

# Excellence in Business Communication



# **Excellence in Business Communication**

## **Chapter 16 Applying and Interviewing for Employment**

# Learning Objectives (1 of 2)

1. Explain the purposes of application letters and describe how to apply the AIDA organizational approach to them.
2. Describe the typical sequence of job interviews, the major types of interviews, and the attributes employers look for during an interview.

# Learning Objectives (2 of 2)

3. List six tasks you need to complete to prepare for a successful job interview.
4. Explain how to succeed in all three stages of an interview.
5. Identify the most common employment messages that follow an interview and explain when you would use each one.

# Application Letters

(LO 1) Explain the purposes of application letters and describe how to apply the AIDA organizational approach to them.

# Writing Application Letters

## Solicited

- Advertised Job Opportunity
- Clear Job Qualifications
- Increased Competition

## Prospecting

- Unannounced Opportunity
- Unclear Job Qualifications
- Fewer Competitors

# Solicited Application Letter

27225 Eucalyptus Avenue  
Long Beach, CA 90806  
March 13, 2017

Sea-Air Global Transport  
5467 Port of Tacoma Rd., Suite 230  
Tacoma, WA 98421

Dear Hiring Manager:

Sea-Air Global Transport consistently appeared as a top transportation firm in the research I did for my senior project in global supply chain management, so imagine my delight when I discovered the opening for an export pricing analyst in your Tacoma headquarters (Position Code: T23-6678). With a major in business and a minor in statistical methods, my education has been ideal preparation for the challenges of this position.

In fact, my senior project demonstrates most of the skills listed in your job description, including written communication skills, analytical abilities, and math aptitude. I enjoyed the opportunity to put my math skills to the test as part of the statistical comparison of various freight modes.

As you can see from my résumé, I also have more than three years of part-time experience working with customers in both retail and commercial settings. This experience taught me the importance of customer service, and I want to start my professional career with a company that truly values the customer. In reviewing your website and reading several articles on Lloyd's List and other trade websites, I am impressed by Sea-Air's constant attention to customer service in this highly competitive industry.

My verbal communication skills would be best demonstrated in an interview, of course. I would be happy to meet with a representative of your company at their earliest convenience. I can be reached at dalton.k.smith@gmail.com or by phone at (562) 555-3737.

Sincerely,

Dalton Smith

The first sentence grabs attention by indicating knowledge of the company and its industry.

The reference to his résumé emphasizes his customer service orientation and also shows he has done his homework by researching the company.

The letter doesn't include a handwritten signature because it was uploaded to a website along with his résumé.

The opening paragraph identifies the specific job for which he is applying.

In this discussion of his skills, he echoes the qualifications stated in the job posting.

In the close, he politely asks for an interview in a way that emphasizes yet another job-related skill.

# Ineffective Unsolicited Application Letter

457 Mountain View Rd.  
Clear Lake, IA 50428  
June 16, 2017

Ms. Patricia Downing, Store Manager  
Walmart  
840 South Oak  
Iowa Falls, IA 50126

Dear Ms. Downing:


Do you have any openings for people who want to move into store management? I am really looking for an opportunity to get a job like yours, even if it takes starting at a low level and working my way up.

Allow me to list some highlights from my enclosed résumé. First, I have a BA degree in retailing, which included such key courses as retailing, marketing, management, and business information systems. Second, I have worked as a clerk and as an assistant manager in a large department store. Third, I have experience in the customer-facing aspect of retailing, as well as operations, marketing, and personnel supervision.

Successful retailing is about more than systems and procedures. It is also about anticipating customer needs, fostering positive relationships with the community, and delivering the type of service that keeps customers coming back. Retailers that fail in any of these areas are doomed to decline in today's hypercompetitive sales environment. I am the sort of forward-thinking, customer-focused leader who can help you avoid this fate.

I will call you next Wednesday at 2:00 to explain why I would make a great addition to your team.

Sincerely,

- 
- ← The writer commits three major mistakes in the first paragraph: asking a question that she could answer herself by visiting the company's website, failing to demonstrate any knowledge of the company, and making the message all about her.
  - ← This paragraph merely repeats information from the enclosed résumé, which wastes the reader's time and wastes the opportunity for the writer to present a more complete picture of herself.
  - ← Johns attempts to show that she understands retailing, but this paragraph comes across as an arrogant lecture. The tone is particularly inappropriate, given that she is writing to the store's top manager.
  - ← The call to action is overly aggressive, and it presumes that the reader will be available and willing to take a phone call from a complete stranger about a job opening that might not even exist.



