WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW?

Interviews are important in that they give you, the job seeker, an opportunity to meet a potential employer, determine if you would enjoy working in that employer's environment, and gain a better understanding of the specific job responsibilities required of the position in which you are interested. It therefore serves purposes other than simply obtaining employment.

Interviews allow potential employers the opportunity to meet you, ask additional questions to assist them in deciding whether you would be capable of performing the job responsibilities asked of you, and determine whether you would fit into their particular organization. Potential employers view an interview as the most important part of their hiring process.

Although an interview will determine whether or not you are offered the job, you need to remember that an interview is merely that - an interview. It is not a job offer or an indication that you should end your job search. Although it might be tempting, do not end your job search unless a company for whom you would like to work extends a firm job offer, you accept that offer, and arrangements are made to begin employment with them. After receiving a call to interview, congratulate yourself!! Evidently, your resume, cover letter, and possible telephone correspondence have won favor in someone's eyes and someone has determined it worthwhile to make the necessary arrangements to meet and talk with you.

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW?

Contrary to what most inexperienced interviewers think, you need to spend quality time and effort preparing for interviews. Don't assume you can waltz into an interview and "wing it." Your lack of preparation will be painfully obvious, sending numerous warning signals to a potential employer about your character and future job performance. The following are specific areas you will want to consider when preparing for an interview:

DRESS APPROPRIATELY

This section and packet are not designed to go into great detail about the do's and don'ts to dressing for an interview. How you dress is extremely important, however, therefore consult the appropriate books and videos located in the Career Center or public library for information on appropriate interview attire.

BRING THE NECESSARY INFORMATION WITH YOU

Although there is usually very little you need to bring to an interview, the following are some items you may want to have with you:

- Extra copy of your resume
- Good quality pen and/or pencil
- Page listing three to five of your references
- Briefcase
- Purse or wallet (hidden in your briefcase)
- Any work samples, usually of a written nature, demonstrating your skills and abilities
- Leather bounded paper tablet

RESEARCH THE COMPANY

Most inexperienced interviewers do not understand the value of researching the company with whom they are interested in interviewing and potentially working. By reading recruiting brochures and annual reports, you can become more familiar with a company's products or services, their particular history, and potential challenges they may be experiencing. Such information can also assist you in knowing how to answer potential interview questions and direct those questions you may wish to ask the interviewer. Aside from all of these benefits, however, you will be grateful for having researched the company when an interviewer asks, "What do you know about us?" Company literature may be found in the Career Center and/or public library. The company's personnel office or public relations department may also provide copies of their annual report and promotional brochures.

PRACTICE ANSWERING COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It is imperative that you formulate and practice your answers to potential interview questions before the day of your interview. As mentioned earlier, don't assume you can waltz into an interview and "wing it." Not only will your lack of preparation be painfully obvious to the interviewer, but you will also put yourself in an extremely embarrassing position. A position from which most inexperienced interviewers have a difficult time recovering. Although it is
difficult to anticipate the exact questions an interviewer will ask, you can prepare statements that can easily be adapted to answer any question. Follow these steps:

First: Think about the job requirements and qualifications required of the position you are pursuing. To do this, simply review the position vacancy announcement or relevant information provided to you via oral or written correspondence. For example, let's assume for a moment that you hold a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, have extensive experience in product testing, and are looking for a full-time position utilizing your education and experience. Upon reviewing the employment listings located in the Career Center, you discover that Thomas & Betts is searching for a Lab Engineer. Among other things, the job posting states the successful candidate should possess a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering, experience developing and conducting laboratory test procedures, knowledge of specific field standards and specifications, and strong communication skills. Knowing this type of information is essential to understanding the position for which you are interviewing, and effectively answering questions asked of you. Recruiting brochures, annual reports, or other company literature might also provide descriptions of potential positions. If you can't locate such information, don't panic! Instead, think about what requirements and qualifications would most logically correspond to such a position.

Second: Identify your particular interests, abilities, skills, and personality characteristics that coincide with the particular job requirements and qualifications. Also consider how your education and experience corresponds to the position specifications. For example, as in the case described above, you would want to recall specific job requirements, college experiences, and/or life experiences that provided you with the experience Thomas & Betts is seeking in their announcement.

