

# THE RESUME FIX

# INTERVIEW

# PREPARATION

# GUIDE 2020

*This guide was designed to provide you with valuable tips, advice, strategies, and techniques for conducting a successful interview*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>The Basics.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Making the Interview Work For You.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What is Your Collateral?.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>What is the STAR Method for Interview Questions?.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Mastering the STAR Method.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Basic Tips to Ensure Success.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Phone Interview Do's and Don'ts.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>How to Excel in a Video Interview.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>20 Common Questions &amp; How to Answer Them.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Questions to Ask the Interviewer.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Body Language.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Avoid these 5 Common Interview Pitfalls.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Follow-up After the Interview.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Final Thoughts.....</b>	<b>26</b>



*This Interview Preparation Package is an in-depth guide which will prepare you for a successful interview. This guide will advise you on what to do (and what not to do) prior to, during and after your interview. Included in this package are ideas for preparation, sample questions and answer suggestions, interview etiquette, pitfalls to avoid and much more. This guide takes you from the beginning to the end of an interview and will be all the preparation you need for a successful interview.*



# THE BASICS

*Here are a few basic things you should consider prior to your interview. Remember, strategic planning will provide you with a competitive advantage.*

## THE PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

The interview is the final step in the screening process.

This is the step where the best candidate will be chosen based on a combination of your resume, cover letter and ability to present your skills in an impressionable manner.



## THINGS TO CONSIDER

### **Be prepared to do well.**

Many highly qualified candidates fail to obtain positions simply because they interviewed poorly.

Your performance in the interview will be affected most by two factors:

- Enthusiasm
- Preparation

Keep in mind that while an employer may have a specific personnel requirement to satisfy, an interview can be a forum for discovering even greater opportunities.

This may lead to expanding the position – and the compensation– for the right kind of candidate.

No matter how well qualified you are, the success of the interview depends on how prepared you are and your ability to demonstrate sincere interest in the employer's needs. You will need to ask and answer questions intelligently, while exhibiting your ability to make a real contribution to the employer and their objectives.

# THE BASICS

## A FEW THINGS TO CONSIDER

**Here are a few surprising facts:**

- Well-prepared candidates often receive offers that even better qualified competitors do not!
- Few candidates bother to research a company prior to the interview. Make sure you do your homework before you go.
- Only one in ten candidates sells his or her abilities and accomplishments effectively.
- Successful candidates always ask questions about the position and the employer.
- Setting the stage of a good interview is a critical step. It sets the precedent for the dynamics of a future business relationship. It is generally best when the tone of the meeting is light and up beat. The mention of a non-controversial topic such as the weather, the facilities, etc. should break the ice. From that point on, allow the interviewer to take the initiative and carry the conversation.
- Companies want people who ask for the job and one way to move toward the top of the list is to directly ask for the offer.



# MAKING THE INTERVIEW WORK FOR YOU

05

- Establish a relationship with the interviewer from the onset that permits a relaxed dialog and an open exchange of information.
- Be friendly and show interest in what the interviewer is saying.
- Look for opportunities to demonstrate your interest in the job, the interviewer and the employer.
- Withhold questions about issues (such as compensation) that can better be resolved once an offer is imminent.
- Maintain your self-esteem but do not dominate the conversation.
- Strike a comfortable balance between listening and asking or answering questions.
- Consider the impression you are trying to create, especially concerning appropriate attire for the interview.



## TYPES OF INTERVIEW

- **Traditional**-These are in person, face-to-face interviews.
- **Phone**-Interviews conducted remotely over the telephone.
- **Video**-Interviews conducted remotely through video conferencing Software, such as Skype.