# Effective Unsolicited Application Letter

457 Mountain View Rd.  
Clear Lake, IA 50428  
June 16, 2017

Ms. Patricia Downing, Store Manager  
Walmart  
840 South Oak  
Iowa Falls, IA 50126

Dear Ms. Downing:

Even with its world-class supply chain, admired brand name, and competitive prices, Walmart obviously would not be the success it is without enthusiastic, service-driven associates and managers. If you have or foresee an opening for such a professional, someone eager to learn the Walmart way and eventually move into a management position, please consider me for the opportunity.

As an associate or management trainee, I can bring a passion for retailing and the perspective I've gained through academic preparation and four years of experience. (Please refer to my enclosed résumé for more information.)

Working as a clerk and then as an assistant manager in a large department store taught me how to anticipate customer needs, create effective merchandising, and deliver service that keeps customers coming back. Moreover, my recent BA degree in retailing, which encompassed such courses as retailing concepts, marketing fundamentals, management, and business information systems, prepared me with in-depth awareness of contemporary retailing issues and strategies.

I understand Walmart prefers to promote its managers from within, and I would be pleased to start out with an entry-level position until I gain the necessary experience. Could we have a brief conversation about the possibilities of joining your team? I am available by phone at 641-747-2222 or email at [glendajohns@mailnet.com](mailto:glendajohns@mailnet.com).

Sincerely,

*Glenda Johns*

Glenda Johns  
Enclosure

Johns gets the reader's attention by demonstrating good awareness of the company and the type of people it hires, presents herself as just such a professional, and then asks to be considered for any relevant job openings.

Johns uses the body of her letter to expand on the information presented in her résumé, rather than simply repeating that information.

The close builds the reader's interest by demonstrating knowledge of the company's policy regarding promotion.

The call to action is respectful, and it makes a response easy for the reader by providing both phone and email contact information.

# Tips for Application Letters

(1 of 2)

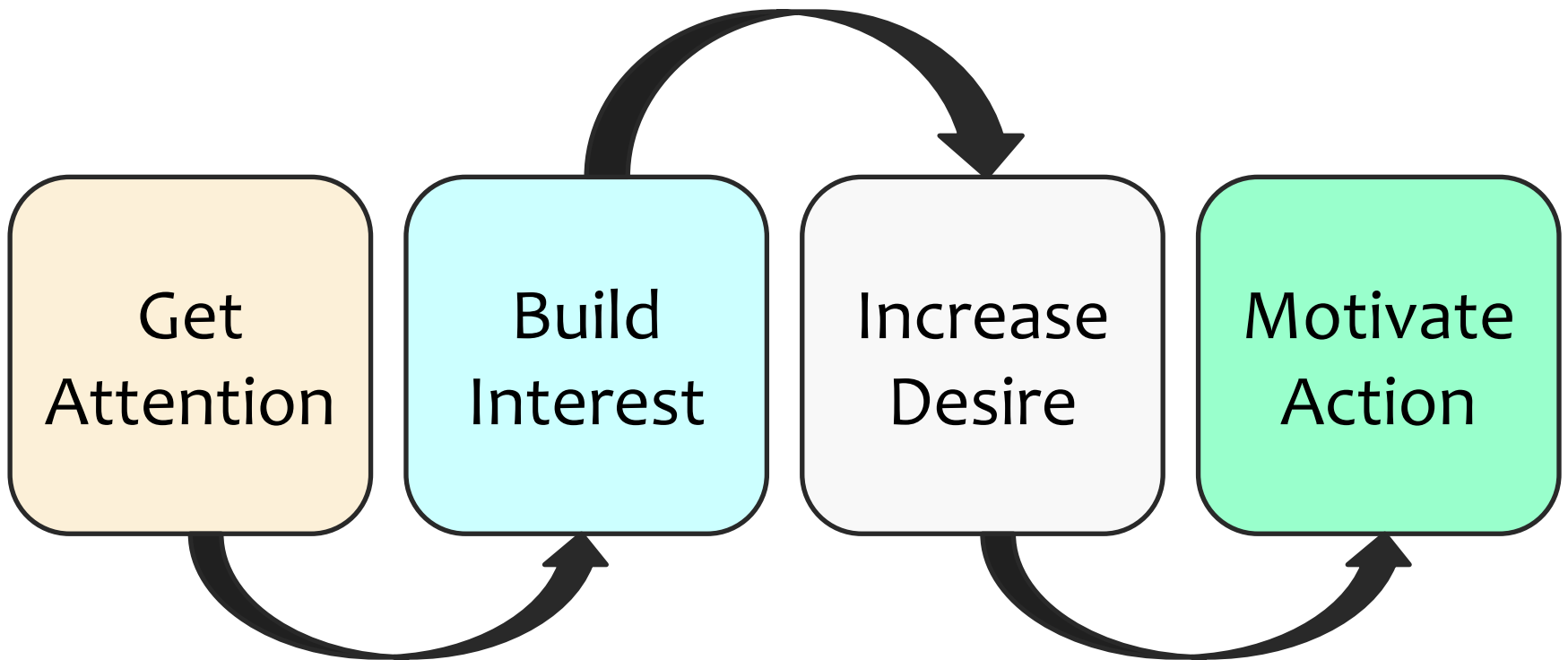
- Write Your Letter to a Specific Person
- Clearly Identify the Opportunity
- Show You Understand the Company
- Don't Volunteer Salary History

