



INTERVIEW TIPS

INTERVIEW WITH CONFIDENCE

We are providing this information to help you prepare for your interview - the primary event in your job searching process. We strongly recommend you study this information and to fully prepare prior to your first contact with your prospective employer. Through our years in the recruiting profession we have found these recommendations to be very helpful for our candidates. We hope they will be useful to you.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- The goal of the interview is for both parties to gather enough information to decide if there is a match which will be beneficial to both. Your goal is to gain information on the problems to be solved and what they are looking for you to do. Use this information to focus your responses with examples of your experiences in relation to their needs.
- Could you tell me about the position, the reporting structure and the scope of responsibilities? This is very important. Each of your responses from this point on should focus on how you can meet the specific needs they just explained to you. This helps you be more direct and specific in your answers.
- What is the number one priority for this job on any given day? (This usually allows for you to share your accomplishments. Use concise illustrations that are examples of how much you can contribute, or how you can solve their problems.)
- What is the top priority you would like for me to accomplish in this position? What three things would you like to see accomplished during my first year? Do you know of any obstacles to reaching these goals?
- Ask the interviewers about their backgrounds and to highlight a reason they like working at this hospital. (Find out if this is a place you want to work.)
- Find out the level of authority and autonomy you will have and how your performance will be evaluated.
- Highlight what you can do for the company, not what the company can do for you.
- Ask yourself whether the job is right for you. Accepting a job you are unsuited for hurts yourself and the hospital that hires you.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- Employers want results! Stress accomplishments you have achieved in your career. Did you decrease expenses, increase revenue, decrease absenteeism, improve morale? Try to quantify your results in either a percentage or dollar amount. Let your prospective employer know how much you have to contribute to their hospital.
- Chemistry is critical. Your credentials, experience, and professional background got the interview. The person hired will most likely be the person the employer feels will be able to work best with the team. Look for shared experiences, common backgrounds or working relationships to improve chemistry.



- Do not discuss salary or benefits. If asked, respond with statements such as these: *The opportunity is the most important thing. I understand the salary range is from ___ to ___ and I feel comfortable interviewing based on that salary range. I am open to a fair and competitive offer based on my qualifications, experience and what I can do for you.*
- Ask if there are any concerns that may have arisen during interview. It is best to address any challenges early on to prevent them from becoming a brick wall.
- **Do not leave the interview without expressing your interest in the position and determining the next step in the hiring process.** *I am very excited about this opportunity. I can do the job and make valuable contributions. What is the next step?* If you know you want the job you might want to say: *Please know that if you extend an offer that is fair and competitive, I will accept it.*

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS and RESPONSES

- When answering questions, answer them completely, but do not ramble. Each response should be long enough to answer the question, but not too long. If you find yourself speaking too much, reel yourself in and prepare for the next question. Also, do not answer unanswered questions. Stick to the specific question asked. The chances of hurting yourself are greater than the chance of helping yourself.
- As often as possible, use a story to answer the question. Most answers should have three parts:
 1. The Situation
 2. Your Actions
 3. The Results (which is most important)

Here are possible questions for which you should have an answer prepared:

- Tell me about yourself. Have a 1 to 3 minute answer prepared describing your education and recent jobs in terms of accomplishment or performance indicators. Concentrate on your professional life and do not get too personal. Also use this as an opportunity to sell yourself by explaining (quickly) some of your major accomplishments. Try not to answer this question in depth until you get more information about the job.
- What kind of manager are you? Are you creative? Answer using a mini-story. Give an example, if possible, of a problem or situation, describe your solution and emphasize the positive results.
- Describe your ideal job. What part of your work do you like best? Least? What part is the most difficult for you?
- Tell me about your strengths? Weaknesses? Most useful criticism received? What are you most proud of?
- What methods do you find effective in dealing with people (staff, physicians, administration)? Ineffective? What are your strongest leadership skills?
- How long will you stay with us? *Respond: I am looking for a career opportunity: If I do not do the job, you will not want me to stay. If there is no opportunity, it will not be the type of environment I would enjoy.*
- What is wrong with your present job? Why are you considering leaving? Never say anything negative about current or past employers - keep it positive. Talk about what you are looking for: new challenges, added responsibility, expanding knowledge.
- Tell me about a time when you witnessed a doctor yelling at one of your nurses. How did you handle it?



- What were the circumstances concerning the last time you had to terminate someone and how did you handle it?
- Has administration ever reneged on budgeting for your department? How did you handle it?
- What are your long-range goals? How will this job help you meet these goals?
- How would your current boss describe you? Your staff? Your peers?
- How have you shown initiative? Use a story.
- What have you learned from your other jobs? In what areas do you still need to learn?
- Give me an example of a successful project.
- What do you do when faced with ambiguity? Use a story.
- How have you recognized subordinates? Use a story.
- How do you deal with bad/improper patient care?
- What are some quality improvement initiatives you've taken?
- Describe a situation where you had to make your staff do something they didn't want to do? Use a story.
- How do you resolve conflict? Use a story.
- What has surprised you the most about management?
- What are your values and beliefs? What is important to you?
- Why do you want to work with us?
- Why should we hire you?

ASK YOURSELF....

- Do I want the job?
- Can I do the job?
- Can I visualize myself working there?
- Do I have any unanswered questions?

REMEMBER....

- First impressions are lasting impressions. The decision to **not** hire a candidate is normally made during the first five minutes of an interview. Present yourself in an enthusiastic, positive and professional manner from beginning to end.
- Dress conservatively in proper business attire. For women: skirted business suit, light make-up, modest jewelry, simple pumps.
- Body language is important!
- Sit up and lean in.
- Make eye contact.



- Show you are interested, but not pushy.
- Take fresh copies of your resume and a separate reference list in case you are asked. Having a portfolio pad and pen are helpful for taking notes. List questions you may want to ask and have a handy list of the achievements you want to emphasize.
- As soon as you have a few moments, write down all of your thoughts and impressions about what you saw and heard and whom you met. Get business cards as often as possible for your Thank You cards and emails. Send a follow-up letter (via mail or email) thanking those you met with for their time. Remind them why you are the best person for the job and ask for the job or another interview.
- Contact **Key Nurse Leaders** as soon as possible after each interview. Having your feedback to report to the hiring authority is critical. If you believe there is not a match, say so. The goal is to find a position you are comfortable with.

This document offers a summary of how to prepare for a job interview. It is not all-inclusive, but hopefully it will help you achieve the correct frame of mind when meeting with potential employers. If you have any questions about this information, contact Key Nurse Leaders, 800-729-6674, www.keynurseleaders.com.