

LPC Interview Guidelines

Purpose of an Interview

Clearly the purpose of an interview is to secure a job. By this point you've caught the employer's eye with your resume. Now is the time to demonstrate in person that you are a good fit for the position.

Employers are looking for employees who can take initiative, are well informed about the company (or church), and can communicate well with others. These characteristics support and enhance your effectiveness in living out your calling, passions, and interests. Your passions alone do not make you hireable. This is the time to put your gifting, preparation, and qualification on display!

When someone wants to hire you, they are looking to add to their team. Interviewers looking to build strong teams will use this time to see if you demonstrate the 3 C's:

1. Character – Is this a person of integrity I can trust in my organization?
2. Competence – Can this person do the job well?
3. Chemistry – Is this person willing to adjust their preferences to fit with the greater needs of the team?

Getting Started

1. Basic Tips
 - a. Arrive clean and dress professionally. Overdressing is always better than under dressing.
 - b. Do not wear excessive perfume or cologne.
 - c. Do not wear overly tight, loose, short cut, low cut, or bad fitting clothes. If you have to wonder if it's appropriate, choose another outfit.
 - d. Do not chew gum, eat, or drink in the interview (unless you are offered water or coffee).
2. When You Arrive
 - a. Arrive at least 15-30 minutes early to the interview. This leaves time for traffic, and gives you time to use the restroom or freshen up before the interview. But do not approach the interviewer's desk any more than 3-5 minutes early.
 - b. Be professional.
 - i. Project self-assurance, not arrogance.
 - ii. Be friendly, comfortable, engaging.
 - iii. Smile and greet your interviewer with a firm handshake.
 1. A good handshake speaks volumes about your confidence and professionalism.
 - c. Say "I'm pleased to meet you." Use employer's name.
 - d. Sit when invited to do so.

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- e. Sit up straight.

During the Interview

1. When You Speak
 - a. Use the interviewer's name at least once in the conversation.
 - b. Remember political correctness. Say nothing that could be objectionable.
 - c. Speak clearly and concisely. Avoid slang.
 - d. Do not wring your hands, rub your face, scratch, pick, or fidget nervously.
 - e. Make eye contact when speaking.
2. Opening Statements
 - a. The first words you say will set the tone for the rest of the interview. Since you are delivering a "pitch" as to why you should be hired, consider utilizing the presentation skills you have developed in the interview. In any presentation, a strong, concise, and attention getting introduction is integral to the success of the remainder of the speech.
3. Be personable
 - a. Project a natural, personal, and honest feel through the interview. Speak in a conversant tone at an appropriate pace. Pay attention to the verbal cues of the interviewer.
4. Attitude
 - a. In the interview, you must be able to convey that you are action-oriented, committed, and motivated. You will not be hired if you seem passive or apathetic, disengaged, short term-driven and self-centered.
5. Value
 - a. Hiring authorities have a present need. They need to hire people who can add significant value to the organization from day one. You must be able to demonstrate ability to provide *immediate value*. This concept must be established within the first few minutes of the interview.
6. Questions
 - a. When an interviewer asks if you have any questions for them, they expect an answer.
 - b. Failing to ask at least a few intelligent questions will convey that:
 - i. You think the job is unimportant.
 - ii. You're uncomfortable asserting yourself.
 - iii. You're not intelligent.
 - iv. You're easily intimidated.
 - v. You're bored or boring.
 - vi. You have not thought about this organization in advance.
 - c. Use the following principles to prepare your questions in advance:

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- i. Ask open-ended questions (usually begin with “how,” “when,” or “who”)
- ii. Keep it short.
- iii. Get to “yes”
 - 1. Ask questions that require affirmation and put the interviewer in a positive frame of mind.
- iv. Use inclusive language – “we” rather than “you”.
- v. Avoid questions that are obvious or easy to determine.
- vi. Avoid “why” questions (they often come off as confrontational).
- vii. Avoid questions that call for a superlative.
 - 1. Instead of “What is the biggest challenge for the organization?” ask “What do you see as three important challenges for your team?”.
 - 2. Instead of “What is the absolute best thing about this church?” ask “What are a couple of things you really like the church?”.
- viii. Avoid questions that hint at desperation
- d. The list below highlights questions that impressed interviewers:
 - i. Now that we have discussed my qualifications, do you have any concerns about me fulfilling the responsibilities of the position?
 - 1. This question is very direct, but affords an excellent opportunity for the candidate. If the interviewer does have any concerns, you are always better off having a chance to speak to them immediately rather than allow them to remain unspoken and never be able to address them.
 - ii. As my direct report in this position, what are the three top priorities you would first like to see accomplished?
 - 1. This question is strong because it assumes that you will be hired. The interviewer is put in a position to clearly articulate priorities that may become immediate action steps for you as a new hire. This question also allows you the chance to highlight your accomplishments in a way that will speak to a much more specific need.
 - iii. What’s the makeup of the team as far as experience? Am I going to be a mentor, or will I be mentored?
 - iv. What does this organization (or church) value the most and how do you think my work for you will further these values?
 - v. What’s the most important thing I can do to help within the first 90 days of my employment

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Do Your Homework

One very common question asked in an interview is “What do you know about us?” This is your chance to display your general preparedness and your level of interest in the position.

Be sure to:

1. Familiarize yourself with the website.
2. Know a brief description of the organization or church.
3. Have an idea of the organizational emphases and culture.
4. Know general history, if applicable.
5. Know the general number of staff.

10 Final Tips For Your Interview

1. Do your homework.
2. Write down at least four questions in advance of the interview.
3. Listen twice as much as you talk.
4. Don't ask a question unless you are certain the answer will make you appear engaged, intelligent, qualified, and interested in taking the job.
5. Never initiate “what about me?” questions.
6. Take notes using a professional-looking notebook and pen. Bring your own materials to demonstrate preparedness.
7. Don't interrupt.
8. Don't argue.
9. Silence your cell phone or pager.
10. Pray beforehand. God ultimately guides us throughout our lives. While we should do our best to prepare for an interview, this is also a time to place our trust in him and ask for his provision and guidance to the right job.