*Remember, no matter the type of interview, the objective is still the same...this is a screening process to find the best candidate so preparation is key.*

# MAKING THE INTERVIEW WORK FOR YOU

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Anticipate “tough” questions the employer may ask.
- Prepare key questions of your own that demonstrate your understanding of the company and its industry.
- Be ready to discuss how you have performed in the past, particularly in solving problems similar to those likely to be encountered in the job.
- Do not try to negotiate a compensation and benefits package until you know the employer is prepared to offer you the job, and never in the first interview!
- If asked directly about your compensation requirements while in an interview, mention your current actual compensation, including any bonuses, etc.
- Indicate to the employer that you would expect a fair and reasonable increase commensurate with the new position and its contribution to the company.
- Before leaving any interview, express your sincere interest in pursuing this opportunity



# WHAT IS COLLATERAL?



*\*\*Remember to print all documents on high quality resume paper for impact\*\**

*\*\*Also remember to bring a pen and notepad to jot down important information\*\**

**“**—  
**Collateral** is HOW you will DIFFERENTIATE YOURSELF FROM THE OTHER CANDIDATES – these materials will boost your chances of success!  
—**”**

Many candidates carry a professional portfolio or briefcase with them to interviews with extra copies of their resumes. But did you know you can create a “collateral package” for your interviewer by also bringing the following:

- Letters of recommendation
- Awards
- Certificates
- Kuddos
- Performance reviews
- Portfolio of work samples
- A list of references
- A 90-day plan or value proposition (how you will make an impact in the first 3 months of employment)

# WHAT IS THE STAR METHOD FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS?



**STAR stands for Situation, Tasks, Action & Results.** So we can see that **STAR** is just (another) clever acronym for a bigger idea, but let's take a second and break down exactly what each letter means.

**Situation:** Think of a situation similar to what the interviewer is asking you about that had a successful outcome. It doesn't necessarily have to be work related as long as it's relevant. Remember to include the who, what, where, when and how.

**Task:** Describe the task you were responsible for in that situation. Keep it specific but concise. Make sure to highlight any specific challenges you faced.

**Action:** This is the part where you describe exactly what you did. How did you complete the task you were assigned? Remember to focus on what you did and highlight traits (qualities) that a hiring manager will find desirable (initiative, teamwork, leadership, dedication, etc.)

**Result:** This is where you get to be introspective. Share what the outcome of the situation was and how you specifically contributed to that outcome. What did you accomplish? What did you learn? What were the results of your actions?

# MASTERING THE STAR METHOD FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## WHEN TO USE THE STAR METHOD

While there are literally an unlimited amount of possible behavioral questions a hiring manager could ask you, there are several specific categories they all fall into:

- Teamwork
- Problem Solving/Planning
- Initiative/Leadership
- Interpersonal Skills/Conflict
- Pressure/Stress

Prior to going in for your interview, make sure you take a good hard look at the job you're applying for and use clues from that to prepare your S.T.A.R answers. By picking out what skills the company is specifically looking for or are required for the job, it will help you target your success stories.



# BASIC TIPS TO ENSURE SUCCESS

## DO'S

- DO perform research on the position/company/industry prior to the interview (interviewers are bothered by candidates who know very little about the company).
- DO ask appropriate and adequate questions (Interviewers are also bothered when candidates don't ask enough questions or ask the wrong questions) during the interview.
- DO be focused or direct in what you want, especially in how the position fits into your career path and personal goals.
- DO be enthusiastic, responsive and display a good attitude (interviewers assume a candidate who is non-attentive, withdrawn, passive or arrogant during the interview would bring similar negative qualities to the job if hired).
- DO look the interviewer in the eye (interviewers perceive that candidates who have poor or no eye contact have something to hide and/or are lacking in conviction and self-confidence).



# BASIC TIPS TO ENSURE SUCCESS



## DONT'S

- DON'T talk about wage and salary unless asked (too many questions about salary and fringe benefits indicate that you are more interested in what the company can do for you. There will be adequate time to address this once the interest is established on technical and career goals).
- DON'T be dishonest (Your answers should be based on the truth, not on what you feel the person wants to hear).
- DON'T forget to be immaculately groomed (attach great importance to good grooming and appropriate dress. Interviewers are turned off when candidates fail to pay adequate attention to personal appearance, hygiene or if the candidate's clothes fail to show a business-like demeanor).
- DON'T forget to sell yourself. Your resume should not say more than you do, and you should know everything on the resume. Refrain from using the phrase "as it says on my resume...". Remember, you are there for the interview not your resume.

