# JOB SEARCH SURVIVAL HANDBOOK

Most applicants are thrown into the job search, resume and interview process with little or no training. Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Business Advisory Council are here to help! We provide job ready clients an opportunity to experience the interview process and resume writing before the application is received.

Let us help you win that job interview!

For more information Contact the Business Advisory Council.

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Inside you will find key tips to assist you in your job search. You deserve to have the job of your dreams. Make yourself stand out from the pack! Get the career you want today!

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR DECISION TO FIND YOUR NEXT GREAT CAREER!

"Through this handbook, we want help you be able to compete for any job and present yourself professionally in your interview."

BUSINESS ADVISORY COUNCIL

# YOU CAN COMPETE WITH THEM

## You just have to know the secrets

# WHAT SHOULD YOU WEAR TO AN INTERVIEW?

**Dress** for the position you want to land! (jeans, sweatpants, short skirts or short dress are prohibited. Do not allow any piece of clothing to sag)

Be careful with prints or patterns. Stick to solid **power** colors such as blacks, dark browns, navy blue and dark gray.

If in doubt think
**conservative!**

Clothing should always be neat, clean and free of rips or tears.

T-Shirts, hats, flip flops, and athletic shoes are examples of what **NOT** to wear during an interview.

Keep jewelry simple and **minimal**

Don't pile on the cologne or perfume one squirt is plenty!

# 10 TIPS TO BOOST YOUR INTERVIEW SKILLS

By Carole Martin,
Monster Contributing Writer

Even the smartest and most qualified job seekers need to prepare for job interviews. Why, you ask? Interviewing is a learned skill, and there are no second chances to make a great first impression. So study these 10 strategies to enhance your interview skills.

## Practice Good Nonverbal Communication

It's about demonstrating confidence: standing straight, making eye contact and connecting with a firm handshake. That first nonverbal impression can be a great beginning -- or quick ending -- to your interview.

## Dress for the Job or Company

Today's casual dress codes do not give you permission to dress as "they" do when you interview. It is important to know what to wear to an interview and to be well-groomed. Whether you wear a suit or something less formal depends on the company culture and the position you are seeking. If possible, call to find out about the company dress code before the interview.

## Listen

From the very beginning of the interview, your interviewer is giving you information, either directly or indirectly. If you are not hearing it, you are missing a major opportunity. Good communication skills include listening and letting the person know you heard what was said. Observe your interviewer, and match that style and pace.

## Ask Questions

When asked if they have any questions, most candidates answer, "No." Wrong answer. Part of knowing how to interview is being ready to ask questions that demonstrate an interest in what goes on in the company. Asking questions also gives you the opportunity to find out if this is the right place for you. The best questions come from listening to what you're asked during the interview and asking for additional information.

## Don't Talk Too Much

Telling the interviewer more than he needs to know could be a fatal mistake. When you have not prepared ahead of time, you may ramble when answering interview questions, sometimes talking yourself right out of the job. Prepare for the interview by reading through the job posting, matching your skills with the position's requirements and relating only that information.

## Don't Be Too Familiar

The interview is a professional meeting to talk business. This is not about making a new friend. Your level of familiarity should mimic the interviewer's demeanor. It is important to bring energy and enthusiasm to the interview and to ask questions, but do not overstep your place as a candidate looking for a job.

## Use Appropriate Language

It's a given that you should use professional language during the interview. Be aware of any inappropriate slang words or references to age, race, religion, politics or sexual orientation -- these topics could send you out the door very quickly.

## Don't Be Cocky

Attitude plays a key role in your interview success. There is a fine balance between confidence, professionalism and modesty. Even if you're putting on a performance to demonstrate your ability, overconfidence is as bad, if not worse, as being too reserved.

## Take Care to Answer the Questions

When interviewers ask for an example of a time when you did something, they are asking behavioral interview questions, which are designed to elicit a sample of your past behavior. If you fail to relate a specific example, you not only don't answer the question, but you also miss an opportunity to prove your ability and talk about your skills.

## Don't Appear Desperate

When you interview with the "please, please hire me" approach; you appear desperate and less confident. Reflect the three Cs during the interview: cool, calm and confidence. You know you can do the job; make sure the interviewer believes you can, too.

