?
- Why did you apply for this position?
- How do you think that you might fit into this company?
- How would you describe yourself?

Personal Knowledge & Experiences

- You have demonstrated in your resume that you have knowledge of _____. Could you please expand on this and tell us what you think your strengths are in this area?
- What particular skills and qualities do you bring to the workforce? What other skills would you like to develop in the future?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you determine or evaluate success? Can you provide an example?
- What motivates you to go the extra mile on a project or job?
- What's more important to you --the work itself or how much you're paid for doing it?
- What's one of the hardest decisions you've ever had to make?
- What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
- What have you accomplished that shows your initiative and willingness to work?
- Why should we hire you?
- Is there an achievement of which you are particularly proud? What is it? Why is it significant?
- Are you willing to travel for the job? Are you willing to relocate?

Focus on Team Skills

- How well do you work with people?
- Do you prefer working alone or in teams?

- Can you describe a time where you have been required to perform as part of a team? What was the situation? What part did you play in the team and what was the outcome of the exercise? The ability to work independently within a structured team is essential to the position.
- This will require the successful applicant to be self-starting, able to prioritize tasks, be a good communicator, as well as showing considerable initiative. Can you give us some examples where you have worked within a team environment and demonstrated these abilities?

Problem Solving Skills/Conflict Resolution

- How would you describe your ability to deal with conflict?
- Have you ever had difficulty with a supervisor or professor? How did you resolve the conflict?
- Describe a time when you had to deal with challenging demands. How did you deal with this situation and what was the outcome?

Leadership Skills

- Do you consider yourself a leader?
- What are the attributes of a good leader?

Career Interests/Future Goals

- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- Why did you choose this career field?
- What are your long range career objectives?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
- Where do you expect to be in 5 years time?
- What will you do if you are not successful in gaining this position? Tip: Demonstrate to the interviewer that you have thought about what it is you want from work and what you hope to achieve. Let them know you are flexible however, and willing to explore new opportunities.
- Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
- What are your long range and short range goals and objectives? ●

Best Questions to Ask in a Job Interview

An interview is meant to be a two-way street. The hiring manager is interviewing you to determine whether you're the best fit for the job. At the same time, you should be asking questions to determine whether you would be happy in the position or with the company.

But once nerves take over, it's easy to forget your role. After all, you're meeting on the employer's schedule in an unfamiliar office. After listening to the interviewer's monologue about the company and role, you're asked a barrage of questions about your background and future plans all the while praying that you're delivering the "right" answers.

By the time the employer asks if you have any questions, it's easy to be so drained and nervous you can only stammer out, "Nope."

Not asking questions, however, is passing up a chance to stand out from the competition. Asking thoughtful questions is a great opportunity to set you apart in a positive way from other people being considered for the job. Employers say they are interested in candidates who ask quality questions and make intelligent conversation based on what they know about the organization.

Before the interview, prepare a list of questions that demonstrate your knowledge of the company and interest in the position. Some good topics to cover include:

The company

- What do you see ahead for your company in the next five years?
- How do you see the future for this industry?
- What do you consider to be your firm's most important assets?
- What can you tell me about your new product or plans for growth?
- How do you rate your competition?

The position's history

- Asking about why the position is vacant can provide insight into the company and the potential for advancement.
- What happened to the last person who held this job?
- What were the major strengths and weaknesses of the last person who held this job?
- What types of skills do you NOT already have onboard that you're looking to fill with a new hire?

The department/unit

Asking about your department's workers and role in the company can help you understand more about the company's culture and hierarchy.

- What is the overall structure of the company and how does your department fit the structure?
- What are the career paths in this department?
- What have been the department's successes in the last couple of years?
- How do you view your group/division/department?

The job's responsibilities

To avoid any confusion later on, it pays to gain a solid understanding of the position. Here are some questions that effectively address that:

- What would you consider to be the most important aspects of this job?
- What are the skills and attributes you value most for someone being hired for this position?
- Where have successful employees previously in this position progressed to within the company?
- Could you describe a typical day or week in this position? The typical client or customer I would be dealing with?