# PHONE INTERVIEW DO'S AND DON'TS

## DO'S

- Be ready for the call
- Respond to voice mail messages within 24- hours (or sooner).
- Keep your resume, notepad and pen near your phone.
- Find a quiet spot and eliminate any distractions such as the TV, radio, children, pets, etc.
- Prepare a cheat sheet outlining your accomplishments and past experiences.
- Get comfortable. Sit in your favorite chair. If you prefer to stand, go for it. They'll never know.
- Keep a glass of drinking water nearby, just in case.
- Exude enthusiasm and professionalism
- Make sure you sound excited, try smiling, even though they can't see you, they can hear your smile through the phone, allowing you to sound friendlier.
- Block call-waiting on your phone ahead of time. If that's not possible, ignore it when it beeps.
- Speak succinctly about your background and experiences, keeping responses to one minute or less.

## DON'TS

### Refrain from the following:

- Don't eat, chew gum or smoke.
- Don't use profanity.
- Don't use unprofessional answering machine messages.
- Don't answer call waiting during your conversation.
- Don't hang up the phone without asking questions (about the company, position, etc.).
- Don't use too many filler words (um, uh, hmm).
- Don't have distracting noises around.



# HOW TO EXCEL DURING VIDEO INTERVIEW

13

*In today's global workplace more and more employers are opting for Skype, Live Messenger or other video interview formats. Let's face it – it cuts down on travel expenses, saves on fuel and provides the employer with a quicker and much easier way to find the perfect person for the position without the time consuming face-to-face interview process. However, for the interviewee, being interviewed in front of a camera and microphone can be daunting. But, fear not! The video interview can be used to your advantage.*

*Here are some video call etiquette tips on how to prepare and ultimately excel in a video interview.*



# HOW TO EXCEL DURING A VIDEO INTERVIEW

## AN INTERVIEW IS AN INTERVIEW

Whether you are being interviewed on video, over the phone or in person, all the general rules of a job interview apply. Just because you are not meeting the interviewer in the flesh doesn't mean any less preparation is involved.

### FIX YOURSELF UP!

The key to a successful video interview is making sure you look presentable. You might feel silly sitting at home wearing a suit and talking to a computer, but it will make all the difference. During the interview it is highly likely that the interviewer will only be able to see your head and shoulders on the camera. Even with this in mind, don't neglect your bottom half. You never know, you may be required to get something from the other side of the room – so save yourself the embarrassment of revealing your pajamas to your prospective new boss.

### CHOOSE YOUR COLORS WISELY

Certain colors like many shades of blue - royal, navy, sky blue - look great on video while others like reds, oranges and magentas can be too bright. Patterns like small dots or stripes can be less attractive than solids so think about a color to wear that is easy on the eye and a pattern that won't be distracting to your viewer.



# HOW TO EXCEL DURING A VIDEO INTERVIEW

15

## CLEAN UP YOUR ROOM

Your surroundings can be just as important as your personal presentation. Whether the interview is being conducted from your own home or a busy office environment, the interviewer does not want to see you sitting in front of a pile of paperwork or with clutter behind you. Tidy up the room as you don't want anything in the background to distract the interviewer from what you have to say.

## KEEP THE NOISE DOWN

Finding a quiet place to do the interview is vital as the microphone picks up more background noise than you might think. Dogs barking, children crying, mobile phones or music are not welcome distractions when an interviewer is trying to determine whether you will be suitable for a job. Nor does it look good if you have people walking in and out of the room – if need be, make a 'do not disturb' sign and stick it on the door.

## GET THE TECHNOLOGY RIGHT

Five minutes before the video interview is not a good time to realize that your internet is down, Skype is not working, or your puppy has chewed through the laptop charger. Not only does this reflect badly on your organizational skills, it will cost the interviewer precious time as they will most likely have to reschedule. Getting the technology right is crucial as it can either make you look like a reliable computer whiz, or somebody who can't quite get the hang of it.

Allow plenty of time before the interview to test all equipment. If possible, try to Skype a friend beforehand and get them to give you some feedback. Can you see/hear them? Can they see/hear you? Is the picture clear? Is the lighting OK? Is there much background noise?

# 20 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & HOW TO ANSWER THEM

*Are you prepared with the ANSWERS? Most of us THINK we are!  
Read on to learn the best way to answer your interviewer's questions.*

## **1. "Tell me about yourself."**

For this question, talk for no more than two minutes. Be logical. (Start anywhere, e.g. high school, college, or first position. This question is fishing for communication skills and linear thinking. Also try to score a point or two by describing a major personal attribute).