# Tips for Application Letters

(2 of 2)

- Keep Your Message Short
- Show Personality, But Be Businesslike
- Project Confidence, Not Arrogance
- Don't Repeat Résumé Information

# Using the AIDA Plan for Application Letters



# Tips for Getting Attention in Application Letters

TABLE 16.1 Tips for Getting Attention in Application Letters

Tip	Example
<b>Unsolicited Application Letters</b>	
Show how your strongest skills will benefit the organization.	If you need a regional sales specialist who consistently meets sales targets while fostering strong customer relationships, please consider my qualifications.
Describe your understanding of the job's requirements and show how well your qualifications fit them.	Your annual report stated that improving manufacturing efficiency is one of the company's top priorities for next year. Through my postgraduate research in systems engineering and consulting work for several companies in the industry, I've developed reliable methods for quickly identifying ways to cut production time while reducing resource use.
Mention the name of a person known to and highly regarded by the reader.	When Janice McHugh of your franchise sales division spoke to our business communication class last week, she said you often need promising new marketing graduates at this time of year.
Refer to publicized company activities, achievements, changes, or new procedures.	Today's issue of the <i>Detroit News</i> reports that you may need the expertise of computer programmers versed in robotics when your Lansing tire plant automates this spring.
Use a question to demonstrate your understanding of the organization's needs.	Can your fast-growing market research division use an interviewer with two years of field survey experience, a B.A. in public relations, and a real desire to succeed? If so, please consider me for the position.
Use a catchphrase opening if the job requires ingenuity and imagination.	<i>Haut monde</i> —whether referring to French, Italian, or Arab clients, it still means “high society.” As an interior designer for your Beverly Hills showroom, not only could I serve and sell to your distinguished clientele, but I could also do it in all these languages. I speak, read, and write them fluently.
<b>Solicited Application Letters</b>	
Identify where you discovered the job opening; describe what you have to offer.	Your job posting on Monster.com for a cruise-line social director caught my eye. My eight years of experience as a social director in the travel industry would equip me to serve your new Caribbean cruise division well.

# Following Up After Submitting Your Résumé

- Communicate Professionally
- Follow Employer's Instructions
- Observe Job Posting's Close Date

# Asking Follow-Up Questions

- Has a hiring decision been made?
- Can you tell me what will happen next?
- What is the company's time frame?
- Could I follow up in another week?
- Can I provide additional information?

# Understanding the Interview Process

(LO 2) Describe the typical sequence of job interviews, the major types of interviews, and the attributes employers look for during an interview.

