

Material Imprimible

Curso de Redacción de CV y cartas de presentación y entrevistas laborales

Módulo 4

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Types of interviews

I will share with you some **types of interviews** that you need to be prepared for.

- Screening interviews are conducted to filter candidates and to keep out those who aren't qualified for the position. They are usually handled by telephone or online.
- Hiring or selection interviews are usually conducted by hiring managers and the objective is to see if the candidate would fit into a company.
- One-on-one interviews involve only two people: the interviewer and the interviewee.
- Candidate group interviews involve two or more candidates for the same position, who are interviewed at the same time by two or more interviewers. The purpose is to test your professionalism and ability to work in a group and under pressure. Try to make your answers notable in comparison with your competitors.
- Panel interviews are conducted by a group of interviewers, who ask you questions. Keep eye contact with the person who asked you a question and with the other panel members too.
- Sequential interviews take place on the same day or various days with different interviewers and on an individual basis. Don't assume that each interviewer knows what was said in the previous interview.
- Behavioural interviews are used to know how you have dealt with certain employment-related situations in the past. The idea is that past performances can be used as indicators of future performances. Questions may be about problem-solving, leadership, stressful situations, just to mention a few. For example, "How have you handled challenges?" To be better prepared, review work-related anecdotes before the interview and when telling them, focus on the positive results of your actions or what you have learned from those situations.

- Competency-based interviews are performed to evaluate if you have the skills needed to perform a job. For example: "Could you describe a time when you supported a co-worker with the performance of a task?" Offer specific examples that match the competency that is being assessed and apply the STAR technique. The letter "S" stands for situation, that is, the description of the obstacle or situation you faced at work. The letter "T" stands for the task you had to accomplish. "A" stands for the action you took to cope with the situation or task and this is the most important section of this approach. "R" stands for "result", that is, how the anecdote ended. You can also describe what you learnt in that situation.
- Case interviews involve giving you a business scenario and asking you to handle the situation. They are used to test your analytical and problem-solving skills. Working Interviews aim at testing if you can do the job by asking you to complete an actual task.

Job interview

We are going to discuss the interview divided into three parts:

- Before the interview,
- during the interview, and
- after the interview has taken place

Before the interview

Tips before the interview.

- Research your potential employer by visiting the company webpage or searching the internet for information about the company. Find out information about the company organization, mission, goals, history, number of employees, customers, competitors, culture, and future plans, just to mention a few things you should know. That information will help

you tailor your interview answers to the company's needs. Employers are pleased when candidates do their homework.

- Prepare yourself and rehearse. Go over the job ad to see what you should focus on and plan your answers. Think about job-related anecdotes that illustrate your educational background, skills and job experience. The stories should be short but detailed and relevant. You may consider recording yourself while rehearsing in order to check how you look and sound.
- Make up for gaps and for what is missing. If there are some areas in your CV that you know you will be asked about, make sure you are ready to give proper answers. For example, if you have little work experience, you may stress recent training you have completed. If you don't meet all the requirements, offer a compensatory response.

Most interviewers finish the job interview by asking the candidate if they have any questions. You should never decline this offer. If the interviewer provides plenty of information during the interview, you may end up running out of questions before you can even ask one, so make sure you have a list of possible questions on your mind, such as the following ones. Take into account that this list should be ready before the interview and the objective should be clear. Let's see some examples.

- Would you mind telling more about the kind of training I would receive?
This question suggests you are interested in developing your skills.
- What are the chances for promotion in this position? It highlights your determination to climb the career ladder.
- What are the key performance indicators for the role and how are they measured? It indicates your interest in knowing the company better and how it measures success.
- What would be my first project? It shows your interest in the position.

- Do you have any doubts about whether I am well-suited for this opening? It implies that you are open to constructive criticism and it also gives you the opportunity to address any concerns the recruiter may have.
- What are the next steps in the recruitment process? It indicates that you are keen on moving forward in the process.

