

# Interview Handbook

Prepare for the Interview and get the Job

**NPC**  **JNM** 013

Slide # 1

Version3

**NPC**  **JNM**  
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## Introduction

The interview process is a two way conversation designed to help the company determine if you are the right fit for the job and to enable you to make an educated decision about the job.

- The goal of the company is to decide whether or not to extend you an offer.**
- Your goal is to help the company decide to extend you an offer.**

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## Introduction

You are likely not the only qualified candidate pursuing this position. How you conduct yourself in the interview may be the deciding factor between you and another candidate.

- DO NOT** bring your cat to the interview.
- DO NOT** wear a Star Trek uniform to the interview.
- DO NOT** give me anything else to add to my list.



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## Preparation

- Research the company, product, latest press releases, news, stock prices, open jobs, market, etc.
- Research the interviewers, LinkedIn is helpful, how long have they been on the job, where did they go to school, what did they study, etc.
- Review your resume, inventory your past responsibilities
- Be prepared to discuss any past experience in detail
- Decide to decide – what are the factors that will go into making a decision? Be prepared to decide on the spot or in 24 hours.

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## Getting There and What to Bring

- Drive to the location in advance if you can, so you are comfortable on interview day
- Arrive **exactly** 10 minutes before the interview

### Bring:

- References (3-5 – former manager, co-worker, subordinate, and/or customer)
- Resume – 3 copies in case they don't have one
- Sample work – if this applies
- Folder, notepad, pen
- Five or so educated questions

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## Appearance

This may seem obvious, but it is not. You don't want them to remember anything about you except what you said.

- Wear a suit – Gray or Navy – white or blue shirt
- No bow ties, ascots, purple shirts, mini-skirts, nose rings, long fingernails
- Don't smoke, eat spicy food or wear cologne of any kind
- Wear simple jewelry
- If you have to wear a Star Trek uniform – don't wear the red shirt!

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## Appearance



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## The Interview Process - Connecting

The skills required to do well in an interview are not necessarily the skills required to do well in the job. In the interview, you should demonstrate:

- **Interest and Eagerness** - Take notes, sit up, look the interviewer in the eye, demonstrate knowledge about the company and products.
- **Preparation** – Do your homework about the company, interviewers, products, news and weave that information into your conversation.
- **Positive outlook** – Smile, never answer negatively, even about a bad job experience or long term unemployment.



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## The Interview Process - Connecting

A large part of any face to face interview is unspoken – it has to do with physical and verbal queues. *People like people that are like them.*

- **Mimic the handshake you get** – Handshakes are cultural – if you get a fish, give a fish, if you get a bone-crusher, give a bone crusher.
- **Pace your interviewer** – If your interviewer talks slowly and precisely, then talk to them in a similar manner.
- **Watch for body position queues** – If your interviewer leans in, you lean in, if they lean back and look up, you do the same. Never cross your arms or put your feet up on their desk, even if they do.
- **Laugh at their jokes! Empathize with them.**
- **Look your interviewer in the eye** – or focus on the bridge of their nose, if that is difficult for you.

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## The Interview Process – Answering Questions

•**Start your answers working from the big picture down.** Frame every answer and understand that your interviewer might not know what a former company even does.

Start with company, location, product or process, your role, then the answer to the question. Make sure to quantify.

For example when asked about your biggest career success, “I worked for ABC company for 10 years. ABC manufactured widgets. I was in charge of manufacturing quality and had a team of 3 engineers. My biggest career success happened 5 years into that job, when ...”

•**Keep your answers concise!** If you find you have been talking for a minute or more stop and ask if that answers the question, or if they would like more detail.

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## The Interview Process – The “Tough” Questions

•**Employers often ask “Tough” questions.** These can be easily handled by being prepared so you can speak with confidence and poise, by keeping your responses concise, never apologizing and keeping your energy up.

### Examples:

**What kind of employee are you?** *“My work is important to me and I give each project my full attention. I’ve had the opportunity to grow and learn from each accomplishment or mistake.”*

**Tell me about yourself?** *Keep it professional. Practice describing your career and professional background starting with school to current and throw in an occasional personal bit of information, like “I moved into Project Management when my twins were born, so that I would be traveling less”. Keep it to 90 seconds or so.*

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## The Interview Process – The “Tough” Questions

### More Examples:

**Tell me about your accomplishments.** *Do not list awards. Prepare two or three accomplishments and clearly state problem, the solution, and then detail the positive result.*

**What is your biggest weakness (or strength)?** *Avoid clichés, like “I am a people person”. Be specific and have examples. Think of a weakness that can also be a strength like “I am a perfectionist” or “I sometimes have a hard time delegating”. And with any weakness, perhaps talk about what you are doing to mitigate that weakness.*

**What are your goals? Or, where do you want to be in 5 years?** *Companies are listening for a level of commitment here.*

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## The Interview Process – The “Tough” Questions

### More Examples:

**What are your goals? Or, where do you want to be in 5 years?**

*Companies are listening for a level of commitment here.*

*Short term goals sound like “It’s most important to me to excel in my position. As I perform and develop within the company I’d like to take on roles with increasing responsibility”*

*Long terms goals demonstrate big picture thinking and sound like “My mission is to develop into executive management, leading a R&D team”*

**How much money do you want?** *Never state an exact figure that you want. Tell them what you made and let them know you will consider any reasonable offer. If you are working through an EXTERNAL recruiter, you should know the range up front – let your recruiter negotiate for you – its in his or her best interest to get the best deal.*

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## The Interview Process – Your Turn to Ask Questions

**When it is your turn to ask questions**, you should be prepared. Engage each interviewer by asking intelligent questions. As you have been taking notes, you may be able to frame questions based on what you have heard so far.

*Even if you have had one of your questions answered, by a previous interviewer, ask it of the next interview to get a different perspective and also to let them know that you ask good questions.*

### **Example questions:**

- *Why is this position open?*
- *What is the career path for a person in this position?*
- *What is a typical day in the life of this position?*
- *How do you think I would fit into this position and culture?*
- *What is the projected growth of the company?*
- *What do you like best about this company? What brought you to the company?*

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## The Interview Process – Concluding

Two most important things to do at the end of the job interview:

- 1. Ask for the job!** Practice this in advance. You should be very direct and say it in the way that feels most natural for you. For example: “I think can I bring a lot to the company and that this position is a great fit. I would like the job.”
- 2. Send Thank You notes.** Send a hand written, professional Thank You card to the hiring manager(s) that you drop in the mail the day of the interview. Then send emails to any other people you interviewed with. The notes should be simple:

Example:

“Dear Mrs. Stockton,

I appreciate meeting you and the opportunity to explore the position of Director of Engineering. I am excited at the opportunity to apply my past experiences & contribute my skills to the development of XYZ Corporation. It is great opportunity and I will look forward to hearing your decision.

Best Regards,  
Bob Thomas”

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## The Seven Biggest Myths about Job Interviews

#7 – The interviewer is prepared

#6 – Most interviewers have been trained to conduct thorough job interviews

#5 – It's only polite to accept an interviewer's offer of refreshment

#4 – There is a right answer to every question an interviewer asks

#3 – If you have great qualifications, your appearance doesn't matter

#2 – If the company invites you to an interview, the job is still open

#1 – The most qualified person gets the job