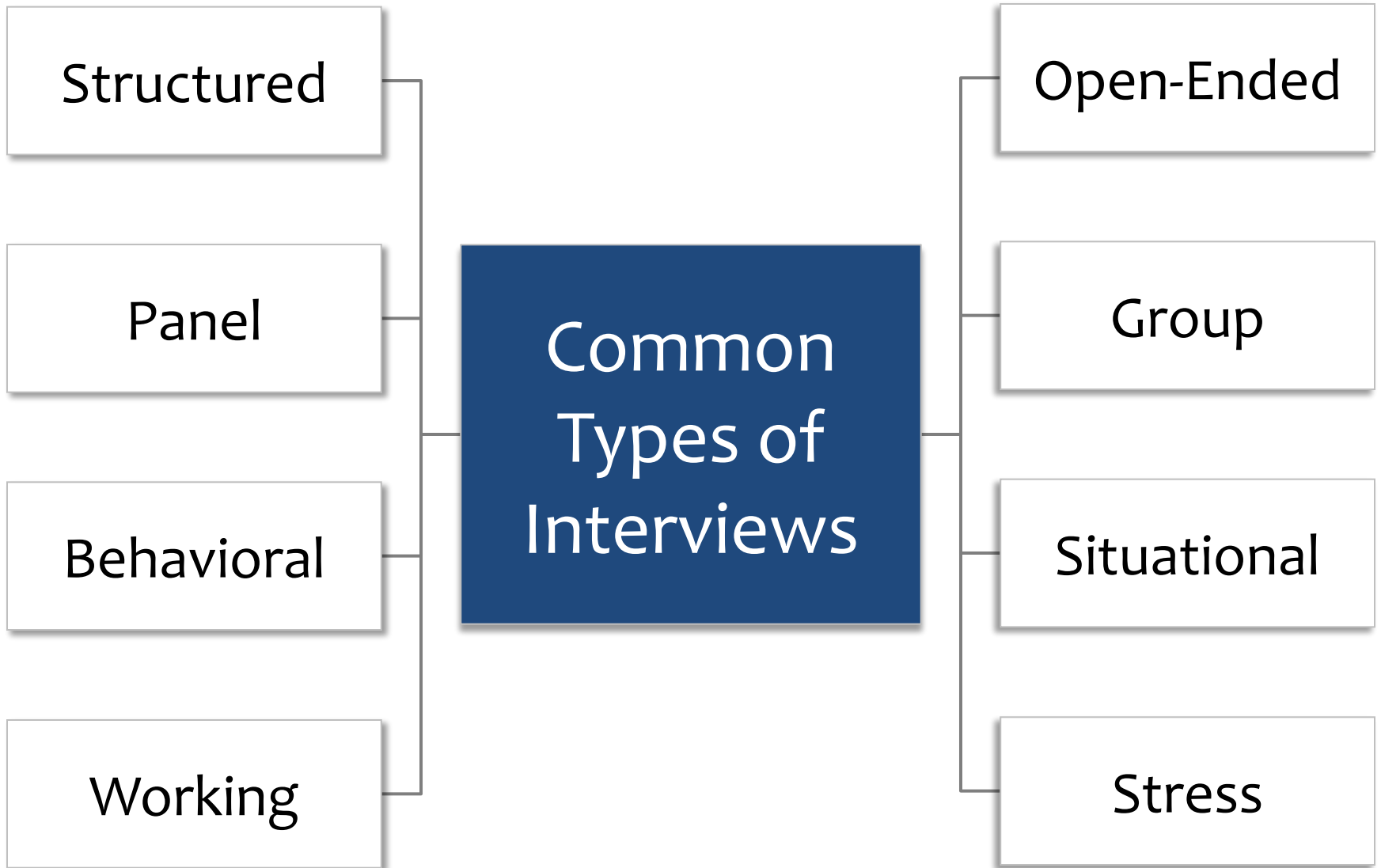


# The Typical Sequence of Interviews

(1) The Screening Stage

(2) The Selection Stage

(3) The Final Stage



# Interview Media

Telephone

Email and IM

Video

Online Interviews

# Job Task Simulation



## Teller Virtual Job Tryout<sup>®</sup>

### Perform Financial Transactions

- Brian's check has been scanned into your computer. Please verify that the items that appear on the computer screen match the information on Brian's check.



