Powering Through the Interview

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ISO New England

As a regional transmission organization, serving the 6 states of New England, ISO New England meets the electricity demands of the region by fulfilling three major responsibilities:

- Minute-to-minute reliable operation of New England’s bulk electric power system
- Development, oversight, and fair administration of the region’s wholesale electricity markets
- Management of the planning process for New England’s bulk electric power system and wholesale markets to meet current and future needs
Summer Internship Program

- 11 week summer program for undergraduate & graduate students
- Interns work full-time, gaining hands-on experience and insight into the Power Industry
- The program is a pipeline to full-time employment
- We recruit students from the following areas:

**Engineering**
- Power Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering

**Information Technology**
- Software Development
- Database Management
- Computer Science

**Business**
- Economics
- Accounting
- Finance
- Communications

ISO-NE.COM/CAREERS
Hiring Statistics

- Unemployment rate of recent college grads (ages 22-26) was 7.9% in 2013 (a decline from 8.9% in 2012)
- The number of college grads working minimum wage jobs is nearly 71% higher than it was a decade ago. [http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2012tbls.htm#6](http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2012tbls.htm#6)
- Experienced workers fare better – internships and other work experience acquired during school will increase your chances of full-time employment
Interviewing is a two way street...
The road is not always easy, so be prepared
Agenda

- Application Submission
  - After submission
  - Social Media Presence

- Interview Process
  - Before
    - Types of Interviews
    - Interview Questions
    - Techniques for Answering Questions
      - E.A.R.L & How to Re-Group
  - During
    - Interview Do’s & Don’ts
  - After
    - Thank You Notes & Follow Up
Common Application, Resume, and Cover Letter Mistakes

What do you think?

- Incomplete application, missing information
- Typos, poor grammar, missing words
- Wrong company listed on cover letter or wrong industry listed in resume *Objective*
- Applying for all posted positions regardless of qualifications
- Exaggerating information
- Listing irrelevant information
- Listing family/friends as references
Submit a Noteworthy Application

- Present a polished, detailed resume with no mistakes
- Submit a concise, thoughtful cover letter specific to the job you are applying for – have it proofread
- Complete the entire paper or electronic application
- When asked, include a relevant writing sample or portfolio
- Set up 2 - 3 strong, positive references
After the Application

▪ Keep track
  • Know what positions you applied for by keeping the position descriptions and company information
  • Know what you submitted to each company

▪ Start preparing
  • Research the company thoroughly
  • Be prepared to answer questions about why you are interested in the position/company and what skills you bring to the table
  • Prepare a list of questions for the interviewers

▪ Answering the initial email or phone call
  • Make a good first impression by responding quickly to emails or phone messages
  • Communicate clearly and efficiently
  • Be prepared to either interview on the spot or to schedule time
Social Media Presence

Be careful of how you come across online

- 37% of employers research applicants on social networking sites
- 34% of employers report finding content that caused them not to hire a candidate

- Search yourself and see what pops up
- Clean up your image
- Check your privacy settings (get your page on lockdown)
- Showcase your talents

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS
Types of Interviews

Phone Interviews
- Take the call seriously
- Be on time and prepared
- Eliminate, noise, static, and other distractions

Electronic/Web Interviews
- Test equipment beforehand
- Dress professionally
- Make sure the room is clear of clutter
- Call in/sign on at least 5 minutes early (if possible)

In Person Interviews
- Dress professionally
- Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- Bring anything you may need with you (directions, contact information, copies of your resume, a list of questions and references, a pad and pen)

Continued...
Types of Interviews Continued

One on One Interviews
- Maintain eye contact
- Watch interviewer’s body language and tone, adjust your own as needed
- Don’t fidget

Panel Interviews
- Find out the roles of interviewers, if not stated beforehand
- Make eye contact with each interviewer
- Keep eye contact with the interviewer you are responding to
- Prepare at least one question for each interviewer

Interviews While Dining
- Order based on price range interviewer orders
- No alcohol, even if they order it
- Avoid messy foods
- Don’t talk with your mouth full – small bites in between questions
Types of Interview Questions

Open-ended Questions
  ▪ What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Hypothetical Questions
  ▪ If I were to call your former boss, what would he/she say about your past performance?