## **2. "Why are you leaving your current position?"**

This is a very critical question. Don't "bad mouth" a previous employer and also don't sound "too opportunistic. For major problems such as a buy-out, or layoff, an honest answer is the best course of action. You may also consider stating something along the lines of "after long personal consideration, your chance to make a contribution is very low due to company changes."

## **3. "What do you consider your most significant accomplishment?"**

The right answer to this question may just get you the job. Prepare extensively for this question. To score points tell a 2-minute story, with details that discuss personal involvement. Make the accomplishments worth achieving. For example, discuss hard work, long hours, pressure, and important company issues at stake.

## **4. "Why do you believe you are qualified for this position?"**

Pick two or three main factors about the job and about you that are most relevant. Discuss for two minutes, with specific details about a technical skill, a specific management skill (organizing, staffing, planning), or a personal success attribute.

# 20 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & HOW TO ANSWER THEM

17

## 5."Have you ever accomplished something you didn't think you could?"

The interviewer is trying to determine your goal orientation, work ethic, personal commitment, and integrity. Provide a good example of when you overcame numerous difficulties to succeed. Prove you're not a quitter, and that "you'll get going when the going gets tough."

## 6."What do you like or dislike most about your current position?"

The interviewer is trying to determine compatibility with the open position. If you have an interest in this position, be careful. Stating your dislike of overtime or getting into details, or that you dislike "management" can cost you the position. There's nothing wrong with liking challenges, pressure situations, opportunities to grow, or disliking bureaucracy and frustrating situations.

## 7."How do you handle pressure? Do you like or dislike these situations?"

High achievers tend to perform well in high-pressure situations. Conversely, the question could imply the position is pressure packed and out of control. There is nothing wrong with this as long as you know what you're going into. If you do perform well under stress, provide a good example with details, providing an overview of the situation. Let the interviewer "feel" the stress by your description of it, as well as how you overcame the stressful situation.

## 8."The sign of a good employee is the ability to take initiative. Can you describe a situation in which you took initiative?"

A proactive, results-oriented person doesn't have to be told what to do. This is one of their major attributes. To convince the interviewer you possess this trait you must give a series of short examples, describing your self-motivation. Try to describe at least one example in depth. The extra effort, strong work ethic and creative side of you must be demonstrated.

# 20 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & HOW TO ANSWER THEM

## 9."What's the worst or most embarrassing aspect of your business career? How would you have done things differently now with 20/20 hindsight?"

This is a general question to learn how introspective you are and if you can learn from your mistakes. If you can, it indicates an open, more flexible personality. Don't be afraid to talk about your failures, particularly if you've learned from them. This is a critical aspect of high potential individuals.

## 10."How have you grown or changed over the past few years?

This requires thought. Mature technical skills or increased self-confidence are important aspects of human development. To discuss this effectively is indicative of a well-balanced, intelligent individual. Overcoming personal obstacles or recognizing manageable weaknesses can brand you as an approachable and able employee.

## 11."What do you consider your most significant strengths?"

Be prepared for this question. Know your top three strengths. Also be able to discuss each with a specific example. Select those attributes that are most compatible with the job opening. Stay away from clichés. Most people say "management" or "good interpersonal skills," to answer to this. Don't use clichés unless you can describe the specific characteristics of management or interpersonal skills (planning, organizing, results, staffing, etc.) and how they have proven critical to your success.

## 12."What do you consider your most significant weaknesses?"

Don't reveal deep character flaws. Rather, discuss tolerable faults which you are working toward improving. Show by specific example how this has changed over time. Better still; show how a weakness can be turned into a strength.

# 20 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & HOW TO ANSWER THEM

19

## 13.“Deadlines, frustrations, difficult people, and many rules can make a job difficult. How do you handle difficult situations?”

Most companies unfortunately face these types of problems daily. If you can't deal with petty frustrations you'll be seen as a problem. You certainly can state your displeasure at the petty side of these issues but how you overcome them is more important. Diplomacy, perseverance and common sense often prevail even in difficult circumstances. This is part of corporate America, and you must be able to deal with it on a regular basis.