Verification		Match	Error
Routing Number	149983456	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Account Number	8703945572	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Check Number	1452	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Check Amount	\$1,432.75	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Intro Example Tips



# What Employers Look for in an Interview

## Suitability

Education

Work Experience

Job-Related Traits

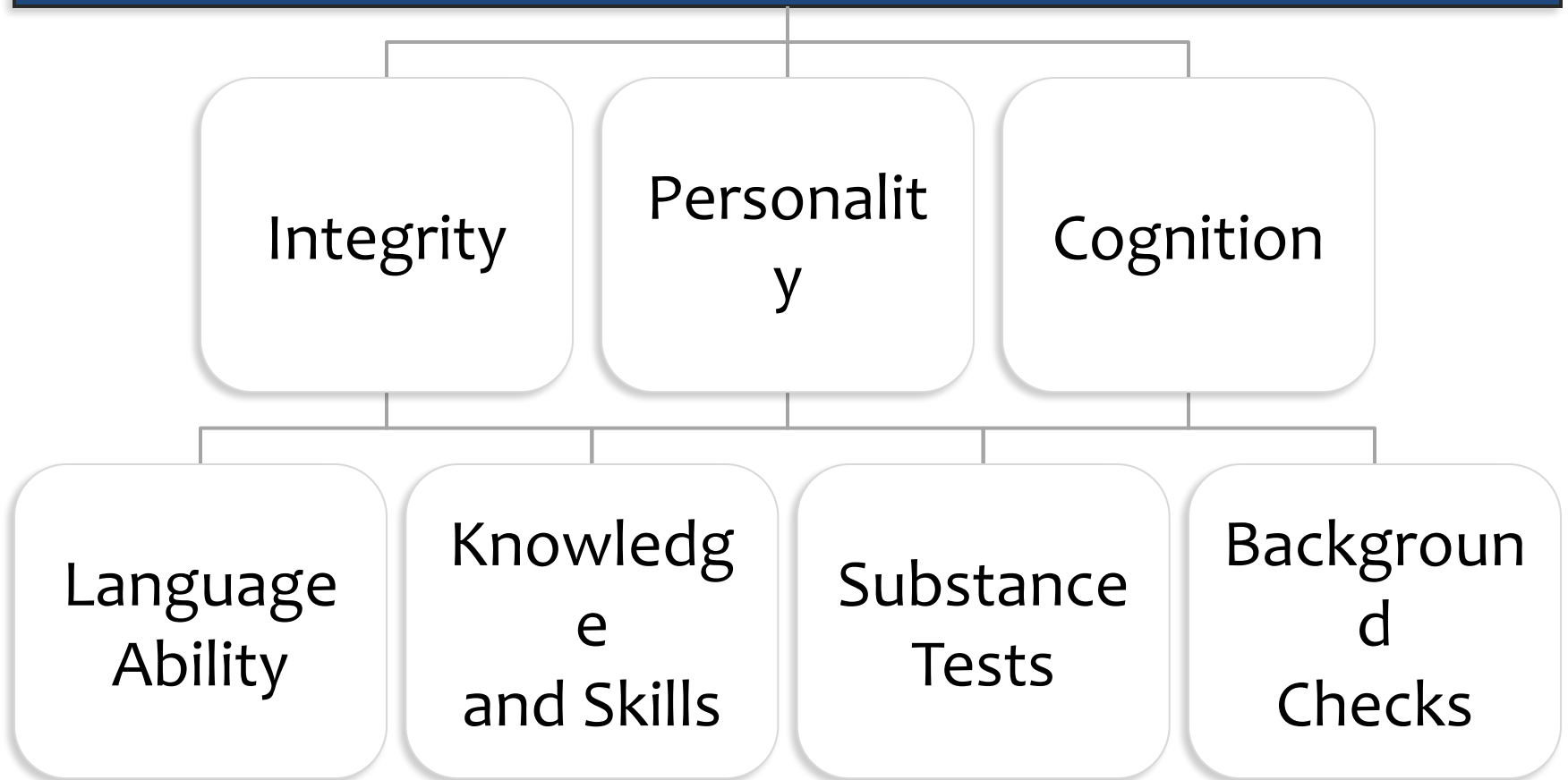
## Organization Fit

Background

Attitudes

Personal Style

# Preemployment Testing and Background Checks



# Preparing for a Job Interview

(LO 3) List six tasks you need to complete to prepare for a successful job interview.