During the interview

Now, it's time to move on to the next stage of the interview: **during the interview** itself. Even before the interview starts, you will be sending nonverbal messages about who you are to the receptionist, your interviewer and anyone who sees you. **Small talk** can help you build rapport and find common ground with the recruiter. Avoid clichés as no recruiter will remember you by them and choose topics that aren't controversial. Let me share some examples.

- "The moment you walk into the interviewer's office, look around for pictures, awards on the wall, brochures or anything that can be used as a small-talk topic. You can say: "I was just admiring your paintings. Is that a Monet?"
- Do basic research on the company looking for information about recent events, awards, special programs and the like. These are safe topics and indicate that you are interested in the company. For example: "I was excited to learn that this company will sponsor a half marathon in Buenos Aires. I'm passionate about running, you know."
- You can research your interviewer on LinkedIn to find common interests. You can say: "I read in your LinkedIn profile that you have worked here for 20 years. May I ask you what has inspired such loyalty?" Be congenial and relatable, but don't get too personal.

Telephone interviews

Nowadays not all the first interviews are conducted in person. As a matter of fact, many of them are made by phone. Let's discuss this topic together. Before participating in telephone interview you should have a copy of the CV you sent to the recruiter, a calendar with your scheduled commitments, a notepad, a pen and water. If you aren't ready when the recruiter first calls you, suggest another date when you know you will not be disturbed. Let's look at a typical phone conversation between an applicant and a recruiter.

- Recruiter: Hello. Could I speak to Julia Brown?
- Applicant: This is she. Can I have your name?
- Recruiter: This is Tom Sandler from ABC Company calling in relation to your application for the position of sales executive with us. Do you have a minute?
- Applicant: I'm glad you called but I'm about to join a meeting. Can I call you back later on this number?
- Recruiter: Sure! I'll be available after 4 pm.
- Applicant: What about 4.30?
- Recruiter: That sounds good.
- Applicant: Thank you for calling and I'll phone you at 4.30 today.
- Recruiter: Ok. Speak to you later. Bye.
- Applicant: Good-bye!

In regard to this example, remember that you should use "This is" plus your name when you identify yourself on the phone. Never say: "I am" plus your name. If you want to suggest another time or date, you can use "what about" or "how about" plus the time or date.

Please, take into consideration the following recommendations. When the phone screening interview comes,

- don't rush and don't over-explain.

- After answering questions, you can check understanding by asking: "Does that answer your question? or "Is this the kind of information you are looking for?"
- Ask the recruiter to repeat what you missed. If the line is not good you can say "I'm having trouble hearing you. Could you say that again?"
- Show that you are listening by using phrases such as "That's interesting", "I see" or "I understand".
- Ask for clarification if a question is unclear by saying: "So, if I understand you correctly..." or "Could you explain what you mean by...?"
- Try to get an interview when the call is coming to an end by saying: "Based on the information you have given me, I am very interested in this opening and would like to set up a meeting to discuss my qualifications and experience. I am available on Friday afternoon. Is that a good time for you?"
- Don't forget to say thank you when the interview comes to an end.

Video conference interviews

Some interviews are conducted through video conferences and there are some questions that I'd like to us to think about together. How should we handle video conferences? What should we take into account? In fact, there are some points we should bear in mind before the interview.

- Let me share some points with you regarding technical issues:
 - i. Before you attend a video conference interview, ask the interviewer what technology they plan to use, such as Zoom, Skype, Hangouts, etc., to download any necessary software, test your connection and equipment and do a technical trial run to see if everything is working properly.
 - ii. Besides, ensure your device is fully charged before the interview. In relation to the camera, place it above your eye-level, angled

slightly downward and look at the camera and not at your computer screen.

- iii. Keep in mind that you will look better if there is lighting in front of you rather than behind you.
- The environment is key so
 - i. choose a quiet place where you won't be interrupted and turn off your phone. If possible, sit in front of a blank wall to prevent the interviewer from getting distracted. Skype, for example, has a background blur feature.
 - In relation to duration,
 - i. Don't forget to check how long the interview will last so you can make proper arrangements so that neither your family nor your colleagues interrupt you during that time.