# BEFORE YOU BEGIN:
# PREPARATION IS KEY!

When filling out a job application it should be neat and accurate. Spend time before you apply for a position either online or in person, by writing down everything that a prospective employer may need or ask for such as:

## Last 3 employers

Name Address Phone

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

## Schools attended

Name Address Phone

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

## 3 Professional References (Supervisors/Not Friends or Family)

Company (they work for), Name, Title, Phone Number

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

## 3 Peer References (Co-Workers/Not Friends or Family)

Company (they worked with you at), Name, Phone Number

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

# APPLICATION RULES:

When filling out an application there are a few things that are very important and if not followed, could cost you a job.

- ✓ Dress professionally - you never know who will give you the application or come out and speak with you.
- ✓ Use black or blue ink pens only.
- ✓ Slow down, take your time and write legibly.
- ✓ Fill out every blank completely, answer every question. Never leave a question blank. Instead if it does not apply to you write N/A for not applicable.
- ✓ Always spell out a word and never abbreviate, such as Ave. (Avenue) Dept. (Department) etc.
- ✓ Never write: See Resume and not answer the question.
- ✓ If it asks for an address, know the entire physical address, street number, street name, suite, city, state, zip.

# DO'S & DON TS

## DON T

Take anyone with you to your interview or to fill out an application. This is a big red flag to a potential employer.

## DO

Be 10 to 15 minutes early for an interview. But never more than 15, you want to respect their time and their busy schedule.

## DO

When you introduce yourself and shake their hand, give a firm solid hand shake. Don't be a wet noodle, show them you are there and you are ready to get this job!

## DON T

Shake their hand with more than two to three pumps with the hand shake. Too long or too many shakes can be weird or awkward, two to three is just right. Don't put the other hand over their hand that is viewed too touchy and can be a deal breaker.

## DON T

Talk on your cell phone at all, in fact do not take your cell phone into an interview. Even on vibrate it is rude and disruptive and shows lack of respect for your interviewer.

## DON T

Give only supervisor's first names on applications. This shows that you are not very thorough.

## DON T

Chew gum, mints etc. during an interview.

## DO

Make sure your interview outfit is appropriate, professional, clean and neat.

## DO

Always ask the interviewer at least two to three questions at the end of the interview and thank them for their time.

## DO

Make good eye contact all through the interview.

## DON T

Give personal private examples when answering interview questions. Keep all answers strictly professional and about your professional strengths and sell yourself.

## DON T

Talk yourself OUT of a position. Keep your answers descriptive and give good work examples, but know when to stop. Sometimes less is more.

## DON T

Ever bad mouth a past employer or co-worker even if it was a bad experience, always refer to the great work experience you gained

## DO

Find a commonality with your interviewer. People hire people they like. If you see or discover a common interest express that to them

## DON T

Don't have a voicemail that is not professional. When you are looking for employment it is very important that you reflect a professional image. No music in the background or children with cute messages. Something very simple such as:

*"Hello you have reached John Smith, I am sorry I am not available to take your call. If you could please leave your name and number and I will get back to you as soon as possible."*

## YOU ARE IN YOUR INTERVIEW AND THEY ARE DRILLING YOU WITH QUESTIONS...

# NOW IT S YOUR TURN!

It's always a good idea to be prepared with at least three interview questions that you ask the interviewer at the very end of the interview. Telling an interviewer that you don't have any questions shows that you were not prepared, lack interest in the company and could show you are lazy.

Some sample questions are:

1. Why is this position available?
2. When do you expect to have a hiring decision made?
3. What does a typical day look like for this position?
4. Can you describe your company culture?
5. Don't ask about Salary, Benefits, Days Off, Sick Policy, 401K, Promotions in a first interview, save that for later stages of the interview process.

