



ZRG Passport for Interview Success

INTERVIEW PREPARATION



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The Importance of the Interview.

In today's market the interview is more important than ever. You need to be able to:

- ▶ Make a quick and strong first impression
- ▶ Sell you and your skills in today's environment
- ▶ Convince the hiring managers you are the right person
- ▶ Have a good personality and perspective
- ▶ Be willing to do whatever it takes to be successful!!!!



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Interview Overview

- ▶ Interviewing is probably one of the most nerve wracking activities that a candidate and hiring manager can do. Most people are not professional interviewers and/or professional interviewees.
- ▶ Outlined is a path to success so that you can and will succeed in the interview process. These strategies have been successful in placing candidates through 2 major economic downturns: .com of early 2000's and the Financials Services collapse of recent times.
- ▶ Additionally these strategies work in multiple cultures across the globe, but one thing still rises to the top of interview success. "People hire people they like and that are most like them" and secondly "the most qualified person is not the person who will get the job, but the one who interviews the best Will" (author unknown)

FYI -- *Each of these scenarios that I have listed above are results of things that have worked or have turned into complete disasters.*



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Things to consider before the interview - simple stuff

- ▶ Make sure you know where you are going. (Don't always trust the GPS.)
- ▶ If flying in or taking a train give yourself plenty of time and if at all possible try to get in the night before.
- ▶ Know where to park and if you need to give your car information to security prior to the interview.
- ▶ Have the phone number of the person you need to ask for and if at all possible get their cell phone number.
- ▶ Make sure you know how long it will take to get through security.
- ▶ Stake out a place to hang out before your interview. (Starbucks/Dunkin Donuts/Hotel Lobby)
- ▶ Always arrive 30 minutes before the interview, but don't get to the office more than 10 minutes before hand.
- ▶ Make sure your car is clean. The hiring manager may say let's go grab lunch or a cup of coffee and he may ask you to drive. (If you car is not clean, it will reflect on how you treat an important situation.)
- ▶ If the weather is going to be bad or snow is forecasted, confirm that the interview is still taking place. (You don't want to get to an interview and only one interviewer shows up and you spent 2 hours to get there to find out that you need to come back next week.)



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Nutritional Preparation

This is an often over looked part of the interview process. Most people don't think that this matters, but it is highly important. You wouldn't go into a major sports competition without proper nutritional preparation, the same is true for interviewing. You are selling yourself and you don't want to go into an interview with too low of energy or too jacked up on coffee.

Many interviews now last several hours and it is more important than ever to make sure that you have the energy to sustain yourself through the interview process. You don't want to be yawning or phased out during an interview because your blood sugar has dropped significantly.

Breakfast

1. For breakfast eat a well balanced breakfast: Protein, Fat, Carbohydrates. Don't eat a high carb breakfast, this will cause a crash once your blood sugar subsides.
2. Be well hydrated.
3. Don't drink too much coffee you don't want to be too jittery and speaking at full speed. This will make you look nervous.
4. Put a power bar or protein bar in your bag or pocket so that you can eat during a break if you need a boost of energy.
5. **DON'T BE HUNGOVER!!!!**



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Nutritional Preparation Cont.

Lunch

If your interview includes lunch or after lunch you need to be very aware of what you eat and how much you eat. Many of us go into a food coma after lunch and are ready for a nap. Don't eat a huge heavy lunch, because your body will spend it's energy on digestion, not on blood flow to the brain. You need your brain more than you need your stomach.

1. If you are having lunch with the interviewer be careful
2. Never eat something you need to eat with your hands (Sandwiches, pizza, taco's, burritos, finger foods.)
3. Eat a balanced meal. You don't want to have the highs and lows that your blood sugar will go through.
4. Never order an appetizer and if the hiring manager does, don't share it even if they ask you too.
5. The #1 focus of lunch is the interview, not the food. Make sure you eat something conservative.

Dinner

Many high level positions have you go out to dinner with the ultimate decisions makers, this is where you need to be extremely careful!!

1. No Drinking!! This is where loose lips sink ships!!
2. Don't overindulge (This is still an interview not a culinary experience.)
3. Get out alive. Dinner can be one of the most difficult tests to pass.



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Visualization

Visualization of success in an interview is one of the best ways to ace an interview. Your mind doesn't know the difference between reality and imagination; visualization is a tool that will allow you to picture success in your mind and picture yourself doing well during the interview. It is a mental rehearsal of the interview, before you actually get to the interview.

Things to visualize.