Third: Review the list of commonly asked interview questions highlighted on page 9 of this packet.

Fourth: Create "mini-stories", lasting one to two minutes in length, that will assist the interviewer in visualizing your use of the particular interests, abilities, skills, and personality characteristics required of the open position. One of your major goals in an interview is to "prove" or convince your potential employer that you would be a good match for the position and company environment. It therefore becomes very important that you effectively identify and communicate such "evidence" or information. For example, as in the Thomas & Betts position, create mini stories that provide examples of your experience developing and conducting laboratory test procedures, knowledge of specific field standards and specifications, and strong communication skills.

Fifth: Attempt to answer the interview questions referred to in the third step by applying the mini stories you developed in the fourth step. Such stories will assist you in answering tough interview questions and supply you with the "evidence" you need to "prove" you are a good match for the position. For example, in your interview with Thomas & Betts, you might be asked to discuss some of your strengths. Remembering the requirements and qualifications of the Lab Engineer position, you might choose to begin your answer by pinpointing legitimate strengths you possess that would be essential strengths of a Lab Engineer. Follow your introduction with brief examples that demonstrate your use of those strengths. Refer to pages 10 and 11 for additional examples of such question and answer exchanges.

Remember, a company's goal in interviewing is to find an individual who would be a good match for the available position and company environment. For those reasons, interview questions are targeted toward identifying whether you are that appropriate match. Therefore, it is imperative that you tailor your answers to show that you possess the needed requirements and qualifications of the position, are confident that you could successfully perform those requirements and qualifications, and would fit into the environment of the company.

UNDERSTAND WHAT AN EMPLOYER IS LOOKING FOR

In addition to asking questions that identify whether an individual is appropriate for the specific available position and general company environment, a potential employer will also be attempting to note a candidates possession of more general personality characteristics. The following list, which has been adapted from the National Association Of Colleges & Employers booklet entitled, "So You're Looking For A Job," highlights a number of such characteristics and provides a brief explanation of their importance to an employer:

- Ability to communicate: Do you have the ability to effectively organize and clearly express your thoughts and ideas via oral or written communication?
- Intelligence: Do you have the ability to understand and conduct your job assignments? Are you able to contribute new and unique ideas to your work?
- Self-confidence: Do you demonstrate a sense of maturity that enables you to deal positively, professionally, and effectively with a variety of situations and people?
• Initiative: Do you have the ability to identify a purpose for work and to take action to ensure that the work is completed?
• Leadership: Can you instruct and guide others to obtain recognized objectives?
• Energy level: Do you demonstrate the capability and forcefulness needed to put a plan into action? Can you maintain the quality of your work at an above-average level?
• Imagination: Can you confront and manage problems that may not have standard solutions?
• Flexibility: Are you capable of changing and being receptive to new situations and ideas?
• Interpersonal skills: Can you draw out the best efforts of individuals so they become effective, enthusiastic members of a team?
• Self-knowledge: Can you recognize and assess your own strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities? Are you able to see yourself as others see you?
• Ability to handle conflict: Can you successfully contend with stressful situations and antagonism?
• Competitiveness: Do you have the capacity to compete with others and the willingness to be measured by your performance in relation to that of others?
• Goal achievement: Do you have the ability to identify and work toward specific goals? Do such goals challenge your abilities?
• Vocational skills: Do you possess the positive combination of education and skills required for the position you are seeking?
• Direction: Have you defined your basic personal needs? Have you determined what type of position will satisfy your knowledge, skills, and goals?
• Selflessness: Are you more interested in what you can do for the company than what the company can do for you? Do you project a customer-oriented attitude?

Strive to portray the above-described characteristics in your answers to interview questions, oral and/or written job search correspondence, and general demeanor.