## 14.“One of our biggest problems is XYZ? What is your experience with this? How would you deal with it?”

Think quick on your feet when answering this question. For example, break your answer into sub-parts and then summarize the total. For example, state how you would go about solving the problem, be specific and show your organizational and analytical skills.

## 15.“How do you compare your technical skills to your management skills?”

Many people tend to minimize their technical skills, either because they don't have any or they don't like getting into the details. Most successful managers possess good technical skills and get into enough detail to make sure they understand the information being presented by their group. Try for a good balance here if you want to be seriously considered for the position.

## 16.“How has your technical ability been important in accomplishing results?”

The interviewer is trying to determine how strong your level of technical competence is. Strong employees have good technical backgrounds. Describe specific examples of your technical wherewithal. Also, you could give an example of how you resolved a technical issue by “accelerated research.”

# 20 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & HOW TO ANSWER THEM

## 17."How would you handle a situation with tight deadlines, low employee morale, and inadequate resources?"

If you pull this off effectively, it indicates you have strong management skills. You need to be creative with this answer and provide a great example. Relate your toughest on-the-job task, even if it doesn't meet all the criteria since most situations don't. Organizational skills, interpersonal skills, and handling pressure are key elements that should be addressed to effectively answer this question. Deftly handling the question is very indicative of your skills.

## 18."Are you satisfied with your career to date? What would you change if you could?"

Be honest with this answer. The interviewer wants to know if this job will keep you happy. It's also important to know if you're willing to make some sacrifice to get your career on the right track. The degree to which you are motivated is an instant selection criterion.

## 19."What are your top career goals? Where do you see yourself five years from now? Ten years from now?

When answering this question, be realistic and specific. Blue-sky, dreamy stuff brands you as immature. A more reasonable goal would be to mention one or two management jumps in three to five years. If your track record indicates you're on line for senior management in ten years, it's okay to mention this. However, if you've had a rocky road career-wise, its better to be introspective.

## 20."Why should we hire you for this position? What kind of contribution would you make?"

This is a good chance to summarize your accomplishments. By now, you know the hiring company's key issues. Restate them and show how you would address them. Relate to specific attributes and specific accomplishments. Qualify responses with the need to gather information. Demonstrate a thoughtful, organized, cohesive summary of what immediate contributions and longer- term contributions you are confident in fulfilling.

# QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

*This is a list of some questions, you as a candidate, might consider asking. There are two major reasons why you should ask questions during the interview: 1) to find out more information about the company, the position and the employer, which can help you decide whether this is the right job for you, and 2) to impress the interviewer by asking the right questions.*

- 1.What specifically, are the day-to-day responsibilities of this position and which are most important?
- 2.In what manner will we interact on a regular basis?
- 3.How do you like to operate in terms of assignments/delegation of responsibilities?
- 4.What kind of person do you feel is best suited for this position?
- 5.What are the company's goals - short-term and long-term?
- 6.What short and long term problems/frustrations do you think exist for your department?
- 7.What do you hope I would accomplish within three, six, twelve months?
- 8.What do you perceive as the major challenges/rewards of my position?
- 9.What are the strengths and weaknesses of my subordinates?
- 10.Whom will I be interfacing with most frequently and what are their responsibilities?
- 11.What are the limits of my responsibility and authority?
- 12.What particular things about my background, experience and style interest you - make you think I'll be successful?
- 13.What opportunities are there for growth in my area of responsibility and advancement in the company? On what kind of timetable?
- 14.How long have you been with the company and what do you find most satisfying?

# BODY LANGUAGE

## Four Places to Watch for Body Language

*When meeting someone for the first time, the way you arch your eyebrows, move your hands, or even sit can tell them how you feel. Here's a quick guide to recognizing the subtle messages you might receive—or inadvertently send.*



- **The Head.** People who are genuinely interested will naturally cock their head to the side, as if literally offering an ear to their partner. Raising the eyebrows can also be a sign of interest, as can nodding your head in clusters of three rather than only once. On the other hand, a furrowed brow is often a sign of confusion, and many people bite their lip to soothe themselves in situations that feel awkward or uncomfortable.
- **The Hands.** In the company of unfamiliar faces, most people assume a cautious approach to the conversation keeping their hands in front of them, for example clasping the hands together and resting them on the table. They might also sit back and use small, precise hand gestures when speaking in a slow, quiet manner. Once they're comfortable, however, people open up, relaxing their shoulders and leaning forward to use more animated, open gestures, often "talking with their hands". Adopting a more interested, exciting body language can convey your interest and make you seem more inviting at the same time. On the other hand, crossing your arms will convey defensiveness or annoyance with the conversation.