The expectations

- What are the most immediate challenges of the position that need to be addressed in the first three months?
- What are the performance expectations of this position over the first 12 months?
- How will I be evaluated at XYZ company, and how often?

The next steps

At the end of the interview, don't forget to ask:

- What are the next steps in the interview process? ●

Seven Deadly Sins of Interviewing

Most of you have heard of the Seven Deadly Sins. Here's a look at common (and some not-so-common) interview blunders, mistakes and gaffes.

Pride: An excessive love of self

You have years of experience, you've earned respect and accolades in your field, but any arrogance will come back to bite you. Remember that seemingly insignificant person you barked at this morning for snagging that prime parking space? Yep, that's the boss's assistant. Getting the brush off after what seemed to be a great interview? Right. It's that assistant again, this time with payback. Once you're within a mile of an interview, treat every person you come in contact with as though someday, they'll be your boss, or you'll be theirs. Take time to warmly greet the receptionist, thank the assistant for that glass of water, and put your best foot forward to anybody who conceivably could weigh in on your candidacy.

Sloth: Laziness, idleness and wastefulness

Winging it is never good, particularly in an interview. Be able to show knowledge of your potential employer, awareness of the industry, and the company's business strategy. The level of detail in your questions should match your experience. If you're an old industry hand, questions about how last year's reorganization is affecting the European subsidiary will seem smart and informed. If you're a newcomer, no need to over-prepare, but do have in mind intelligent questions that show you've thought about the industry – "who are your best / worst customers and why?" or "How does this trend impact your business?"

Greed: An excessive quest for money and power

You're interviewing because you want a higher salary, a company car, or three weeks of vacation. But don't start off by asking about a new set of wheels or taking August off. Set aside those questions for later ... much later. Remember, first you have to get the offer. Then, you can negotiate the terms. In the first interview rounds, you're being judged on your experience and abilities. If you make it clear you're mainly focused on money and perks, the interviewer's perception of your priorities will suffer. After you get the offer, you'll have a better idea of where you stand, and more power to negotiate since you already know the job is yours.

Gluttony: The desire to consume more than you need

Scarfig down that onion bagel before you inter-

view is a bad idea, but gluttony doesn't always center on food. A good interview depends on the rapport you build with the employer. The interviewer is trying to learn about your skills, talents, experiences, and most of all, your ability to succeed in the job. She's not trying to learn your whole life story. Spare her the details of the great Peterson account win of '05. Take a reasonable amount of time to answer questions. Be thoughtful and complete, but don't go on and on, or else your job search may do the same.

Wrath: Feelings of hatred, revenge or denial

Sure, your old boss was a disorganized, credit-hogging, incompetent jerk. That said, the person sitting across from you – who could be your next boss – identifies more with your past bosses than she does with you. She wants to see how you'll handle yourself in her organization. If you shoot down your old colleagues, won't she fear being the next person in your crosshairs? Instead of criticizing people from your past work experiences, find common ground with the interviewer by addressing issues common to all companies, like poor communication or ineffective meetings. Let her know how you've attacked these problems in the past, and what you can do to help now.

Lust: The desire to do what you want, not what you should

We're talking dress code here. Obviously, provocative clothing is out, and showing too much skin is a terrible idea, but there's more to it than that. Don't dress for your comfort, dress for the situation. Always wear a suit to an interview, even if the dress code is business casual. You might stick out like a sore thumb while you're in the lobby, but you'll never lose points for being dressed professionally.

Envy: The desire for what you don't have now

Maybe you secretly wish to chuck it all and cruise around the Caymans, or take your U2 cover band on the road. Now's not the time to bring it up. Although discussing your personal interests or passions may humanize you, expressing too much enthusiasm for your outside interests could dash your chances. When a potential employer asks where you see yourself in five years, mention a loftier, more responsible position in the industry or profession. If it's clear you *really* want to do something else, it's tough for an interviewer to believe that you'll bring all your capabilities and focus to the demands of the job. ●

True Interview Faux Pas from the Field

Stated that, if he were hired, he would demonstrate his loyalty by having the corporate logo tattooed on his forearm.”