CONSIDER HOW YOU MIGHT ANSWER AN ILLEGAL QUESTION

Any question that attempts to uncover potentially discriminatory information such as your age, weight, marital status, parental status, race, national origin, or religion is illegal. According to the law, employers can only ask questions that are directly related to the qualifications and requirements of the position for which they are interviewing. If asked a question you suspect is illegal, attempt to understand what information the interviewer is seeking by asking such a question. For example, if the interviewer asks you your age, he/she may really be questioning your ability to successfully conduct the various responsibilities required of the position. After pinpointing what the interviewer is hoping to learn by asking such a question, you need to decide how to respond to it. The following are four possible ways you might respond to an illegal question:

One: You could answer the question just as it is asked of you. For example, as in the case described above, you could simply tell the interviewer your age.

Two: You could point out that he/she has asked an illegal question, and that you would rather not answer the question or prefer him/her to restate the question.

Three: You might respond by saying, “That’s an interesting question; why do you ask?” This type of response turns the question around, forcing the interviewer to explain his/her intentions for asking it.

Four: Although you should never ignore an interviewers question, you can attempt to alter an illegal question somewhat before answering it. For example, as in the case described above, you believe the interviewer has asked your age because he/she wonders whether you would be able to successfully conduct the various responsibilities required of the position. Therefore, you could answer the interviewers question by saying, “If you’re wondering whether I would be able to successfully conduct the responsibilities required of the position, I am confident that I can.” Then describe why you believe you can conduct them successfully, or recall a situation where you successfully managed similar responsibilities.

NOTE QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

Unfortunately, most job seekers who have not held down a “real job” enter an interview with few, if any, well-constructed questions to be asked of a potential employer. The only concern on the mind of these job seekers’ is landing a job. The ultimate goal of a job search is to land a job; however, you want to like the job responsibilities, benefit package, co-workers, and environment in which you will be working. Therefore, you would be wise to generate questions that would assist you in making an educated decision about the various jobs for which you
interview. Do not ask questions readily answered in recruiting brochures, annual reports or position advertisements. The following are examples of questions you might consider tailoring to fit your particular job interviews:

- What specific responsibilities are required of this position?
- To whom would I report? Tell me a little about this person and his/her management style.
- With whom (co-workers and other departments) would I be interacting?
- How does this position fit into the organization as a whole?
- Tell me about the frequency and types of performance reviews?
- What problems might I encounter in this position?
- How might my time be divided?
- Could you describe a typical day in this position?
- What type of individual are you looking for?
- How does the organization feel about continuing education?

Naturally, these are just a handful of possible questions you might consider asking an interviewer. Consult the resources or staff members in the Career Center for additional assistance in formulating your own personal questions.

UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

There are many different types of employment interviews, as well as many different labels given to each of the specific interview types. The following are some of the more common types of interviews, and their corresponding labels:

_Informational Interviews:_ There happen to be two different types of informational interviews. The first type, also called a networking interview, should be treated as a professional job search interview with one exception - you are not there to ask for a job! Granted, this type of interview may eventually lead to a job, but its main purpose is to provide you with information on a particular position, occupation, career field, company, and/or work environment. For example, let's say you were particularly interested in seeking employment with Holiday Inn, but hadn't seen any of their employment ads in the newspaper. Upon consulting the Career Center, you learn that an alumni of CBU is a manager in the restaurant of a local Holiday Inn. Even though you are not interesting in pursuing a position in the restaurant, you obtain the work number of the alumni and arrange to meet with him. Considering you initiated the meeting in order to gather information about Holiday Inn, ask advice on seeking employment with them, and acquire the names of people in the departments in which you are seeking employment, you need to prepare for your meeting by noting questions that will assist you in obtaining your desired information. Such interviews are never a waste of time. The information and advice you uncover may prove to be invaluable in your job search, and the person with whom you talk might refer you to someone who ultimately offers you a job. As with other types of interviews, you will need to arrive early, dress appropriately, prepare well-constructed questions, and send a thank you letter after your appointment.