Next, we'll turn our attention to the development of the interview. At the beginning of the videoconference confirm the camera and sound are working properly by asking "Can you see me?" or "Can you hear me?" Then, move on to a polite greeting such as "How are you today?" or "I'm pleased to meet you!" and by expressing your gratitude for being considered, for example, "I really appreciate being considered for this role."

It's time for us to look into some considerations related to video conference interviews.

- At the beginning, make small talk, for example, "I believe you are in San Francisco, aren't you? I visited that city two years ago and I found it fascinating".
- You may also take advantage of the beginning to indicate that you're a good fit for the position, for example, "I'm looking forward to talking with you about how my experience and qualifications align with the position."
- One of the problems with this type of interviews is that connections are sometimes delayed. To avoid talking over the recruiter, let the interviewer finish the question, pause for a few seconds and then give your answer.

- If you noticed you have made a mistake, correct yourself by saying "Actually what I meant to say was that...".
- If you experience any technical issues, let the recruiter know. For example, "There's a lot of noise in the background. Could you check your microphone please?" or "I'm afraid I couldn't hear the last part. Could you repeat the question?".
- During the interview maintain good posture and avoid fidgeting. Also, maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- The following examples may be useful at the end of the interview; "Thank you for your time and I'd like to let you know that I love the idea of working for ABC because..." or "It was a pleasure meeting you and I'll be expecting your call".

Interviewing across cultures

When you prepare yourself for a job interview in another culture or by someone from a different culture, you may want to find out what the foreign people's expectations are for establishing credibility, what is considered respectful or disrespectful in the other culture and what are the most common misconceptions about people. It is key to be prepared and the following points will guide you when you do research into other cultures. Here are some considerations:

- Body language can be a make-a-break issue in employment interviews. Keeping eye contact is a sign of confidence and openness in the United States but in China it is considered unpleasant. Hand waving is unbearable for Asians while for Latin Americans it shows that the speaker is passionate about the topic.
- Regarding your role during the interview, keep in mind that in the United States applicants aim at selling their qualifications and experience to recruiters by showing their interest and looking engaged and proactive

while in other countries your role may be more passive and you may not be expected to ask questions.

- Concerning dress and appearance, in some cultures the quality of your attire reflects your quality as a person whereas in other cultures it may be perceived as arrogance.

Here are other aspects to keep in mind.

- Name dropping in interviews is considered inappropriate in many European countries but acceptable in Mediterranean countries.
- Personal questions. In the United States laws prevent privacy-related questions that may lead to discrimination but in other cultures questions about your age or marital status are common.
- High-context cultures such as Asian, African and Arab ones, rely on implicit and non-verbal communication, where verbal messages are indirect. Low-context cultures such as the American, German and English ones, rely on explicit communication, where one spells things out exactly. For example, an American interviewer may consider a Japanese interviewee purposefully vague while the Asian candidate assumes the interviewer understands what he means to imply. If one person is unaware of these differences, people from high-context cultures may be perceived as too formal and rigid and people from low-context cultures may give the impression of being rude. These concepts were developed by Edward Hall in his book called *The Silent Language*.
- In relation to formality, some cultures expect very formal interactions during the interview and joking may be considered a sign that you are not taking the job seriously. Other cultures favour a more easy-going conversation that reveals your personality.

Typical job interview questions

“Tell me about yourself”.

How should we answer that question. First, we should think straight. Here are some tips.

- When answering that question, sell yourself and remember that this is your chance to make a good first impression.
- One way to go about it is to write your own elevator pitch that should last between one or two minutes, grab the recruiter's interest and support your claims with specific facts.
- Focus on your educational and professional strong suits and don't recite your CV.
- Before writing your pitch, you should think about the main requirements for the advertised job and then write a pitch that says the kind of professional you are, two to four professional highlights and why you are interested in that position.

Let's take a look at an example:

- “I am a resourceful HR manager with vast knowledge of team-building and talent acquisition. I have spent the last four years developing my skills for ABC Company and I can describe myself as inspirational, because I can motivate my team to go the extra mile, and professional, because I always uphold the values of the organization I work for. Although I like my current position, I am confident I am ready for a more high-powered role.”

“What are your strengths?”