- ▶ How you will handle yourself when you meet the first interviewer
- ▶ How well you will be speaking
- ▶ Focusing on your breathing
- ▶ Picturing yourself speaking slowly, clearly, and concise
- ▶ Seeing yourself offering solutions for the interviewer
- ▶ Picture yourself winning the interview



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First Impressions

Making a good first impression.
*The hiring manager will judge you in
the first 30 seconds.*

- ▶ Make sure your suit is ready to go and that everything matches. Better to be conservative than edgy.
- ▶ Don't have your interview clothes smelling like moth balls, smoker or a cedar closet (instant turn off).
- ▶ Make sure your shoes look good and match your belt (black shoes, black belt; brown shoes, brown belt).
- ▶ Don't wear too much jewelry (wedding ring and watch for men, simple jewelry for women).
- ▶ Don't wear too much cologne or perfume.
- ▶ Make sure your breath smells good (coffee or smoke breath is terrible).
- ▶ When going to the interview and you are drinking coffee don't spill it on your shirt. In case you do, bring an extra shirt and leave it in the car. (The interviewers will be focused on the stain on your shirt and not on you.)
- ▶ Don't put a pen in your shirt pocket, if it explodes (same as above).
- ▶ Make sure you have a firm handshake, not a limp handshake (this can kill the deal).
- ▶ Stand tall, not hunched over. (Think confidence, not hope) Nothing sticks out more than a desperate interviewer.
- ▶ Keep strong eye contact!!!
- ▶ Remember the person interviewing you will likely be as nervous or more nervous than you. If you can put them at ease, they will be at ease.



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During the Interview - *What Not To Do?*

- ▶ Prior to the interview take a few minutes in the bathroom to get ready. (Be careful of what you say or do in the bathroom prior if there is someone else in there because you never know who you will be interviewing with.)
- ▶ Don't fidget, be calm, don't bounce your knees or play with your fingers (this will show nervousness).
- ▶ Don't use slang, profanity or make negative remarks regarding race, politics, sex, age, religion, prior employees or current/prior workplace.
- ▶ Try to minimize name dropping. You never know if the interviewer knows that person and whether or not they have a favorable impression of them.
- ▶ Don't take a cup of coffee, even if they ask you (if you spill the coffee all over the table or desk or the interviewer, you will spend more time cleaning it up rather than selling yourself.)
- ▶ Don't take calls or check your phone during the interview. (Make sure the ringer is turned off, you don't want the Hell's Bells' ringtone to go off that your 12 year old son put on your phone.)
- ▶ Avoid talking about compensation, but if the money question comes up, here is the best way to answer it.

Mr. Hiring Manager, you have my present salary and total income. (or the minimum salary I would consider). Rather than give you a specific amount, I would rather leave with the thought that I am qualified and interested in the position we've been discussing. If you feel the same about me, make me the best offer that you feel comfortable with so I might consider a career with your (company)

~ author unknown



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During the Interview - *What To Do?*

- ▶ Be a good listener – the goal is a 50/50 exchange during the interview process. Don't dominate the conversations and ask questions throughout the process.
- ▶ Talk about success!!!
 - How much money you made/saved the company.
 - How you delivered something on time or prior to the time it was due.
- ▶ Sell yourself and be proud of your accomplishments. Don't undermine your success, sell your success. (Many people have a hard time doing this, but this is highly important.)
- ▶ Have a list of questions ready for the interviewers.
- ▶ Make sure you have done your homework on the company and know some solutions you could provide them if you were hired.
- ▶ Bring some examples of success with you: writing samples, sales plans, go to market strategies.
- ▶ Try to make a personal connection with the team members you meet.
- ▶ Close positively and show interest based on the story you heard. Emphasize you want the job and would be a top performer who would work hard and do whatever it takes to get the job done.
- ▶ Follow up the interview with a hand written note or email thanking everyone you met.
- ▶ Outweigh any weaknesses with positives.



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Goals of the Day

Gain a better understanding of the role and determine if the position, company and culture are good fits for you and to convince them you are a strong, viable candidate for consideration.

You should be able to answer the following questions:

- ▶ Is this the type of company and culture that I would like to work for?
- ▶ Does the role fit my skills and strengths?
- ▶ Are the leaders of the type of people I would enjoy working with?

End of Interview Goal:

- ▶ You have sold on your capabilities and style and you have further assessed if this might be a viable opportunity for you to consider.



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Questions To Ask Yourself

Who did you meet with? What are their titles?

- ▶ Is this the final round? Did you meet with the sr. execs?

What went well?

- ▶ Did you get a good picture and the details of the role?
- ▶ Do you need more clarification?
- ▶ Do you feel that you will perform well at the role?

What did not go so well?

- ▶ Are you too sr/jr for the role?
- ▶ Culturally was it the right fit?
- ▶ Could you work for the people you interviewed with?

Is there anything that you have any concerns about?

What does your gut say?

Can you do the job? Does it match your career objectives?

Based on a scale of 1-10 what is your level of interest?

Go through the reasons why you are looking for a new role.

- ▶ Money
- ▶ Upward progression
- ▶ Role

Was Money discussed?

How did the interview end, what did the hiring manager say the next steps would be?

- ▶ Did you set up the next round?
- ▶ How long before you hear feedback?

Make sure you have the hiring managers Email so they can send a thank you note.

Do you have any questions or concerns?

How do you think your company will react when you go to resign?

What are you going to do when you get counter offered?

- ▶ 93% of those who accept a counter offer are gone in 12 months.