The second type of informational interview, often thought of as a prospecting interview, should also be treated as a professional job search interview. Although you will want to obtain the same types of information as the above described informational interview, this type of interview differs in that your purpose is to acknowledge you are job searching and explore possible job opportunities. You will also want to leave a copy of your resume with the person with whom you meet. For example, let's say that you hear of a possible position opening up in the marketing department at Kraft Foods, a company and department with whom you would like very much to work. Upon consulting the Career Center, you are able to find the marketing department manager's name and work number. You contact the manager, briefly communicate your interest in Kraft Foods, and ask whether you could meet with him to learn more about the company and possible employment opportunities. Again, remember that you initiated the meeting to learn more about the company, understand the dynamics of the position you hear may open up in the near future, and sell yourself. Therefore, you need to prepare questions that will assist you in obtaining your desired information, and communicating your personal skills and strengths. If upon meeting with the manager, you discover you would not qualify for the forecasted opening, don't despair, a position for which you are qualified might open up in the future. By meeting with the manager you have shown an interest in their particular company, demonstrated many valued characteristics such as initiative and confidence, and sold your skills and strengths. Therefore, you are already one step above other applicants, and one step closer to landing a job. Again, as with other types of interviews, you will want to research the company, arrive early for your appointment, dress appropriately, prepare well-constructed questions, and send a thank you letter after your appointment.

_Screening Interviews:_ Screening interviews may be conducted on college campuses, via the telephone, at job fairs, or through employment firms. They are designed to eliminate less suitable applicants from a particular interview pool. Screening interviews are less time consuming and expensive than formal interviews; hence, their increased use by
companies. As part of the screening process, interviewers may ask potential candidates questions related to such things as their desired salary range, educational background, and previous work experience. For example, if a potential candidate indicated a preference of a $35,000 starting salary and the position only generated a starting salary of $30,000, there is a strong possibility that potential candidate would be eliminated from the interview pool. Usually your main goal in a screening interview is to not be eliminated from further consideration. Unless you realize that you would not be a good match for the position and/or company environment, make every attempt to remain in the interviewer’s favor.

**Stress Interviews**: The main purpose behind stress interviews is to create situations or ask questions that will put interview candidates under stress in hopes of revealing how the candidates handle job-related stress. The following steps may help you in preparing for such interviews:

**Step One**: It is rare that you will be warned of such interviews ahead of time; therefore, you would be wise to prepare for them by anticipating their possibility and watching for clues. Prior to your interview, think about the position for which you are applying and possible job-related responsibilities or situations that may be considered stressful. For example, if you are applying for a position as an FBI agent, one potentially stressful or aggravating responsibility may involve watching a suspect’s house for an indefinite period of time.

**Step Two**: Think about how an interviewer may try to simulate such stress in an interview. In the case of the FBI interview, you may be told to arrive for a 1:00 pm interview. Upon arrival, you may find yourself sitting in a room with thirty other candidates who are waiting for the same 1:00 pm interview. Even if the clock strikes 2:00 pm, if you are interested in being interviewed for an FBI position, it is in your best interest to wait patiently.

**Step Three**: Identify that the interviewer may intentionally be creating a situation or asking questions that will cause you stress. Attempt to remain calm and focused. Do not get defensive or angry. As in the case of the FBI interview, it is very possible that the waiting period is part of your interview. If you show any frustration in waiting and/or leave, you may possibly have demonstrated a lack of patience - a critical characteristic of an FBI agent.

Other stress-inducing tactics may include using a significant amount of silence throughout the interview, indicating you are not qualified for the position for which you are applying, and/or asking a series of questions so quickly that you barely have time to think about your answers.

**Series Interviews**: Series interviews consist of a number of individual interviews with several individuals from the same organization. Series interviews are typically held during the course of one day, and may involve interviews with the Personnel Department, your potential supervisor, potential co-workers, and members from other departments with whom you may interact. Although you may find such interview days to be long and draining, you need to strive to remain alert, enthusiastic, and focused. Attempt to treat each interview as if it were your first interview. Remember that each individual with whom you interview will be talking with you for the first time, therefore, you need to be conscientious about continuing to make a good first impression. Prior to interviewing each candidate, the interviewers typically meet to discuss the types of questions they are to ask each candidate. Sometimes each interviewer asks questions that focus on the relationship he/she will have with the candidate. For example, if you are interviewing for a position in the marketing department, a member of the manufacturing department might ask how you might effectively market one of their new products. Other times, a list of designated questions are divided among the interviewers in order to supply structure to each interview and eliminate duplicate questions. After all interviews have been conducted, the interviewers will typically meet to discuss their impressions of each candidate. Although each interviewer contributes his/her opinions and decisions, the ultimate hiring decision is left up to the hiring manager.