Another typical question interviewees are asked is related to their strengths.

Interviewers ask the question "What are your strengths?" to check if your strengths align with the company's needs and the job responsibilities and if you have the necessary skills, qualifications and experience that you set apart from other candidates. It's essential to show that you have the qualities the employer needs, so before the

interview, make a list of your top 10 strengths including experience, soft and hard skills, education and training. Next to each of them, write an example of how you applied them in the past. Then, narrow down the list to three to five that closely match the job description. Your answer shouldn't be more than 2 minutes long.

Let's turn our attention to three examples and let's analyse them from a grammar perspective.

- "I am very good at communicating complicated topics to different audiences". After the adjective "good", we need the preposition "to" and a gerund, that is, a verb ending in "ing".
- "I am able to see a situation from different angles". After "be able to", use a verb in the infinitive form.
- "I take pride in my writing skills". You take pride "in" something but you feel proud "of" something.

“What are your weaknesses?”

It is asked to know if you have been able to learn from your mistakes. Saying that you don't have any weaknesses may make the recruiter feel that you are hiding something while revealing weaknesses shows that you have self-awareness and a sense of humility. When choosing which weakness to mention make sure it doesn't hinder your ability to perform the job, it is minor and fixable. Also, indicate how you are working on it as it shows you have the drive to overcome your shortcomings.

For example:

- “I would like to be better at delegating tasks. Sometimes I am so focused on getting everything done properly and on time that I end up doing things that I could easily delegate. Two years ago I started using a project management tool that lets me oversee the progress of all the tasks I and that has helped me feel more at ease.”

As you can see, the weakness is described but the candidate highlights how he has looked for a way to improve. From a grammar angle, after “better at”, don’t forget to use a verb with “ing”.

"What is your biggest accomplishment?"

Choose a relevant and interesting achievement that demonstrates that you are the best candidate for the position, describe the challenge you faced, whether it was a task or action, your chosen course of action and the results. It's advisable to follow the STAR approach, where "S" stands for situation, "T" for task, "A" for action and "R" for result. The following example illustrates the STAR approach.

- “Soon after joining Clothes Super Store, I noticed that most shoppers would only make a few steps into the store and then leave. The seconds at heavily discounted prices displayed near the entrance didn't seem to encourage them to walk around. As a store manager, I asked to watch the CCTV recording and I noticed that most shoppers seemed displeased after having a look at the seconds. I understood most of them were looking for quality and design not price. With this in mind, I reorganized the store by displaying our most attractive designs just outside the transition zone to make a good first impression. As a result, time spent by shoppers navigating the floor went up as well as sales.”

"How do you handle stress?"

Don't say that you never feel stressed because what the recruiter wants to know is whether you understand how pressure affects you, how you deal with it and if you can cope with job-related stress. It can be useful to think which of your soft skills help you deal with stress, such as adaptability, organization, communication, etc. Now, remember the times you experienced stress at work and how you overcame the situation resorting to your soft skills. Don't focus on negative feelings and don't blame others. Now, it's time to have a look at an example:

- "I work in a call centre and I often deal with dissatisfied customers. Those calls can be a source of stress but I've learned to react to situations rather than to stress. For example, to help angry customers relax I listen to and empathize with them. And when they are ready to move forward, I map out an action plan and communicate it to them clearly and effectively. I believe that my communication and organization skills reduce their stress and assure them that I will follow through."

"Do you like working on a team or alone?"

When the interviewer asks you this question, what he wants to know is if you can work as a team member or on your own. Some positions require strong teamwork and others require people who can work independently, perhaps remotely.

- If you are the person who thrives in groups, the following answer may suit you: "I am the kind of person who thinks that two heads are better than one. Ever since I started playing team sports, I have been a team player. I feel more motivated and energized when I work with a group collaborating with others".
- If you are a lone wolf, you can say: "Throughout my career I have realized that I focus better when I work on my own."
- However, indicating the benefits of both approaches will showcase you as a dynamic and versatile candidate. "I am comfortable working as part of a team but I can also work by myself depending on the task. As a sales assistant I enjoy dealing with clients on my own but I also take pleasure in being part of team and exchanging ideas about lessons learned, goals and alternative approaches".

