

## **THE ART OF INTERVIEWING**

### **MARKO INTERNATIONAL**

Janice Marko, President

Penny Powers, SVP

#### **You must always prepare for your interview.**

1. Research the company AND the person you will be interviewing with. If you don't know who you will be interviewing with, simply call the company and ask. Get their full name and title.
2. Look them up on LinkedIn and social media (Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter).
3. Google them.
4. Do your research and find out everything you can about the person. Who they are and what they are about? What connection points you may have. Did you go to the same school? Have the same hobbies?
5. Look at the company website. Check them out on Glass Door. See what other employees are saying about working there. Really dig into it. Research, research, research.

#### **Most interviews are virtual now. Below are a few tips to help achieve the best results possible.**

1. First, and foremost, test the program you will be using. Some programs will require a download ahead of time. Test your internet connection. Make sure you have the bandwidth necessary. We know this sounds very elementary, but many people don't think of these issues until it's too late. We once had a Zoom interview where we could only catch every other word. It was a disaster for the candidate. But thankfully, we are recruiters, and not the client and could coach them through it
2. Do a test to see what your background looks like. Better yet, do a test with a friend before your virtual interview. How is the lighting? You don't want it too dark or too light. Keep distractions to a minimum. Are your dirty dishes from breakfast visible? Are there dirty clothes laying everywhere?
3. At the time of the interview make sure your children and pets are in another room. If your dog barks or makes a lot of noise, then ask a neighbor to take them for a walk. Your Zoom presence needs to be as professional as if you are sitting in the conference room with the interviewer.
4. Be sure to dress as if you would be in a face to face interview.
5. At the beginning let the interviewer know you will be taking notes. You don't want them wondering if you are looking at your phone screen when you are looking down. We do this when taking a job description from a client or speaking with a new candidate. We make a point to tell them ahead of time that we will be taking notes. Not blowing them off because we may not be keeping eye contact.
6. Body language is very important. Don't sit with your arms crossed or your face resting on your hand. Sit up straight. This not only gives a sharper physical appearance, but your voice comes from lower in your diaphragm and is more

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commanding. And be sure to make eye contact with the camera. Multi-person interviews can get a little hectic if several people try to talk at the same time. Just be sure to keep eye contact with the camera and you will automatically be looking at the right person.

7. At the beginning of the interview let the interviewer present the position before you start asking questions. That way you will have a full understanding. A lot of your questions will be answered, and then you can better formulate any remaining questions.
8. Be prepared to share your screen to show your portfolio. Every virtual meeting software has the capability to share screens. With Zoom, it's a tab in the upper right-hand corner. Again, test this with a friend before the interview. Also, make sure you don't have any awkward windows open on your desktop! Penny and I have seen some crazy things!! Your portfolio should show full cycles of the projects you worked on. Please include examples of your CAD or Revit work, as that is the industry standard.
9. Be sure to get full names and email addresses for every person who participated in the interview. You will want to send thank you notes within 24 hours.

### **Face To Face Interview**

1. If you are not familiar with the location drive the route ahead of time. Try to do it at the same time of day as your interview. What exit do you get off? Where should you park? What was the traffic like? Again, this is very elementary advice, but hey, we live in Atlanta. One of the worst cities for traffic foul ups. You just want to get there on time.
2. While getting there on time is important, you also don't want to get there too early. 10 to 15 minutes at the most. You don't want to be sitting in the lobby and the interviewer feels they must rush through what they are doing so you won't have to wait. You also don't want to be sitting there if they are interviewing another candidate and they come through the lobby. Awkward! If you get arrive earlier than 10 to 15 minutes wait in the car.
3. Dress for the position you ultimately want. If they say it is business casual, then dress BUSINESS casual. That means a pair of slacks, button down shirt and jacket for men and a nice pair of slacks and top or a dress for women. Don't go in in t-shirts or jeans.
4. Please do not wear too much perfume or cologne. Better yet, don't wear any. Some people are allergic to perfume and cologne and you want them to focus on you, not on what scent you are wearing and how it will affect them. Wear minimal makeup and remove all visible piercings.
5. With the current Covid-19 situation bring a mask, hand sanitizer and gloves. Don't feel uncomfortable wearing a mask. Nobody is going to judge you on that.
6. Bring multiple copies of your resume and a copy of your portfolio. It's preferable to have your portfolio in electronic format. If not, make sure it is not too large and

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bulky. Your portfolio should show full cycles of the projects you worked on. Please include examples of your CAD or Revit work, as that is the industry standard.

7. Make sure your electronic device is fully charged and take a copy of your portfolio on a flash drive in case something happens.
8. No handshakes at this time. Perhaps, never again.
9. As stated with the virtual interview, at the beginning let the interviewer present the position before you start asking questions. That way you will have a full understanding of the position. We're sure some of your questions will be answered and you can better formulate any remaining questions.
10. Be sure to get business cards to send thank you notes within 24 hours to everyone that was involved with the interview.

### **General interview information that is pertinent to both the virtual and face to face interview.**

1. Hard skills are important, but soft skills are just as important. People want to hire passion. People want to hire people they want to be around. Don't be afraid to talk about things not job related. It shows your personality and you may find areas of commonality with the interviewer. Did you go to the same school? Like the same type of foods? A love of animals, etc.....
2. At the end of the interview the interviewer will always ask in some fashion if you have any questions. Never answer with a "no". That leaves a negative hanging in the air. If you are interested in the position and all your questions have been answered then ask "You have answered all my questions about the position, have I answered all your questions about my ability to do the job?". This opens more dialogue and will provide you with additional information. And information is King. It gives you the ability to make a qualified decision do you want to move forward.
3. Also, if possible don't answer the money question with a money answer. Many people price themselves high thinking that the company will want to negotiate. Not all companies want to negotiate and some will chose to say bye and move on to the next candidate. You also don't want to leave money on the table if possible. If they ask you what you are looking to make, simply say "I'm very interested in this position and it's not all about the money. I will look seriously at any offer you want to make". That puts the awkward money question back on their table.
4. If you want the position be sure to let them know your level of interest and BE SURE to ask "What, is our next step".
5. If you are currently working you should expect a salary bump when moving to a new position. In 2019 it was between 10 and 20%. But that has changed and there is no standard at this time. The average salary raise in 2019 was 3-1/2%. The highest since 2008. But that too has changed.

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#### **Follow Up**

1. First thing after the interview you want to send thank you notes. Within 24 hours. Send a thank you note to everybody that was involved in the interview. Even if you do not want the position, always send a thank you note. It is common business etiquette. It's OK to send a thank you by email. Do not use text message. You want something that can go in a file. Some recruiters advocate also sending a copy of the thank you by postal service. That's up to you. We don't want to age discriminate but most people under a certain age don't want to fool with the paper anymore. They want everything to go on a flash drive.
2. Connect with the interviewer on LinkedIn. And start following them on twitter if they have an account. DO NOT ask to friend them on Facebook. That's too personal, for family and friends and a little bit like stalking.
3. OK, so you've sent the thank you note and have connected with them but haven't heard anything. You need to be persistent but in a nice way. For architects and designers, we suggest reaching out and offering to do a sample project, a color board, sample drawing, so you can show them what you are capable of.
4. If you don't get the position you must accept a no graciously. You do not want to burn any bridges. Many times, Penny and I have clients that were faced with choosing between two excellent candidates. And will go back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> candidate the moment another position opens.
5. If you do not get the position, always thank them for their time and ask for feedback on why you were not chosen. This will give you insight into where you may need to improve your skills. If you do not get the position because of lack of experience, ask them if you can stay in touch and come back for an interview at a later date.