

Interviewing Excellence

Your Checklist for Success

Interview Preparation

- Know the types of interviews you may have, and be prepared for each.
- Practice answering common interview questions (download *Sample Interview Questions*).
- Use the *Personal Strengths, Achievements and Personality Traits* worksheet to help you respond to behavioral interview questions using the STAR method (this form will also help you craft your resume).
- Practice answering the five most common interview questions:
 - Why should I hire you?
 - Tell me about yourself.
 - What did you like least about your last job?
 - Describe a difficult work situation or project and how you overcame it.
 - Tell me about a time when ... (see behavioral interview questions in *Sample Interview Questions*)
- Practice appropriate responses to inappropriate (or illegal) interview questions.
- If you are a wounded, ill or injured warrior, be familiar with the unique issues you will need to address in an interview situation.
- Prepare for wildcard questions like, "If you could be any animal, which one and why?" and, "What would you do if you won the lottery?"
- Research the company so you will be able to ask smart questions when the interviewer asks, "Do you have any questions for me?"
- Work on translating your military experience into language a civilian interviewer will understand. Use <http://www.job-hunt.org/veterans-job-search/translating-military-experience.shtml> for guidance.
- Dress for success by wearing a conservative business suit and keeping jewelry to a minimum.
- Arrive at the interview location about ten minutes early, and be courteous to everyone.
- Be prepared to engage in professional small talk before the interview begins.

Interview Performance

- Practice appropriate body language and use it during the interview.
- Bring a list of questions you want to ask your interviewer that demonstrate your knowledge of the company.
- Resist the temptation to ask about salary and benefits at a first interview.

Interview Closing and Follow-up

- Prepare to sell yourself at the end of your interview. Use the interviewer's "hot buttons" and ask about the next steps in the process.
- Send a thank-you letter immediately after your interview.
- Follow through with anything you said you would do in your initial interview.
- Prepare for follow-on interviews.