“A telephone call came in for the job applicant. It was from his wife. His side of the conversation went like this: ‘Which company? When do I start? What’s the salary?’ I said, ‘I assume you’re not interested in conducting the interview any further.’ He promptly responded, ‘I am as long as you’ll pay me more.’ I didn’t hire him, but later found out there was no other job offer. It was a scam to get a higher offer.”

“... asked who the lovely babe was, pointing to the picture on my desk. When I said it was my wife, he asked if she was home now and wanted my phone number. I called security.”

Q. What five or six adjectives best describe you?

A. Really, really, really, really, really cool.

Q. How do you handle change?

A. I usually put it in a jar in my sock drawer.

Q. Are you willing to take a drug test as part of your employment?

A. Sure. What kind of drugs do I get to test?

After arriving for an early morning interview, a job seeker asked to use the hiring manager’s phone. She then faked a coughing fit as she called in sick to her boss.

When the hiring manager called the candidate, she asked him to bring several copies of his resume and three references. He called back an hour before the interview and asked to reschedule, saying his references couldn’t come with him to the interview.

The interviewer asked the candidate to describe his ideal job. His response: “I don’t know...I haven’t had it yet.”

The job seeker halted the conversation about work hours and the office environment, saying she didn’t like being confined to a building. She said she would consider taking the job if she could move her desk to the courtyard outside.

When asked about her greatest job skill, the candidate said she was most proud of her computer illiteracy.

In response to a hiring manager’s offer to answer questions about the position, the job seeker replied, “What happens if I wake up in the morn-

ing and don’t feel like coming to work?”

When asked what motivated him, the job seeker replied, “I’ve got a big house, a big car and a big credit card balance. Pay me and I’ll be happy.”

When asked what he wanted to be doing in his next position, the job seeker said, “I’ll tell you what I don’t want to be doing—sitting in boring meetings, doing grunt work and having to be nice to people all day long.”

An applicant spent the length of their interview bellyaching about their former boss totally unaware of their interviewer’s relation to their aforementioned boss. They even had the same last name!

An applicant dozed off right in the middle of his interview.

Stressed out and in a hurry due an interviewee forgot to put on his suspenders. When standing up to shake the interviewer’s hand he found himself standing in the middle of the agency’s office with his pants around his ankles.

A woman brought the interview to a halt in order to dial her therapist for guidance on how to answer a question.

A candidate was caught with his foot in his mouth when he made a wisecrack about West Virginia only to discover that his interviewer was from there.

A woman flipped off, honked, and shouted obscenities to the driver of another vehicle prior to finding that same driver conducting the interview for her desired position.

An applicant declared that he was so qualified for the job that if he happened to be denied the position it would ultimately confirm the company’s management to be insufficient!

An interviewee refused to leave his chair unless he was given the position. Eventually police were called in to the scene to remove the applicant.

When asked what person they would most like to meet, living or dead this applicant replied with “the living one.”

A final impression is just as important as the first. This applicant made a memorable one when he got up to leave the interview and walked into a glass door shattering it to pieces.

One candidate asked for a cup of water, took a sip, swished it around in his mouth, and spat into a potted plant.

True Interview Faux Pas from the Field

Prospect said, "Seven handicapped parking spaces next to the front door? What, are you having a wheelchair convention or something?"

When asked if he had experience with a certain programming language, the interviewee said, "I don't know, is it on my resume?" while leaning over attempting to look at his own resume.

Interviewee leaned back in the chair, put his feet on the desk and proceeded to tell me how he wanted more money than the position offered but didn't really like to work very much, so he'd need Fridays off and only wanted to work 4-5 hours the rest of the days.

Candidate left his cell phone on and took a call during the interview.

Candidate walked to interview on a hot day, and interviewed while sweating profusely.

Interviewee brought a friend (without confirming first), mentioned her friend was a drug addict so would definitely have to stick around "for a few paychecks".

Interviewee told me he'd worked at a gym and said he had a problem cleaning up the blood and semen in the saunas.

