

## The Trainers Directory

*Welcomes you to*

# **Interviewing for Success**

Developed by  
Lois Hall  
Copyright © 2008  
All Rights Reserved

No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without written permission.

## *Speaker Profile*

### **About Lois L. Hall**

As founder of Access to Leadership, Lois Hall brings over twenty years of independent and corporate business experience in training, development, coaching and management. She has designed training and coaching programs and facilitated workshops for all levels of employees, with emphasis on skill and career development. Her expertise is in leadership and management development, performance management, career management, succession planning, strategic planning and customer service.

Career highlights include international sales and management positions in the service and high technology industries with companies such as American Airlines, Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC), Jenny Craig International and Altos Computer Systems, where she was responsible for the hiring, training and on-going development of staff. In addition to teaching Leadership and Management courses at the University of California, California State University and San Diego State University, Hall serves as a Certified Career Consultant where she coaches individuals in Career Management and Transition. She has also been a featured radio guest discussing various topics on effective management and leadership practices.

She is author of the upcoming book, *Leader of the Pack: Leadership Lessons I've Learned from My Dog*, a non-fiction, inspirational book about the lessons that working dogs have taught their human handlers and how those lessons made their human partners more effective leaders in the workplace.

Lois holds an M.A. in Counseling from Assumption College in Worcester, MA, and an undergraduate degree in Psychology and Sociology from Annhurst College in Woodstock, CT. She is a certified Myers-Briggs Type Indicator professional and incorporates the instrument into many of her programs. Hall actively participates in the National Speakers Association, the American Society for Training and Development, the Society for Human Resource Management, and the Professional Coaches and Mentors Association.

Lois is available for onsite training sessions, coaching and keynote speeches designed to address your learning objectives and capture your target audience.

Every discussion with hiring managers should be considered an interview, even if it is a conversation in passing or in an informal setting. Your role in the discussion should be to position your skills, talents, and experience as a solution to the challenges they face in the organization. Your task is to cultivate an offer by helping the hiring manager see you in a particular role and eventually make you an offer.

**Module I:** Purpose of Session

**Module II:** The Interviewing Process

- a. Screening
- b. Telephone
- c. Group (Panel)
- d. Behavioral

**Module III:** What the Interviewer is Seeking

**Module IV:** Guidelines for Interviewing

- a. Preparing
- b. Conducting
- c. Concluding

**Module V:** Traps to Avoid

**Module VI:** Commonly Asked Interview Questions

**Module VII:** The Behavioral Interviewing System

**Module VIII:** Asking the Right Questions

- a. Responsibilities
- b. Resources
- c. Authority
- d. Measurements
- e. Culture

**Module IX:** Your Most Difficult Questions

**Module X:** Interview Follow-up

## **OBJECTIVES**

- ◆ Use a *Positioning Statement*
- ◆ Understand the interviewing process
- ◆ Gain significant advantage over other candidates
- ◆ Prepare for commonly asked interview questions
- ◆ Follow-up effectively

## **Interviewing**

**Hiring managers make judgments about your qualifications based primarily on what you tell them.** You can, therefore, gain a significant advantage through careful preparation. You may even edge out a better-qualified competitor if you succeed in conveying a larger quantity of more relevant information in the interview.

Some hiring managers interview often and are highly skilled at it. The best interviewers have been trained in Behavioral Interviewing or a similar system. Others may be more nervous than you are about the interview – and less skilled. This session is designed to help you prepare for all of them.

## **Interviewing as Part of Your Overall Communication Strategy**

Effective communication is a key element in your job search strategy. The manner in which you communicate affects the impression you leave on others. It determines your success in obtaining interviews, meetings, and job offers. It also determines your success in the interview.

The words and concepts you use to describe yourself in an interview should sell the prospective hiring manager. Interviewers will make judgments on your qualifications based primarily on what you communicate to them.

### **Effective Interviewing Begins with Active Listening**

Active listening is important as an interview or meeting proceeds. Listening alerts you to the employer's wants and needs. It helps you achieve your planned objectives in a meeting or interview. If you can determine the assets and qualifications an employer values in a candidate, you can better address them in the interview. You can also collect information which will permit you to do outstanding post-interview follow up.