**Group Interviews**: Unless you are familiar with this type of interview concept, you may find yourself confused and frustrated in a group interview. Group interviews involve the interviewing of several job candidates at the same time. As with stress interviews, ask yourself what the interviewers hope to learn about you through the group interview process. Think about the qualifications and responsibilities of the position for which you are applying. Then, attempt to exhibit those desired qualifications or demonstrate your ability to carry out the required responsibilities through the group interview. Among other things, group interviews allow potential employers to observe the leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills of their candidates. Although the interviewers note the content of the discussions taking place in the interview, they are more interested in the how each candidate conducts himself/herself.

**Board Interviews**: Board interviews are the reverse of group interviews. In a board interview, you are interviewed by two or more interviewers at the same time. Such interviews may be handled a few different ways. Interviewers may either take turns asking their questions, or each interviewer may ask all his/her questions before the next interviewer begins his/her questions. As with series interviews, interviewers may be assigned specific questions or
be allowed to ask questions more specific to their particular interests. Regardless of the process or types of questions asked, you will want to direct your response to all interviewers present, even those who are not paying attention to you.

This packet does not discuss lunch, dinner, or out of town interviews. Preparing for such interviews is important, however, therefore consult the appropriate packets, books, and videos located in the Career Center or public library for assistance in preparing for such events.

**KNOW WHO YOU ARE MEETING AND HAVE ACCURATE DIRECTIONS TO THE INTERVIEW SITE**

It is critical that you know the name of the person with whom you will be interviewing, as well as have exact directions to the interview site. Be sure to write down the interviewer's name and business title so that you can send him/her a thank you letter following the interview. You will want to arrive for your interview at least ten minutes prior to your scheduled time. If you are unfamiliar with the directions, parking arrangements, or amount of time needed to get to the site, you need to find such details prior to your interview day. You would be wise to drive to the site the day before your interview in order to understand where it is located, identify guest parking areas, and clock the amount of travel time needed.

**WHAT TYPES OF FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES ARE APPROPRIATE?**

Although the majority of your energy should be focused on preparing for your interview, you need to remember that regardless of how confident you felt after the interview, you still have a few more steps to complete before actually landing the job. To ensure that you have completed every possible step in the process, consider the following follow-up procedures:

**SEND A THANK YOU LETTER**

You would be wise to send a thank you letter immediately following an interview. Among other things, thanking an interviewer for meeting with you conveys respect for the interviewer, and enthusiasm for the company and position for which you interviewed. Also, interviewers may have interviewed several people for that particular position; therefore, such correspondence can play a vital role in reminding the interviewer of your qualifications. Considering thank you letters also provide a potential employer with insight into your personality and professional conduct, you will want to ensure their content and appearance are professional. In the case of informational interviews where your intentions were to simply gather information about the company and/or job opportunities, you would also be wise to send the person with whom you spoke a thank you letter. You never know what part that person may eventually play in your job search; therefore, you would be wise to cover all of your bases.

Thank you letters may be handwritten or typed, and are typically sent on 5 1/2 X 8 1/2 sized stationary or smaller note cards. Your paper or note cards should be plain, possibly white or cream in color with little or no decoration. They should be mailed in envelopes of similar color and weight. Although thank you letters should be unique to your particular interview experience, there are some general guidelines you may wish to follow when writing them. As with cover letters, they will typically have three main paragraphs. The first paragraph should thank the interviewer for meeting with you. The second paragraph should reiterate your interest in the company and position for which you interviewed. It should also remind the interviewer of your particular job related strengths. The third paragraph should indicate what you would like to have happen next.

Although thank you letters should express your own personal information in your own style, writing them can be somewhat intimidating. Refer to page 12 of this packet for sample thank you letters, and/or consult the resources and staff members in the Career Center for additional assistance in their creation.