Candidate texted on cellphone during interview.

Prospect reeked of alcohol.

Huge drop of drool came out of candidate's mouth while listening to a question.

Candidate wore shorts and sandals, and a baseball cap.

When asked if there was anything else he wanted to tell the interviewer, the applicant said, "Well, ma'am, I ain't never killed nobody before."

One candidate, when asked if he was ever convicted of a felony, responded, "No, I was not convicted, I pled guilty."

A job applicant challenged the interviewer to an arm wrestle.

Interviewee wore a Walkman, explaining that she could listen to the interviewer and the music at the same time.

Candidate fell and broke arm during interview.

Candidate announced she hadn't had lunch and proceeded to eat a hamburger and french fries in the interviewer's office.

Candidate explained that her long-term goals was to replace the interviewer.

Candidate said he never finished high school because he was kidnapped and kept in a closet in Mexico.

Balding candidate excused himself and returned to the office a few minutes later wearing a hairpiece.

Applicant said if he was hired he would demonstrate his loyalty by having the corporate logo tattooed on his forearm.

Applicant interrupted interview to phone her therapist for advice on how to answer specific interview questions.

Candidate brought large dog to interview.

Applicant refused to sit down and insisted on being interviewed standing up.

Some strange things said by the applicant during an interview:

"I figure if I can get a few months experience here then I can get the job I REALLY want (at competitor)."

"I never get hungry."

"I know who is responsible for most of my troubles."

"Sometimes I feel like smashing things."

"My legs are really hairy."

"I think I'm going to throw up."

"Women should not be allowed to drink in cocktail bars."

"What are the zodiac signs of all the board members?"

"Why do you want references?"

"Do I have to dress for the next interview?"

"I know this is off the subject, but will you marry me?"

"Will the company move my rock collection from California to Maryland?"

"Does your health insurance cover pets?"

"Would it be a problem if I'm angry most of the time?"

"Does your company have a policy regarding concealed weapons?"

"Do you think the company would be willing to lower my pay?"

"Why am I here?"

"I have no difficulty in bolding my bowel movements."

"At times I have the strong urge to do something harmful or shocking."

"I feel uneasy indoors."

"I think that Lincoln was greater than Washington."

"I get aroused very easily."

"Once a week, I usually feel hot all over."

Top 10 Tips for a Successful Job Interview

Job interviews in many organizations are getting sophisticated these days. Psychological tests, role plays, and challenges to one's "quick intelligence" and street smarts are often part of the package. While it's impossible to anticipate everything you may encounter, here are ten tips that will help you negotiate the interview process successfully.

1. Prepare and over-prepare.

It is assumed that you don't go in with egg on your tie, spinach in your teeth, or without a thorough knowledge of the organization and position for which you are interviewing. Beyond that, there's an important principle that will enable you to be much more confident. It's called, "over-preparing." It goes like this: Plan your strategy—your answers to all the possible questions you may be asked or the challenges that may be thrown at you—and then practice, practice, practice. Role play and repeat your best responses until they are entirely natural, until they simply roll off your tongue with the apparent spontaneity that comes only with successive repetition.

2. Be particularly clear on what you know and what you want to achieve.

If your interview is resume-based (you've had to supply a resume either before or concurrently), have the facts of your stated objective, relevant experience, education, etc. thoroughly memorized and mentally supported. As to your job objective, be clear on what you want, as well as what you don't want. There's little room in the job market for the applicant who's willing to take anything; he or she will usually get nothing!

3. Make sure your responses match your claims.

If, for example, you've taken extra coursework to qualify for a particular position, license, or certification, tie it into your narrative, e.g., "When I took my coursework for my CPA, I learned that ..." Build on your resume, but don't refer directly to it (assuming the interviewer has it in his or her possession); make sure the connections are there, but do it subtly.