**BASED ON YOUR MEETING and if THEY GIVE YOU A FAIR OFFER
ARE YOU READY TO GO TO WORK THERE?**



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Resignation

- ▶ Resigning from a job can be just as stressful as taking a new role and many times it is combining a high level of excitement for the new role and having the feeling that you are letting down your current employer. Remember that you need to take care of yourself and that you wouldn't have been interviewing if you loved your job or if the new role didn't offer better money, career advancement, or the chance to make a better name for yourself in the market place.
- ▶ My philosophy for resigning is simple: Give your boss, line manager, friend a large thank you for all the help they have given you, realize that you are not going to be enemies once you leave, and that they will be sad that you are leaving, but if they could have given you the job you wanted they would have.
- ▶ Many times this is when a counter offer usually comes up. It is also a selfish way for them to cover their losses and to keep you as long as they can to get what they want from you.



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Counter Offers

How to Handle Counter Offers

by [Brian Moore](#)

Congratulations, you've just accepted an offer for the job you've been chasing for months. You are excited and relieved, but you're wondering how your boss is going to react when you resign. Will the reaction be understanding, angry, shocked or dismissive. How do you react when one of your best performers resigns to you?

Some of the more common thoughts that the boss may have are:

- ▶ He's one of my best performers. How am I supposed to replace him, keep the team together, and achieve budget?
- ▶ What inconvenient timing – I was about to go on annual leave for 3 weeks
- ▶ How am I going to look to the board/senior management for losing this person?
- ▶ Where is he going?
- ▶ Can I get her to stay until I find a replacement and have an effective hand over?
- ▶ How can I get her to stay?

If you are a valuable resource, then your boss and your company won't want to see you walk out the door, especially to the competition. They will make every attempt to convince you to stay, either by:

- ▶ Making you a counter offer
- ▶ Making you feel incredibly guilty and disloyal
- ▶ 'Loving' you like they've never 'loved' you before – be suspicious of this
- ▶ Being made an attractive counter offer is instantly good for your ego, but you must take a number of things into consideration before saying "thanks" or "no thanks":
- ▶ You have only received a counter offer because you resigned. It is a purely reactive tactic from your employer and should make you wonder whether you need to resign every time you want to improve your situation. If your employer thought you were truly worthy, why didn't they improve your situation anyway?
- ▶ Do your reasons for wanting to leave still exist? You may have a number of reasons – salary too low, no promotion in sight, don't like your boss. You may be offered more money to stay, which can be tempting, but if you still have other issues outstanding, you'll probably end up leaving anyway.
- ▶ Despite what your employer is saying to you, they will probably now consider you a risk and may make contingency plans without your knowledge. You may not be seen as a true member of the team.
- ▶ The counter offer could simply be an interim tactic from your employer to bridge a gap whilst they look to replace you.

Much research and many surveys have been completed over the years to measure what happens to employees who accept counter offers. Only 6 out of 100 employees are still with their company after 12 months, and 2 important points become apparent:

- ▶ Salary was hardly ever the prime motivator for resigning – more money didn't ultimately change the true state of play.
- ▶ Things didn't take long to return to the way they were before the resignation.
- ▶ Before accepting a counter offer, ask yourself why your employer has made the offer. There is a strong possibility that the cons will outweigh the pros and you will realize that your decision to resign was right after all.



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About the author



I am currently a Managing Director with ZRG Partners with a focus on the Financial Services industry. For the past 15 years I have had tremendous success in placing individuals in the following segments: Equipment Leasing, Fin Tech, Asset Based Lending, Trade Finance, Credit Cards, Banking, and Payments.

Most recent success has been in placing candidates beyond the US Borders in Europe and South America. Recent global placements include:

- ▶ Head of Public Finance Group, for de novo start up
- ▶ Global head of Vendor sales to drive \$300-400M more volume
- ▶ Two new divisional Presidents to double the business
- ▶ Building a business for a Foreign bank coming into the US Leasing Market
- ▶ Deputy Head of Credit, USA
- ▶ General Manager and Head of Finance, USA

For the past 17 years I have been in the Executive Search Business. I started my career with K Force in 1999 during the “Gold Rush” of the Dot.Com economy and in 2002 moved to ZRG Partners. I have been fortunate enough to have been in 2 major downturns, which have forced me to become a better search professional.

In addition to my professional life, I am still a competitive athlete and love the thrill of pushing myself to excel. I still compete in ski racing, bike racing, running races, and endurance events. It is a way to get into a truly introspective state which then allows me to perform better as a professional, parent, spouse, and athlete. You can often see me out with my kids on a run or skiing.

I have developed a personal philosophy that: sacrifice, hard work, desire, and passion for constant improvement drives me to constantly look for ways to excel in my professional and personal life.

Check out and feel free to join one of my groups on Linked In.

1. Executive Athletes- 17,000 Members
<http://www.linkedin.com/groupRegistration?gid=2791940>
2. Global Leasing/Trade Finance/ABL Professionals- 7000 Members
<http://www.linkedin.com/groupRegistration?gid=2875488>
3. Boston Banking and Financial Services professionals 10,000 Members
<http://www.linkedin.com/groupRegistration?gid=3099420>

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