If those don't work, write your own

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

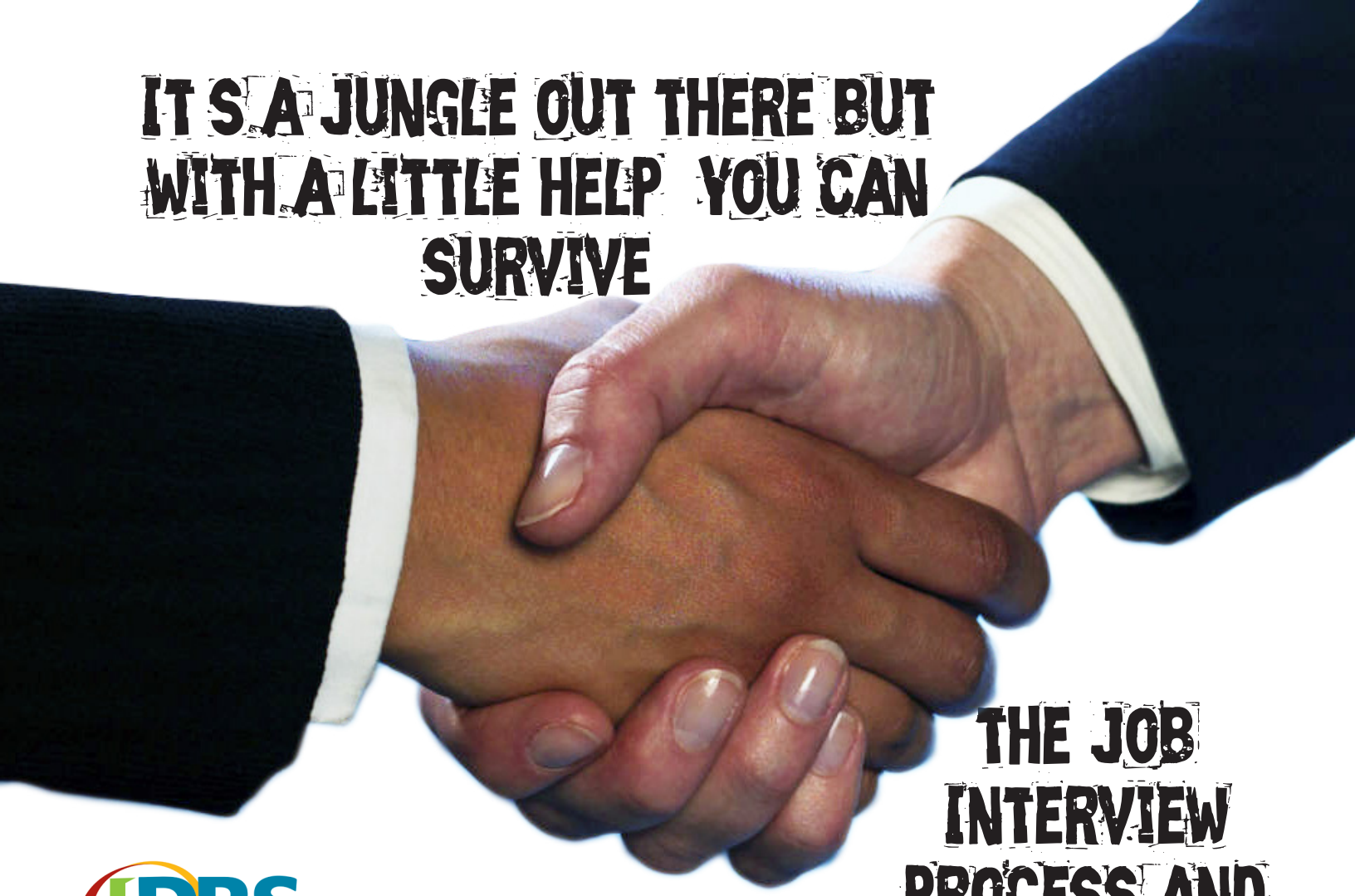
## I HAD MY INTERVIEW NOW WHAT?

You should purchase a box of blank thank you cards and handwrite your appreciation for the interviewer taking time to meet you and how you feel you are the most qualified candidate for the position that you interviewed for.

You should also always answer your incoming calls professionally, during the time you are searching for work.

If interviewer gave you a day and time to follow up, make sure you follow up on time and don't be late.

# IT S A JUNGLE OUT THERE BUT WITH A LITTLE HELP YOU CAN SURVIVE



# THE JOB INTERVIEW PROCESS AND WIN THAT JOB

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