4. Be clear about your strengths.

You're almost certain to be hit with questions pertaining to your strengths and weaknesses. Know your strengths and emphasize those that relate specifically to the position for which you're being considered. If, for example, you're applying for a sales position, you might describe one of your strengths (if it's true) as follows: "I've made a study of personality types and I've learned to quickly type people in terms of the kinds of approaches that might best attract them." Be prepared, in this case, to back up your claim if the interviewer suddenly asks: "What type would you say I am?"

5. Describe your weaknesses as strengths.

This is tricky, so let's think about why the question is asked. The interviewer probably wants to learn several things about you with this question, such as: whether or not you are arrogant ("I really don't think I have any weaknesses"), whether you know yourself ("Well, I've never really thought about that"), and finally, what you are doing to eliminate your weaknesses. Here are two ways to answer this question so that you leave a positive impression in the mind of the interviewer: (a) Show that, in overcoming a weakness, you've learned. If, for example, there's a period in your chronology that just doesn't fit (say that you took a job selling cars between jobs as an accountant ... it happens!), you might tell the interviewer: "One weakness, which it took me some time to overcome, was that I really wasn't sure that I wanted to be an accountant. For example, in 1988-90, I worked as a car salesman. I did so because I couldn't decide if I wanted to make accounting my career. That experience taught me that I really didn't want to sell products, and that I was much more challenged by the opportunity to solve client problems. (b) Pick a weakness that is really a strength. If, for example, you're interviewing for a job in an organization you know is hard-charging and unforgiving of average performance, you might say, "One of my weaknesses is that I tend to be impatient with people who aren't willing to pull their full weight and give 110%." In this case, your "weakness" may help you get the job.

6. *If you've been fired, be forthright about it.*

So many people have been laid off through no fault of their own in the past ten years that it's no longer a stigma to have been fired--unless it was for justifiable cause (e.g.,- you socked your boss). Answer directly, but without a "charge" in your voice. Expressing your bitterness over being let go tells the interviewer (rightly or wrongly) that you can't accept the realities of modern free enterprise -- that downsizing is acceptable and often necessary.

7. *Be clear where you want to go.*

A standard question which has all manner of variations is: "Where do you want to be five years from today?" Only today, the answers are different. Unless you plan to inherit Dad's company, your answer is apt to be a lot more general than it might have been a decade ago. Why? Because the economy and nearly every industry are changing so fast that specificity with respect to the distant future is extremely difficult. So, instead of responding to the question with, "I plan to be in a position of senior leadership in this company," you might want to say: "I plan to become qualified in every phase of this industry." The exact response depends upon the specifics of your job hunting campaign, but the principle is: be specific while allowing yourself the flexibility which suggests that you understand the complexities of the business you're applying for.

8. *Have clear personal standards.*

This is a sleeper because, on the face of it, the question doesn't seem to have much to do with the immediate interview. Today, however, many organizations are looking for people who DO have standards regarding their personal and professional lives, who can articulate them clearly and concisely, and who live by them. In this case, the briefer, the better. "I delegate my weaknesses." "I don't take on projects unless I can give them 100% dedication." "I respond in specifics and avoid meaningless generalities." "I am committed to life-long learning and growth."

9. Interview the interviewer.

The applicant who will take anything offered is unlikely to win any but the most temporary of positions. A competent interviewer (there are some) will respect your efforts to assess the organization and the position in terms of whether or not it meets YOUR requirements. And you owe it to yourself to have defined before hand, what you ideally want and what you are willing to settle for, under certain conditions. For example, you might really want a salary of \$75,000 to begin with, but you'd be willing to take less if the opportunities for growth are clearly in the picture.

10. *Don't allow yourself to be badgered by the salary issue.*

Even today, it's still not uncommon to hear the old refrain: "Our policy is not to pay a new employee more than X% higher than he/she is currently making." Sorry, that doesn't fly. The real issue, and the only one at stake here, is whether or not your prospective employer is willing to pay WHAT YOU ARE WORTH. And, your worth is a function of the job itself and your capability and willingness to perform it. In most organizations, there are clear parameters for a given job, a range of salary that is adjustable depending upon the market and the applicant's experience. In most cases, unless you are very good, you will have to work within those limits. But, within the limits, what you are worth is a matter of mutual agreement based on your own knowledge of your worth and your ability to convince those interviewing you. So, to sum it up: Know the range of compensation for the job you're seeking, make your own realistic determination of what you're worth, and then be prepared to stand your ground. ●

Interviewing and the Church

On September 22, 2009, a study was released by the National Association of Colleges and Employers Job Outlook for 2010 which stated that the top traits employers wanted most in a job candidate were communication skills, a strong work ethic, ability to work in a team, initiative and integrity.