**CALL THE INTERVIEWER**

It is perfectly acceptable to call an interviewer within two weeks of your interview to inquire about the status of the search to fill the position for which you interviewed. While some search committees strive to fill positions within a few days of interviewing candidates, others may take longer in their process. Although it is the practice of many companies to send letters of rejection to those candidates who were not chosen, unfortunately not all companies allow you that courtesy. Inquiring into the status of the search will tell you whether someone else has been offered the position or whether the search process is simply taking longer to complete. As with sending a thank you letter, calling the interviewer conveys continued enthusiasm for the company and position for which you interviewed. It also reminds the interviewer of your particular qualifications.
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I NEED TO REVIEW OR CONSIDER?

How you conduct yourself in an interview may determine how you will be viewed by your boss and co-workers; it may also determine the future salary potential you can expect. Therefore, if you want your interview to be as successful as possible, it is essential that you prepare for it. The following is a checklist of things to review prior to your interviews:

- Do you have directions to the interview site? Have you clocked the amount of travel time needed?
- Have you made necessary parking arrangements, or know where you should park?
- Are you certain of your interview time?
- Do you know the name and title of the person with whom you are interviewing?
- Are you dressed professionally in clean, pressed clothing?
- Are your accessories (jewelry, perfume/cologne, makeup) conservative?
- Is the information on your resume accurate? Do you have extra copies of your resume?
- Do you have copies of your reference page?
- Have you asked permission of your references to use their names in your job search?
- Have you reviewed potential interview questions and your responses to them?
- If applicable, do you have sample copies of your work?
- Have you reviewed those questions you would like to ask of the interviewer?
- Are you knowledgeable on the company and position for which you are interviewing?
- Do you know your salary expectations and/or have a salary range in mind?
- Do you have paper and something professional looking with which to write?

In addition to reviewing the various sections in this packet, you may also want to discuss your personal interviewing strategies with a career counselor in the Career Center. A career counselor can assist you in formulating answers to specific interview questions based on your personal background and experiences, and in understanding the types of questions you may want to ask potential employers. A career counselor can also assist you in the writing of thank you letters and other job search correspondence.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER A DECISION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED?

Depending on the type of decision generated from the company's search process and your response to that decision, your job search may either involve one less lead or be nearing its completion. Regardless, there are a few more points to cover before the process with the particular company with whom you interviewed is over. The following are a few of such points:

SEND WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE

Although many people are familiar with cover letters and thank you letters, few are knowledgeable about letters that communicate a withdrawal from consideration for a position, respond to being rejected from consideration for a position, and acknowledge acceptance of a job offer. Such correspondence, however, is important in the job search process. Considering it is not common to spend your entire career with any one particular company, you need to anticipate conducting a number of job searches throughout your working life. You therefore need to cover all of your bases—present and future. These letters are further outlined below.

Withdrawal from consideration: If you are either scheduled to interview or have interviewed with a particular company, and then decide that you could either not accept the position or work for the company, you would be wise to send your company contact a withdrawal from consideration letter. Not only is such correspondence courteous, it could also prove vital to the company's search to fill the position. Most companies invite individuals who have been selected from a large pool of applicants to interview. Therefore, informing the company that you are no longer interested in the position allows the company to select another interested candidate from its pool. Not only would you save the company time and money in their search process, but you would also allow someone who might have been rejected from consideration to interview. When writing such a letter, do not belabor your decision. Simply verbalize your decision, and thank the company contact for his/her invitation to interview or job offer. Remember that how you conduct yourself will be very important. Not only do you not want to burn any bridges, but you also do not know who those company representatives know at companies with which you may be hoping to interview.

Response to rejection: If you either apply or interview for a particular position, and receive a letter rejecting you from acceptance, you would be wise to send a letter of response to the rejection if you are interested in being considered for future positions with the company. Understandably, most people choose to not respond in such situations, however, responding to a rejection may prove helpful for future considerations. When writing such a letter,
briefly acknowledge your disappointment, then reiterate your interest in working for the company. Also highlight your particular job related strengths and positions to which you would best be suited. Continue to project confidence and professionalism; a company will be less likely to consider you for another position if you portray an attitude of defeat and/or desperation.

**Acceptance of job offer:** If you are offered a position with a company and wish to accept the offer, you are encouraged to send a formal letter of acceptance in addition to verbally acknowledging acceptance to your company contact. Such correspondence is somewhat of a formality and generally is kept in your personnel file once an official employee. When writing such a letter, simply state your acceptance of the job offer, enthusiasm for the position and company, and understanding of your official start date.

