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Interview Tips

There are several important steps to the interviewing process and it is important to be prepared at each level. These recommendations will ensure you present yourself positively.

Telephone Interview

You have submitted your CV for a job opportunity (either directly or through a Recruiter). It is most common to have a telephone interview first before you are invited to interview in person (a site visit).

The organization contacting you will ask questions to determine if you are a potential fit for their opportunity and for their community. You will want to determine if the organization and opportunity fit your specifications before you invest the time to make a site visit.

1. When you receive a call in response to submitting your CV, ask if you can schedule a time for the telephone interview.
2. Try to have the telephone interview away from work and in a quiet place where you will not be interrupted and can take notes.
3. The telephone interview will often take 30-60-90 minutes so you should be prepared with questions regarding the opportunity and community.
4. Speak slowly so you can be understood by the caller - this is particularly true if English is your second language (if you cannot be understood over the telephone, it is unlikely you'll be invited for a site visit).
5. Speak with enthusiasm and avoid a flat monotone style.
6. If the opportunity appears to meet your specifications, let the caller know and inquire about the next steps - don't be shy!
7. If the opportunity does not meet your specifications, let the caller know the reasons it would be inappropriate to move forward.

Site Visit Arrangements and Expenses

If you are invited for a site visit, it is perfectly appropriate to ask how the travel arrangements will be handled. It is customary that the expenses are sponsored by the organization inviting you for the site visit. Consider the following:

1. If you are married or have a significant other, they should be invited as well. It is better to determine on the first site visit if the community will suit both of you.
2. The organization should offer to arrange your travel for the site visit or they may put you in touch with their travel agent who can issue electronic tickets if you will be flying to meet them.
3. Some organizations may ask you to buy your own airline tickets and offer to reimburse you for the cost. Please bear in mind that it may take 30-60+ days to reimburse you. If you are a "starving Resident", you should let the organization know you'd appreciate their making the arrangements and emailing the electronic tickets (after you've approved the travel itinerary).
4. Organizations inviting you for a site visit can make a rental car reservation but it is very difficult for them to pay for the rental in advance. You will need your driver's license and a credit card for the car rental. You can submit the cost with any other expenses (parking, gas, food) you incur for the site visit.
5. Be prepared to let the organization know what you would like to see during your site visit so they

can create an itinerary that will allow ample time for interviewing and ample time to get to know the community.

6. If you have children, it is best to leave them at home so you can concentrate on the interview. However, if you must take your children, some organizations will sponsor the travel costs and others will expect you to pay the costs. If you are unsure, you can ask the organization about their policy.

Dress Code and Behavior During the Site Visit

Never forget you are being interviewed the entire time you are on a site visit. The organization will be evaluating your clinical knowledge, experience, personality and social skills.

1. Men should wear a suit or a shirt, tie and jacket for the interview. The way your spouse or SO is dressed will also be evaluated. If you are visiting a small or rural community, be sure your spouse is not overdressed for the area.
2. Women should wear suits (skirt or pants) or conservative dresses (no prints). Wear little or no jewelry.
3. Be very conservative regarding alcohol. Although it is a social event, both you and your spouse/SO are still being evaluated.
4. There are three things that will negatively impact your site visit, limpy handshake, lack of eye contact and flat affect. An enthusiastic presentation will give you a strong advantage over your competition. The "warm and fuzzy" candidate will receive the offer!
5. Within 72 hours after the conclusion of the site visit, send a thank you note. This courtesy is rarely used after site visit and you will stand out as a physician with strong social skills. If you are genuinely interested in the opportunity, say so in the thank you note. If you are not sure the opportunity is for you, let them know you are continuing to interview with other organizations.

Questions to Ask During the Interview

Be prepared during the telephone interview and site visits. Keep a list of questions that will help you evaluate the opportunity against your practice and geographic preferences. It is perfectly appropriate to take a portfolio or notebook to the interview so you can make notes and refer to your own list of questions. A few questions, which may be appropriate, are:

1. What is practice philosophy?
2. What are the long-term goals of the practice with regard to number of physicians and type of patients you would be seeing?
3. What activities are the practice members involved in? Faculty appointments, association, society activities, hospital committees?
4. How is the practice thought of in the community? By other physicians? By patients?
5. To what types of patients will you be providing care? Which patients would you refer to other physicians?
6. What is typical patient load?
7. Is there partnership potential? Is there a buy-in and over what period of time?
8. Is the practice well managed and financially sound? Is the staff well trained and stable?
9. What is the payer mix?
10. How long have you been looking for a new physician and why is there a vacancy?
11. What is the compensation and benefit package? Don't ask too early in the interviews - you'll be seen as greedy. Keep these questions for the end.

What the Practice will want to Know About You.

You should be prepared to answer the following questions:

1. Tell me about yourself (limit your response to 2 minutes)
2. Why are you interested in practicing here?
3. Why did you choose your specialty?
4. Why should we hire you?
5. What are your long-term goals?
6. What is your greatest strength?
7. What is your greatest weakness?
8. What are your compensation and benefit expectations?

9. What is important to you in a practice?
10. What do you do in your personal time?
11. How do others describe you?
12. How would you describe your style of medicine?
13. Do you have special interests or skills that you can contribute to this practice?

Negative Factors Evaluated During the Interviews

Pay close attention to this list, which can make a difference between getting an offer and you losing your job prospect.

- Poor personal appearance
- Overbearing, aggressive, conceited, superiority complex
- Inability to communicate clearly
- Lack of courtesy, enthusiasm, passive, indifference
- Over emphasis on money - interested only in best compensation package
- Condemnation of past employers
- Merely shopping around
- Little sense of humor
- Inability to take criticism
- High pressure style
- Intolerant

How to Wrap up the Site Visit

No matter if you drove to the interview/site visit - or flew across country, your genuine appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about the practice, hospital and community must be expressed when you wrap up. AND don't forget to send a thank you note. The following questions should be asked if you are interested in the opportunity.

- Do you have any concerns about my ability to be successful in this practice? If there are, you have the opportunity to address them on the spot.
- I am very interested in this opportunity. What is the next step? What is your timing to hire a new physician?

If you are not interested in the opportunity, be sure to tell the organization you are continuing to interview or you have already interviewed with practices that you feel more closely meet your specifications.

Enjoy Your Interview and Site Visits

You will enjoy your interviews and site visits more if you are prepared. Be sure to allow enough time to evaluate the opportunities that most closely meet your practice and geographic preferences.