Fortunately, with the regards to the Church's "brand" in the workplace, most employers—especially those outside of Utah, assume that *all* Mormons have those traits so, as far as expectations are concerned, the bar starts pretty high.

When you start interviewing for positions with people unfamiliar with the Church and its culture, there are particular nuances that you need to understand. These may surface when representatives from outside of Utah come to campus to interview or when LDS students travel to other parts of the country to interview for internships or other career opportunities.

The first thing is to make sure that, whether it's on your resume or in the interview itself, you don't use Mormon jargon that someone outside the Church would not understand—words such as stake, ward, Mutual, elders quorum, relief society, zone leader, etc. Every one of these terms can be described in layman's terms.

The Word of Wisdom

Perhaps nothing causes inexperienced job applicants more anxiety than how to handle conflicts regarding the Word of Wisdom that arise in the interview setting. More often than not, when you go to an interview, the first question someone will ask you is "Can I get you some coffee?"

Starting out the interview by saying, "No thanks, I don't drink coffee," can fluster a host and create confusion in their mind on what they should do next. You do not want to start out the interview by making someone else feel uncomfortable right out of the gate. At that point, the best response is: "No, thanks, but some water would be great."

This response lets them know that you don't want coffee, gives an alternative to offer you which you can be positive will be available, while, at the same time, letting them feel that they are being a good host by offering you something to make your visit more comfortable.

In rare instances, confusion arises when an LDS candidate is offered a choice of coffee or a soda and the person picks a "Coke," confusing the host who has incorrectly been told that "Mormons don't drink caffeine." I think it's just always better in the interview setting to play it safe. You can debate doctrine later after you're hired.

Sometimes, your interview will be followed by either lunch or dinner during which alcohol will be served. There are three strategies with which to handle this issue should it arrive:

Strategy 1) "No thanks, I don't drink." Usually that's enough. These days, there are a lot of peo-

ple that don't drink for health reasons. Usually, that statement will be sufficient.

Strategy 2) *Allow them to serve you and not drink it.* Sometimes, you can be distracted and not notice when the waiter fills your wine glass, or your host buys a round of strawberry daquiris for everyone. If you're trying not to stick out and think it's better to just take it and not drink it, later on, your host(s) won't remember that you actually did or didn't drink it, only that you *accepted* it. This falls under the "avoid the appearance of evil" category.

Strategy 3) *"I don't drink....I'm Mormon."* In some rare cases, the people you are with will consider a personal or cultural affront if you do not join them in drinking alcohol either before, during or after the meal. For example, it is a Chinese custom that, when you are at dinner with a group of people, if the person to your left or right drinks, then you are supposed to drink with them and they can be very insistent. Not wanting to offend his host, one LDS businessman tried to discretely decline participating. When it became clear that his host was getting kind of upset, the man discretely explained that part of the religion forbade the consumption of alcohol and that he had made a promise to God. The subject never came up again.

Handling Membership Issues

Frequently in an interview, the interviewer will say, "I see from your resume that you went to BYU... so, are you Mormon?"

Technically, that question is illegal and, more often than not, the person is more curious than discriminatory. Yet, how you answer that will usually lead to a whole different round of questions because, if people aren't familiar with the Church, they are fascinated.

Outside of Utah, often times, they will just blurt out what you might think are the dumbest questions you've ever heard. Here are a few of the ones I've heard people ask other LDS candidates when I've accompanied them an interview setting:

- "If you got this job, since Mormons don't believe in driving cars how would you get to work?"
- "A lot of this job requires using computers. Since technology is against your religion how would that work?"
- "Have you ever met Donnie Osmond?"
- "Is it true Mormons wear magic underwear? Could I see yours?"
- "Have you ever seen Big Love?"
- "What do you think about Mitt Romney?"
- "I knew a Mormon in college. Maybe you know him—his first name was Jared but I can't remember his last name."