Be certain that you hear accurately what the interviewer says. The best way to do this is to summarize important information and ask if your summary is correct. This technique will often stimulate your interviewer to be more clear and more forthcoming.

Your accuracy and responsiveness as a listener also demonstrates specific skills you have that might be of value to the company. Active listening is also an important vehicle when building a relationship, such as one that might exist between an employer and employees.

Be sensitive to the verbal and nonverbal communication of your interviewer. Do not assume that everyone understands you. No matter how clear you think you are, the interviewer or the contact person might misinterpret what you say. Check back with the other person to make sure your message is clear.

### **Non-Verbal Communication Is Also Important**

Your body language can be interpreted both positively and negatively. Avoid distractions during interviews and meetings. Tense or nervous behavior (like crossing your arms or drumming your fingers on the chair) detracts from your presentation and conveys a lack of comfort or confidence. Your facial expressions should put the interviewer at ease by reflecting your interest and enthusiasm.

Good eye contact establishes rapport and shows that you are attentive and interested. It also enables you to judge the effects of your presentation. Maintain good eye contact throughout an interview without staring or making the interviewer uncomfortable. If you are being interviewed by more than one person, make eye contact with each person in the group. In a group interview, sit toward the end of the table if possible. This helps to avoid “tennis match” scanning that could hinder good eye contact.

Most interviewers assume that you will never dress better on the job than you are dressed in an interview or a meeting. So dress according to the importance and formality of the position of company environment, and pay close attention to your personal grooming.

## **The Job Interview**

A job interview is a culmination of all of your preparation and search efforts. Everything that you have accomplished has led up to and prepared you to market yourself during the interview. You developed your advertising package, or resume, to communicate your objective and your marketable skills. Now, through the interview, you have an opportunity to present and sell the total package, from a market-driven perspective.

To market yourself during an interview, you need to match your qualifications and skills to the position. Consequently, you should actively listen, respond with interest and ask questions to get as much information as possible about the responsibilities of the position and the related needs and problems of the company. This will prepare you to respond with specific accomplishments and information which validate your appropriateness for the position.

In today's job market, you must demonstrate what you can do for the company by documenting your skills and qualifications. Hiring managers cannot be expected to determine how your past work experiences fit with future skill requirements. You must take responsibility for understanding their needs and explaining how you fit.

Concentrate your efforts on positively presenting yourself in relation to the particular job. You do this by establishing rapport with the interviewer at the beginning of the interview and by honestly and straightforwardly establishing your appropriateness for the position. Be prepared to substantiate your qualifications with specific examples of your accomplishments.

You can expect an interviewer to probe for areas of weakness during any interview. Most of the probes are predictable and preparing responses for them is essential. Make sure that you respond to all of the interviewer's questions with positive answers.

A list of interviewing questions is included in this session to prepare you for the interview process. Suggested responses are also listed. If you can respond to the interview questions with positive answers, you will probably be able to answer questions to the satisfaction of your interviewers. Not all interviewers have been adequately prepared to interview job candidates. There are good and bad interviewers. If you are well prepared, having a weak interviewer can be an advantage. Your challenge will be to meet your objectives regardless of the level of expertise of the interviewer. Your job is to communicate your strongest and most relevant selling points whether you are asked about them or not.

Be positive, be prepared and provide information as you respond to questions. The same positive attitude is important when you ask questions from your prepared list. Prepare an agenda of information you want to provide and questions you need answered. Meet your agenda by listening, probing and responding to the interviewer.

You might experience a pressure interview during which the interviewer attempts to create a stressful environment to see how you handle yourself. You might even be asked inappropriate questions. If you are prepared and confident, you can handle any interview situation.

### **The Importance of Chemistry**

Finally, some say that only three things really matter in a job interview: chemistry, chemistry, and chemistry. While this is an exaggeration, interpersonal chemistry is certainly important. After all, if they do not like you, they will not even hire you even if you are the most qualified person on earth. And if you dislike them, do you really want to spend 40 (or 60 or 80) hours a week with them? So, the interview is also social: relax and enjoy the conversation. See if you like *them*.