How to Succeed in Second and Third-Round Interviews

So, you've made it through your first round of interviews. Congratulations! Now you're on to the second and third round ... the good stuff.

HOW TO PREPARE

Evaluate Previous Interview(s)
Review your notes from the previous interview(s) with the organization. What questions did you struggle with? Was there something you forgot to mention? The next interview gives you an opportunity to answer any doubts the organization might have from your previous interview(s).

Be Prepared for a Different Style
Your next interview may not be the same as the last interview. You might meet with a panel, have a mix of one-on-one and panel interviews, or be asked to complete a job related task. Additional interview styles and techniques are discussed on the back of this handout.

Get the Agenda
Ask the person who scheduled the interview for an itinerary so you know up front what to expect.

Get Ready to Interview Them
Prepare a new list of questions that expand on dialogue from your previous interview(s). Ask educated questions that show an increased knowledge of the organization. At this point, you are in serious contention for the position so it's appropriate to ask about the organizational structure and how you will fit in.

Bring Extra Copies of Your Resume, Cover Letter, and References
Second or third interviews may include meetings with several different people. Most likely they will all have copies of your information, but if not, being prepared with extras will be helpful.

Think About and Research Salary Requirements
The organization will likely ask what you expect for a salary and other benefits. Do your homework! Find out national and regional salary information for comparable positions in your field so you can answer appropriately.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Say Thank You
Send a thank-you letter to everyone who participated in the second job interview, making sure that the letter is different than the one you sent after your previous interview. Tailor the letter to your most recent interview and personalize the letter for each person.

Is There a Fit?
Sometimes people get an uneasy feeling about a job or a potential employer. It can be hard to pinpoint specifically what it is, but something doesn’t fit. Second or third interviews allow you to see if an organization is a good fit for you so make sure you take time to think about that.

What if You Get an Offer?
You don't have to say “yes” or “no” right away. It is perfectly acceptable to ask for 24 to 48 hours to consider the offer. Take time to fully consider the position, the company, the work you will be doing, salary, benefits, etc.
TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Mealtime Interview
Business dining is less about assessing your business acumen than about seeing how you are able to interact with others in collegial situations. In short, this is where the smallest of small details will separate those who receive an offer from those who don't.

Following are a few restaurant recommendations:
- Do not wear your sunglasses, either on your face or on your head.
- Follow your host's lead regarding small talk vs business conversation.
- Don't drink alcohol, even if they do.
- Order food that's easy to manage – nothing messy and difficult to eat.
- Don't discuss your dietary habits or other personal issues.
- Do not check your cell phone/PDA until you exit the restaurant. Give your goodbyes the same attention you did your hellos.

Case Study Interviews
Case Studies are designed to prove that you are the creative and logical thinker your résumé claims you are, or that you're the "people person" your references claim you can be. Remember that there is rarely a "right" answer to case study questions. They are behavioral tests that check mental agility.

➢ Group Case Interviews: In this situation, the employer has one goal: to find out which people work well with others. Are you sociable? Can you make an impact in a tactful way in a group setting? While you definitely want to demonstrate that you can contribute, you don't want to dominate the group's discussion or take charge in an aggressive way.

   Example: A group was given 30 minutes to decide whether an American chain restaurant should expand into Asia. Of the eight group members, three failed: two because they didn't speak up at all, and one because he couldn't stop telling everyone why he was right.

If you are in this situation, here are some techniques to follow:
- Be a quiet organizer. Suggest that you all take a few minutes to read the case; offer to keep time.
- Initiate discussion by sharing insights that you have.
- Help others share and clarify their ideas by asking questions.
- Be respectful of others' contributions, no matter what you may think of their ideas.
- Follow the directions. For example, if they say, "Only use the information we've provided," don't offer to look something up on your BlackBerry.

Bottom line: Be a team player who contributes respectfully to the group to achieve the goal.

➢ Individual Case Interviews: In this case, you want to shine as an individual. It may not be because you got the right answer, but because you exhibited creative and logical thinking processes. The questions may be presented in written form or orally. Some are "big thinking" questions. Example: A person was asked what he would do about the environment if he were president. His first clarifying question: "On Earth as a whole, or are we considering space exploration?" At that point, he knew he had them.

If the cases take the form of brain teasers or practical tasks, keep the following in mind:
- Use all the time they give you. Make notes, especially if the information is delivered orally.
- If you can ask clarifying questions, do, but don't fish too much. Show that you can be effective working with the facts you have.
- Stay cool, even if you make a mistake in the arithmetic. They are looking at logic flow.
- Not all the information may be relevant, but avoid saying so, since you may be missing a connection. If you think some information is irrelevant, just don't draw on it in your answer.

Again, the point of a case study interview is to see if you can think logically and clearly under pressure. Approach the question like a doctor trying to diagnose an illness . . . and you'll be fine.