# BODY LANGUAGE

- **The Habits.** Even among these signals, not all body language tells the whole story. For instance, self-soothing behaviors such as biting your nails could come across to others as results of anxiety or discomfort—both possible signs of deception. Studies show, however, that these behaviors are more indicative of stress than lying; both guilty and innocent parties exhibited them in interview situations.
- **The Eyes.** Likewise, avoiding eye contact is frequently associated with lying, but studies have shown that habitual liars often attempt to compensate by engaging in more eye contact than usual. In fact, humans naturally look away when trying to recall important conversation points, glancing upward when trying to recall a visual memory or to the side (toward the ears) to remember something they heard. So next time you think someone is lying, be aware: they could just be trying to be completely honest about what they saw or remember.



# INTERVIEW PITFALLS

*Here are the top five interviewing blunders that can cost you the job*

## **Arriving unprepared.**

- Before arriving at the company's offices, be sure you're well-versed in as many of the firm's products or services as possible. Try to make sure you can discuss knowledgeably how your skills and background will mesh with those of the company. Don't be afraid to bring materials that you may wish to show right at hand.

## **Wearing the wrong clothes.**

- Experts say that no matter what the corporate culture, you should still dress professionally for that first interview. Simple, conservative business attire for both men and women are still the standard. No heavy fragrances, loud clothes or flashy jewelry.

## **Acting desperate for the job.**

- If you've been asked in for an interview, then the company believes you have something to offer because of your skills and experience. Don't derail that by acting too eager or nervous. Instead, appear confident, relaxed and in control.

## **Talking too much during the interview.**

- Some candidates are so eager to impress the interviewer that they scarcely allow questions to be asked. You wouldn't be in the interviewer's office if you hadn't already demonstrated your appeal. Impress the interviewer with your listening skills, and then thoughtfully lay out why you'll be an asset to the company.

## **Acting "on the fence" about the opportunity.**

- You may be considering multiple opportunities, in addition to the one you are interviewing for, and you may have concerns about relocation that you are struggling with. If you seem "on the fence," it will likely be interpreted by your interviewers as a lack of interest in the company or the opportunity. Make every effort to explore the opportunity fully while at the interview. You can always decide post interview that the opportunity is not a good fit for you. Your goal is to keep the door open if you are sincerely interested.

# FOLLOWING UP AFTER THE INTERVIEW

**Immediately after the interview several actions are critical:**

- “Debrief” after your interview – what do you think went well and what do you think went not so well?
- Write a thank-you letter to each key person you met. Indicate your appreciation for the opportunity to discuss their organization and its needs. Be sure to re-emphasize any pertinent experiences and accomplishments you discussed that may uniquely qualify you for the opportunity.
- Mail your thank you letter off within 2 business days of your interview.
- If you initially decide that the opportunity fails to meet your needs, do not burn your bridges. Still remain polite and only express your disinterest once an offer has been made.



*Immediate follow-up is a crucial part of the interview process – it shows your appreciation for the time the interviewer(s) spent discussing the job with you and considering you for the position.*

# FINAL THOUGHTS

- Remember, the professional job interview is a science that has separate and distinct components where certain basic principles must be applied in order to elicit a job offer and consummate the transaction with an acceptance.
- You have not committed to anything in asking to pursue the position further. You have just let the interviewer know of your level of interest.
- Most important of all, be energetic, enthusiastic and assertive. Maintain a continuity of excitement throughout the interview so you will have credibility at the close when saying, "(interviewer's name), I really enjoyed the chance to discuss this opportunity with you, and I'm very much impressed with your organization. I am interested in the position, and I would like to pursue it to its conclusion."
- These tips and tricks are just a guideline on how to successfully handle the interview process. There are really no hard and fast rules, just suggestions. If you follow these guidelines, your ratio of offers to interviews should increase and after all, isn't that what it's all about?

