

How to Make the Most of your Interviews

You spent years preparing for this moment – now what? Your residency program trains you how to take care of patients, not how to land the job you want.

Social skills are more important than clinical skills in an interview. Effectively communicating your skills and abilities is key! You want to make the best impression you can. In some ways, interviewing is like a courtship. You want to get to know each other to see if you are a match.

First things First – The Phone Interview

To save time for both you and the practice, the first step will more than likely be a phone interview. The first person you speak with will typically be an office manager, practice administrator, or in-house recruiter. On some occasions, the first phone call will come from the senior partner or hospital executive. If you are contacted at a busy time, kindly request to reschedule for a mutually convenient time. It's always helpful to have a copy of your CV handy as well as something to take notes. Regardless of who the call is coming from, treat the interviewer with respect and do your best to learn about the practice's needs. This is your opportunity to make a good first impression.

The Dos and Don'ts of Dating... er... Interviewing:

- **Demonstrate your interest** in the needs of the practice. Learn all you can prior to the interview so that your questions are knowledgeable.
- **Dress to impress!** Your attire should be clean and well-fitting, but it should not take center stage. Dressing nicely and appropriately is a compliment to the person you meet.
- **Treat everyone you encounter with professionalism and kindness.** Yelling at the waiter on a date isn't nice; neither is being rude to administrative and support staff. They may offer opinions of you that will be important for the hiring process.
- **It is a good idea to turn off your cell phone ringer.**
- **Be aware of your non-verbal behaviors.** Make eye contact, but don't stare. Smiling is always a good sign.
- **Confidence counts.** Genuine enthusiasm goes over very well. You want to demonstrate you are the right person for the job without coming across as aggressive or egotistic.
- **Stay positive.** Bad-mouthing people you have dated in the past to your date isn't a good idea; Neither is speaking poorly of your program or attendings on an interview.
- **Everyone likes a good listener.** Give thoughtful, to-the-point and honest answers. Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question. It is okay to take a few moments of silence to gather your thoughts before answering. Try not to beat around the bush or take a long time to give the answer the interviewer is seeking.

Questions you can ask to learn about the needs of the practice:

- *Do you mind sharing with me a little bit about your practice and what your needs are?* Feel free to jot down this information. Evaluate your needs in comparison.
- *Where will the volume come from for the new physician?*

The number one reason people change positions is lack of volume for surgeons. Will you have the right number of cases to keep you happy?

- *What are you looking for in your new hire?*
Gaining insight into the expectations of the incumbent is paramount to your success.
- *What do you think will make a match successful with your group?*
Interpersonal skills, traits, and characteristics are important.
- *What are your ultimate goals for the practice? What are you trying to develop or accomplish?*
Are the goals and the plan for how you will reach them reasonable?
- *Can you tell me about what I will need to do to successfully develop a practice as a member of your group? Where do your referrals currently come from? Where do you think my referrals are likely to come from?*
Are you being set up for success?
- *Are there any special clinic skills you'd like your new hire to have that would be useful to you?*

Show me the money!

When can I ask about compensation, vacation, and benefits? Unless the practice brings it up, it's usually not a good idea to ask about compensation during your first interview. Focus on learning about the practice, the needs of the group, and getting to know the people. You can ask about compensation on the second visit. Vacation and benefits will become clear when you receive an offer. If it isn't clear, you can clarify then.

After the Interview

- **Make notes** right away so that you don't forget critical details. If you are working with a recruiter, calling to debrief while the interview is fresh in your mind is a good idea as well.
- **Thank you notes:** Sending thank you notes to everyone who interviewed you is like calling for a second date. Reiterate your interest in the position. Thanking the support staff who arranged your interview will be looked upon favorably too.
- **Relax!** Chances are, if you liked them, they liked you!

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