One time, as a favor to someone, I set up an interview with Marriott International for a young woman who had just returned from a mission. At the time, a member of the Marriott family was

servicing the Director of Sales for a hotel in the Washington DC area. As a favor to me, he sat in on the interview with the hotel's director of human resources. During the course of the interview, the HR Director asked, "What kind of job are you looking for?"

This young woman looked her directly in the eye and said, "I don't really care what I do just as long as I can share the Gospel with everyone I meet." We were speechless.

Suffice it to say, in most situations, job interviews are *not* missionary opportunities. It's inappropriate and it's unprofessional. Believe me, if you are hired, there will be plenty of missionary opportunities that will automatically present themselves whether you are looking for them or not.

Missions and the Job Interview

One of the mistakes most RMs make is not looking at their missionary service as something irrelevant to, rather than an essential component of their skills as candidate, relegating to simple, one-line addition in some category other than professional experience.

A couple of years ago, the bishop of a singles ward in the Washington DC area asked me to help the son of a friend find his first job out of college. Based on my contacts, I arranged for him to have eight interviews during the week of his spring break. Before he got there, his two-year mission experience had been reduced to one line on his resume which said simply,

*Missionary,
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,
Lima, Peru, 2007-2008*

Toward the end of the interview, the president of the company said, "I'm not really familiar with this whole mission thing. How do you think the experience that you gained from that experience could help my company?"

Pausing for a second, the candidate answered, "While my college education taught me the technical skills I needed to succeed in this field, the two years on my mission taught me effective time management, interpersonal skills, leadership and organizational skills and how to listen to and communicate with a wide variety of people in diverse settings."

The president looked at another member of his staff and said, "None of our new graduates have *any* of those skills. We need someone like *you* in our firm." He then offered this candidate, nearly \$10,000 more than any of the other eight offers he had received because the candidate knew the value of the things he had learned on his mission and how to explain them in business language that could be understood.

Here are some bullet points that I have created for the resumes of Return Missionaries which translate various aspects of their mission into business-appropriate terminology:

Excerpt - Resume 1

Voluntary Representative, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Washington, DC

- Served as unpaid volunteer 7 days a week, on average 70+ hours a week, for two years among people from more than 63 different countries.
- Appointed to leadership positions of increasing scope and responsibility including Assistant to the President.
- Engaged in leadership, training, logistics, reporting and shared administrative oversight of over 170 full-time volunteers.
- Worked with underprivileged youth in Washington D.C. area
- Developed and organized presentations, conferences, and seminars focused on effective instruction, education and service.
- Coordinated food drives, community projects throughout Washington, D.C.
- Worked directly with top business leaders in Washington D.C. to organize volunteer contributions and efforts.
- Organized content, logistics and publicity for monthly lecture series

Excerpt - Resume 2

Voluntary Representative, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Washington D.C.

- Appointed to various leadership positions including leadership of a geographic zone
- Engaged in leadership, training, logistics, reporting and administrative oversight of 150+ volunteers.
- Developed and organized educational presentations, seminars and conferences
- Participated regularly in city- and state-sponsored service projects
- Successfully organized content, logistics and publicity for monthly lecture series
- Designed and implemented quarterly training curriculum
- Compiled, edited and distributed monthly newsletter
- Gathered, compiled, analyzed, and reported statistics to headquarters
- Conversational fluency in French, Spanish and Mandarin Chinese

Excerpt - Resume 3

Voluntary Representative, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Washington D.C.

- Appointed to leadership positions of increasing scope and responsibility.
- Engaged in leadership, training, logistics, reporting and shared administrative oversight of over 50 volunteers.
- Developed and organized presentations, conferences, and seminars focused on instruction and education
- Coordinated food drives and clean-up projects in conjunction with local government leaders