



A job interviews enable a company to learn more about an applicant, while the candidate has the opportunity to become familiar with the demands of a given position. The process allows both parties to exchange information, ask questions and evaluate the potential for establishing a professional working relationship. Both parties have an opportunity to get a "feel" for one another other and determine if the chemistry is right

Learn the Corporate Dynamic

A thorough understanding of the job opening and the ability to articulate what you bring to the position is a major asset. Also, the manner in which the employer approaches the interview will offer insight into the day-to-day realities of the work place. If the interview is light, conversational and includes a good back-and-forth discussion, that's an indication that the workplace is relaxed. If the interview feels formal or impersonal, it's likely to be a reflection of a more conservative culture.

Sell Your Abilities

The interview gives the employer its first impression of you and provides you with a crucial opportunity to "sell" yourself. The manner in which you present yourself often determines if you are offered the job. You want to establish yourself as a highly competent individual who is well suited for the position -- as well as a competitive salary. The interview also sets the stage for your long-term relationship with the company, establishing your potential for advancement.

Gauge Career Potential

If you have a long-term career plan, the interview is your opportunity to assess if the employer provides the potential for professional development. When discussing long-range goals, the employer can also get a better idea of your objectives, and you can gauge if there's room for significant growth. Ask about mentoring opportunities, the company's policy toward promoting from within, and inquire about upper-level positions to which you might one day ascend.

Determine Earning Power

Many employers don't discuss salary and benefits until the interview stage. After establishing your qualifications, this is an opportunity to discuss compensation, pay increase schedules, retirement plans and perks. You can also inquire if profit-sharing and bonus programs are in place, and discuss your ultimate earning potential.

Meet Potential Colleagues

Some interview formats, especially panel interviews, afford the opportunity to meet potential colleagues. This is especially true in second and third-round meetings when interviewers attempt to assess how well you will fit in with the existing team. Talking to these staffers can help you determine if your personalities will mesh. Ask employees what they enjoy most about their jobs as well as what they see as the most challenging aspects. Take note of how they interact with each other.

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