Behavioral or Situational Questions
  ▪ Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult customer/person? What was the outcome?
Common Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you know about our company?
3. Describe a situation when you went above and beyond what was called for, what did you do and why?
4. Tell me about your strengths/weaknesses.
5. Describe your ideal manager and/or work environment.
6. Tell me about a time when you made a mistake, what went wrong?
7. How do you handle stress/pressure?
8. Give me an example of a team project you worked on: what was your role on the team and what was the outcome?
9. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
10. Why should I hire you?
Bring E.A.R.L. to the Interview

- Prepare a variety of work-related examples which demonstrate to the interviewer your:
  - Experiences (you have had)
  - Actions (you have taken)
  - Results (you have gotten)
  - Learning (you have obtained)

- Use specific dates, times, places and numbers
  - This will lend credibility to your responses
  - Especially important in behavioral based interviews
How to Practice with E.A.R.L.

- For each question asked, describe the Experience briefly
- Explain the Actions taken in response to the experience in a little more detail
- Provide a short, effective sentence that clearly expresses the Results or the benefit to the company
- Show your humility by describing what you have Learned from the experience and how you might apply it in the future
Q: Tell me about a time you had to deal with a difficult situation. What was the situation? How did you handle it?

Describe the Experience

- I was assigned to work on a project with another classmate. They were not completing their assignments on time, which was holding up our ability complete the project.

Explain the Actions taken

- I told him I was concerned that we were behind schedule because he had not completed his assignments on time. I asked him if he was running into problems and, if so, did he need help?

Expresses the Results

- He told me he had been really sick and missed a week and a half of classes and was trying to catch-up. I suggested we meet on a Saturday and spend a couple hours working together to get back on track. We met and, working together, got the project done, submitted on time and received an A.

Describe what you Learned

- Sometimes you have to focus on the end goal. It required me to do more work, but I helped out someone who needed it and in the end I was rewarded with an A for the project.
How to Re-Group When You Goof

- Keep calm, take a deep breath, smile
- Focus on the question or the last thing the interviewer said to you
- Buy some time by restating the question or asking for clarification
- It’s okay to let them know you are nervous – they were once in your shoes
Questions to Help You Buy Some Time

- Brain freeze – you lost track of your thought
  - “I’m sorry, I’m nervous and need a moment to regroup so I can answer your question properly.”

- You strayed from the original question
  - “I think I went off track a bit, did I answer your question?”

- You don’t understand the question
  - “I’m sorry, I think I misunderstood your question. Will you rephrase it for me?”

- You are totally stumped and cannot think of an answer
  - “That’s a great question. May I have a moment to think about it?”
Do’s

- Dress appropriately – professional business attire
- Arrive 10-15 minutes before the established time
- Maintain a warm and friendly demeanor – treat everyone you meet with respect
- Be aware of your body language and that of the interviewers
- Remember the questions and answers you prepared and highlight your successes and strengths
- Collect business cards from all interviewers or determine how best to follow up with them later

Don’ts

- Avoid rambling or talking in circles – be sure to answer the question asked and if you need more time, ask for a moment
- Don’t slouch – have good posture and body language
- Avoid distracting habits such as pen clicking, hair twisting, foot tapping, and knuckle cracking
- Limit the amount of personal information you provide – keep your answers based on school and work
- Don’t panic if you draw a blank – buy some time
- Don’t leave without asking about the next steps
Follow Up After the Interview

Send an email or thank you note to each interviewer within 48 hours

- Tailor the note to each interviewer you met
- Notify references that they may be contacted

Follow up a few weeks later if you have not heard back

- Call or email the recruiter and/or hiring manager
- Be complete and accurate if sending an email or leaving a voicemail message
KEEP CALM AND BE PREPARED
Questions