# Learning About the Organization

Information About the Company

- Operations
- Markets
- Challenges

Information About the Managers

- Names and job titles
- Common interests
- Organizations



# Thinking Ahead About Questions

## □ Typical Employer Interview Questions □

- What's the hardest decision you've made?
- What's your greatest weakness?
- Where do you want to be in five years?
- What didn't you like about previous jobs?
- Tell me something about yourself.
- How do you spend your free time?

# Planning Questions of Your Own

Demonstrate  
Understanding

Steer the  
Discussion

Evaluate the  
Opportunity

Meet Interviewer  
Expectations

# Boosting Your Confidence



Focus on Your Value to the Company



Emphasize Your Positive Attributes



Highlight Your Individual Strengths



Know How You Can Help the Employer

# Polishing Your Interview Style

## Build Your Competence and Confidence



Staging Mock Interviews



Observing Your Nonverbal Behavior



Improving Your Speaking Voice

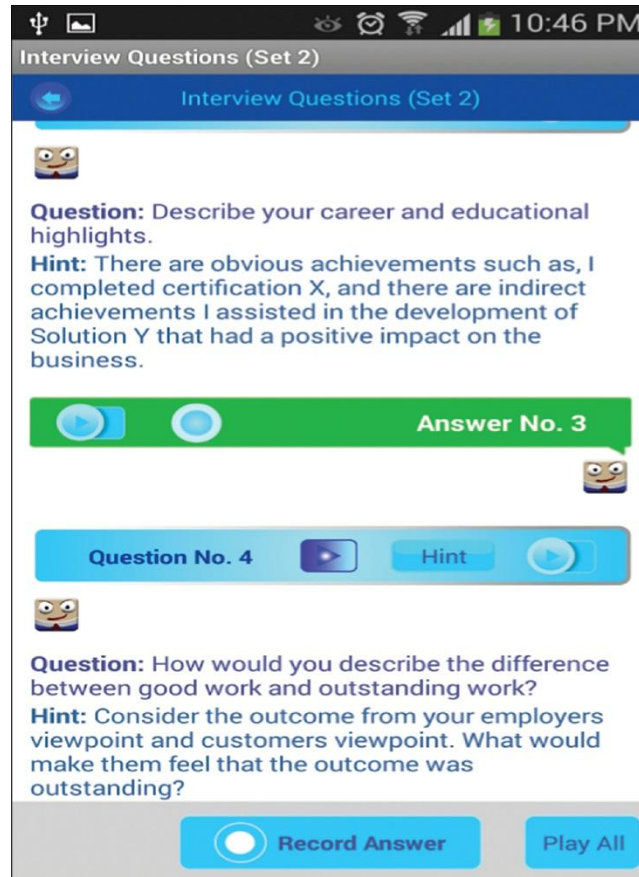
# Presenting a Professional Image (1 of 2)

- Neat “adult” hairstyle
- Conservative business suit (formal)
- Business casual attire (less formal)
- Limited jewelry (men especially)
- No visible tattoos or piercings

# Presenting a Professional Image (2 of 2)

- Stylish but professional-looking shoes
- Clean hands and trimmed fingernails
- Little to no perfume or cologne
- Subtle makeup (for women)
- Exemplary personal hygiene

# Interview Simulator



# Being Ready When You Arrive

- Your Résumé
- Documentation
- Mobile Devices

## Preparing

## Traveling

- Know Location
- Plan Your Route
- Set Travel Time

- Review Notes
- Be Professional
- Be Courteous

## Waiting



# Interviewing for Success

(LO 4) Explain how to succeed in all three stages of an interview.

# The Warm-Up Stage



Making a Good First Impression



Paying Attention to Body Language



Being Courteous and Professional

# Question-and-Answer Stage



Answering and Asking Questions



Listening to the Interviewer



Handling Discriminatory Questions

# The Close



Concluding the Interview Gracefully



Discussing Salary Requirements



Consulting Your Interview Notes

# Following Up after an Interview

(LO 5) Identify the most common employment messages that follow an interview and explain when you would use each one.