Consult the resources and staff members in the Career Center for additional assistance in both understanding when such correspondence is appropriate and creating such correspondence.

**UPDATE AND THANK ALL NETWORKING SOURCES**

As mentioned earlier, it is not common to spend your entire career with any one particular company; therefore, you need to anticipate conducting a number of job searches throughout your working life. This realization implies that you may need to rely upon the references and networking sources utilized in your present job search in the future. Therefore, you would be wise to periodically touch base with such valuable sources, as well as, update them regarding the status of any ongoing job searches. After landing a position, be sure to contact your sources to thank them for their assistance and educate them on the dynamics of your new position. You will also want to contact the Career Center after landing a position if they were a source in your job search so that your file may be removed from the Resume Referral Program.

**A WORD ABOUT STRESS!**

Everyone will be nervous the day of an interview--job candidates and interviewers alike--everyone! Naturally, people experience the stress of an interview to different degrees, but everyone will be nervous. It's normal and natural. Considering such stress is inevitable, preparation and confidence are essential keys to lessening the degree of stress you experience.

**COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- What goals, other than those related to your career, have you established for yourself for the next ten years?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- What do you really want to do in life?
- What are your long-range career objectives? Your short-range?
- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- What do you expect to be earning in five years?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
- What salary are you expecting?
- How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- Why should I hire you?
- What qualifications do you have that makes you think you will be successful in this position or occupation?
- How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in a company such as ours?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and a subordinate.
- What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction and why?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- Why did you select you college or university?
- What college subjects did you like best? Why?
- What college subjects did you like least? Why?
- If you could do things over, how would you plan your academic study differently? Why?
- What changes would you make in your college or university?
Do you have plans for continued study? If so, explain your plans.
Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?
In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
How do you work under pressure?
In what part-time or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?
How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?
Why did you decide to seek a job with this company?
What do you know about our organization?
What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for whom you would like to work?
Do you have a geographic preference? Why?
Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
Are you willing to travel?
Are you willing to spend at least six months as a trainee?
Why do you think you might like to live in the community in which our company is located?
What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
What have you learned from your mistakes?
Tell me about yourself.

Remember: These are just some of the questions you might be asked. There are certainly thousands of others. The key is not to memorize answers to particular questions—just as sure as you do, you won't be asked that question! This list is provided to help you develop a thought process to be able to answer these questions and related ones.

SAMPLE QUESTION AND ANSWER EXCHANGES

Question: “What type of salary are you expecting to receive?”

Answer: Although negotiating a salary is an important part of the interview process, you need to fully understand the dynamics of the job and benefits package before setting a specific price. Naturally, you will want to have some type of salary range in mind prior to your interview. It would be a good idea to consult the Salary Survey by the National Association of Colleges & Employers prior to your interview, available in the Career Center. When approached with such a question, there are numerous ways you might choose to respond. The following are a few of such ways:

One: You will want to avoid answering salary related questions early in an interview considering your answer to such a question will depend on your knowledge of the position particulars and stage in the interview process. Therefore, if you are asked the question early in the interview, you might respond by saying, “I would like to hear more about the dynamics of the position before considering a salary.”

Two: If you are asked the question later in the interview but are hesitant about responding with a specific salary range, you might reverse the question by asking, “What is the salary range for this particular position?” Depending on the interviewers response, you could then agree or disagree with the range presented.

Three: If you are asked the question later in the interview and understand the dynamics of the position, but are still wanting to be somewhat vague, you might respond by saying, ”I am looking for a salary that considers my educational background and experience, and is compatible with the responsibilities of my position.”

Four: If you are confident about the type of salary you require to live comfortably, and if your background justifies asking for a particular salary range, you might respond by saying, ”Given my educational background and experience, I am considering salaries ranging between $25,000 and $30,000.” You will then need to consider how you will respond to the interviewer if he/she agrees or disagrees with your specific range.

Question: “Tell me about yourself.”

Answer: Although you may dread being asked a form of this particular question, its open ended nature can actually work to your advantage if you think strategically about how to answer it. Think about what you want most to convey
to the interviewer. Naturally, you want him/her to believe you would be a good match for the available position and company environment. Therefore, contemplate how you can effectively communicate that information in your response. Given everyone has such unique backgrounds, experiences, and career goals, there are infinite ways to respond to such a question. The following are a few steps to assist you in formulating your own response:

**First:** You might begin your response by highlighting various points about your background. You could recall such information as where you were born, what high school you attended, what college you attended, why you chose to attend that particular college, what subjects you enjoyed in school, and what extracurricular activities you participated in during college.

**Second:** You could expand your response by discussing any career-related positions you have held, the various career-related experience you have obtained, and/or why you decided to pursue a career in your particular field. Make every attempt to emphasize those positions and experiences that relate directly to the position for which you are interviewing.

**Third:** After painting a visual picture of your progression into your career field and position of interest, you could then stress your desire to apply your educational background, interests, and experience toward a position such as the one for which you are interviewing.

**Question:** "What do you consider to be your weaknesses?"

**Answer:** Considering everyone has weaknesses, you would come across as arrogant or naive if you insisted that you have none! Therefore, you need to carefully review your weaknesses and mentally put them into one of the following four categories:

**One:** The first category involves those weaknesses that would be detrimental to the position for which you are interviewing. For example, if the job requires an individual who has excellent communication skills, and you realize that you need more practice effectively organizing and clearly expressing your thoughts in written forms of communication, you would not want to respond by saying that you have weak communication skills. Granted, if confronted with a question concerning your communication skills, you don't want to lie about your weakness. Instead, you might respond to the question by saying, "My written communication skills are not as strong as I would like for them to be. Therefore, I am currently taking steps to improve my effectiveness in that area." Then briefly describe how you are working to improve that particular skill.

**Two:** The second category involves strengths that, when overextended, become weaknesses. For example, you might consider yourself to be a perfectionist or workaholic. Naturally, employers would want their employees to perform every aspect of their jobs to the best of their abilities. Therefore, your interviewer may actually approve of your revealed weaknesses. If possible, select a weakness (overextended strength) that would lend itself well to the position for which you are interviewing.

**Three:** The third category involves those weaknesses that are insignificant from a potential employer's point of view. For example, if your position only involves the marketing of products, you won't hurt your chances of being offered the position if you reveal that you are not an effective money manager.

**Four:** The fourth category includes weaknesses of which the interviewer is already aware. For example, if the position involves the use of a computer program with which you are unfamiliar, and the interviewer knows that you do not have experience with that particular program, you could state that as your weakness. After stating such a weakness, you would be wise to discuss how you intend to correct your weakness once hired.

**Question:** "What do you see yourself doing in five years?"

**Answer:** An interviewer might ask this question for a number of different reasons. He/she may be curious about the length of time you plan to stay with the company if hired, your intentions for the position for which you are interviewing, your goals for moving up in the company, any plans in your personal life that might conflict with your job, and so forth. Think realistically about the question, and about the consequences of your response. Naturally the interviewer will understand that certain areas of your life might change in five years, but he/she will still be interested in hearing whether you have thought about your future.
Handwritten Thank You Letter In Response To A Prospecting Informational Interview

August 15, 2004

Dear Mr. Stone,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me this past Monday. I enjoyed learning more about the Marketing Department and Kraft Foods in general.

Although I was disappointed to learn you are not in need of someone with my educational background and experience at this time, I did find our time together to be worthwhile.

I would be very interested in working with a team such as yours, and therefore would appreciate your contacting me if a position for which I am suited becomes available.

Yours Truly,

Amanda Sarginski

Typed Thank You Letter In Response To A Job Interview

June 10, 2004

Ms. Sarah Anderson
Laboratory Manager
Thomas & Betts
79 South Machinery Court
Memphis, Tennessee 35222

Dear Ms. Anderson:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview Monday for the Lab Engineer position. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about Thomas & Betts and the Electrical Division.

The interview confirmed my strong desire to work for your company and affirmed my enthusiasm about applying my education and experience to the Lab Engineer position.

Thank you again for your consideration. As discussed, I look forward to hearing from you within the next two weeks.

Sincerely,

(SIGNATURE)

Randy L. Pierce