# Types of Employment Messages (1 of 2)

- Follow-up Message
- Message of Inquiry
- Request for a Time Extension

# Types of Employment Messages (2 of 2)

- Letter of Acceptance
- Letter Declining a Job Offer
- Letter of Resignation

# Follow-Up Message: Ineffective

**Ineffective**

Thanks! - Message (HTML)

MESSAGE INSERT OPTIONS FORMAT TEXT REVIEW

To... serena.reynolds@westcoasttv.com

Cc...

Send

Subject Thanks!

Dear Ms. Reynolds:

The talk, the tour, watching commercials being filmed—I had a great time interviewing with you yesterday! That was nice of you to take so much time to show me around.

You guys are doing so many cool things there, and your tour convinced me that I would really enjoy working on the various film and TV productions you do there.

Again, thank you for the chat. I really believe you and I hit it off and would make a great team. Please let me know your decision as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

The subject line is too generic and doesn't give the reader any clues about the content of the message.

The message oozes with enthusiasm but beyond that it doesn't really say anything to further the candidate's cause. The writer fails to use this opportunity to confirm his ability to perform the job.

The tone here is too personal, and the closing line is too demanding.



# Follow-Up Message: Effective

The subject line lets the reader know what the message is about.

The opening expresses appreciation and enthusiasm without overdoing it.

The writer takes the opportunity to provide additional information—in this instance, reversing something he said in the interview.

Espinosa uses the close to confirm his ability to do the job and to emphasize some positive personal characteristics.

Effective

Thank you for yesterday's interview and tour - Message (HTML)

INSERT OPTIONS FORMAT TEXT REVIEW

To... serena.reynolds@westcoasttv.com

Cc...

Send

Subject Thank you for yesterday's interview and tour

Dear Ms. Reynolds:

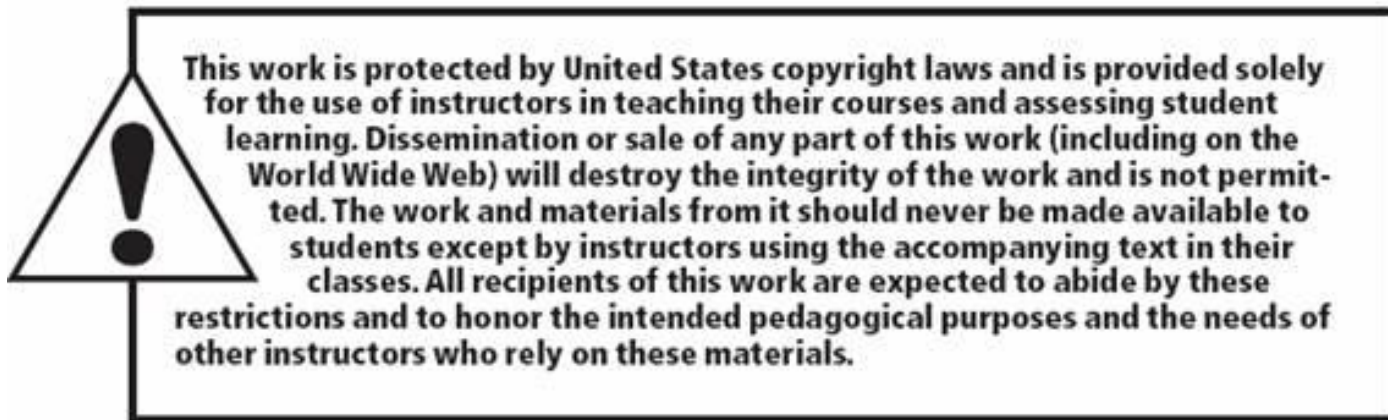
After talking with you yesterday, touring your sets, and watching commercials being filmed, I remain enthusiastic about the possibility of joining your staff as a production assistant. Thanks for taking so much time to show me around.

During our meeting, I said I would prefer not to relocate, but I've reconsidered the matter. I would be pleased to relocate wherever you might need my skills in set decoration and prop design.

Now that you've explained the details of your operation, I feel quite strongly that I can make a contribution to the sorts of productions you are lining up. You can also count on me to be an energetic employee and a positive addition to your crew. I look forward to hearing your decision.

Sincerely,

Michael Espinosa  
585 Montoya Road  
Las Cruces, NM 88005  
(505) 555-6208



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