"Why do you want to work here?"

This question has different versions such as "why did you apply to this company?" or "why are you interested in this company?"; all of which are asked to understand your

motivations in sending your application, whether you are likely to work for your prospective employer for some time and if you would enjoy working there. Your answer should demonstrate knowledge of the company and industry, which means you should have done pre-interview research. Good reasons may include: the quality of the employer's products, the company's business reputation and reputation as an employer, the company culture and values. What shouldn't you mention? Company benefits, close to home, salary, just searching for a job or being unemployed for a while.

It's time for an example.

- "Some weeks ago I read an interview to your CEO, where he emphasized the importance of corporate social responsibility. I am a firm believer in giving back and I was glad to know that there was a job opening suitable to my skills and experience, in a company where my professional contribution and my personal values would be appreciated and valued."

"Why are you interested in this position?"

Here you should explain what you find appealing about the job and how good you are at the work required. Therefore, you should align your skills and experience with the position and tell the interviewer something about the employer's job that you liked. You should demonstrate that you understand what the job involves and you are excited about it. Please, take into account the following advice:

- Never give a reason related to personal needs, like needing more money.
- Concentrate on the company's needs and your career growth.
- Don't criticise your current employer and indicate the good things you want to gain in your next job and perhaps your current employer can't offer those things now.

It's time for us to turn to an example.

- "I have been working as a social media manager for 3 years and it's a field that ignites my passion and enthusiasm. After reading the job ad I

decided to apply for this position because it focuses on strategy for developing the community and analytics. Since I'm digitally savvy and I have experience leading community initiatives, I can start delivering results from day one".

"What are your educational qualifications?"

You should explain if you have graduated, if you are currently studying or if your study is incomplete. Please, be mindful of these recommendations

- The key point is to mention how your education has prepared you for the job you are being interviewed for and what motivated you to choose that study.
- As your educational background is in your CV, don't repeat what the recruiter already knows.
- Share something the recruiter will remember, for example, why you graduated early or how a certain subject helped you succeed in a project in your career.
- If you don't have a degree, highlight how your experience, knowledge and any training courses, conferences or seminars you've attended that are relevant to the position.
- Remember that college isn't the only path. If you are asked why you dropped out of university before completing your course, the best policy is honesty and to avoid a sorrowful attitude. You may say that you dropped out because you couldn't afford tuition fees any longer or due to family issues but let the employer know that the matter has been resolved. You may also say that university wasn't for you and shift the interviewer's focus to your skills.
- For example, you may say that you have strong organization skills, which you have applied to organize your current sales team.

“Why are you leaving your present job?” or “Why did you leave your previous job?”

The answers to these questions may vary depending on your circumstances. You should avoid a negative answer such as saying that your boss is authoritarian and focus on why you are looking for a new position while staying positive and professional. You can mention that you disagree with your current employer's direction. If you were laid off, you can explain why shortly by saying, "I was made redundant when my area was eliminated owing to a takeover".

Now I would like to offer you an example.

- "For the past three years I have worked as a receptionist and I have gained new skills and consolidated my ability to be resourceful and proactive. However, I believe it is time for me to progress in my career. Also, I feel this company has a fast-paced environment where I can find new challenges and apply my solid written and verbal communication skills."

"How do you handle failure"

The answer to these question reveals what's your opinion on adversity and how you overcome it. The interviewer wants to know if you can pull it together, if you are confident enough to admit your mistakes and learn from them. Before the interview, think about a failure example that will let you highlight your strengths too and ends with a lesson learned. Whenever possible, follow the STAR format we have described before to tell a failure story. Make sure that your story doesn't undermine your work ethics or limit your ability to do the job applied for. Besides, it's better to mention failures that aren't recent.

Focus on your strategy for improvement as in the following example:

- "One important failure happened in my previous role as a project manager at ABC Company. Our team failed to clinch a \$500,000 project with one of our clients. In hindsight, I can say that we didn't keep the eye on the ball and we didn't dig deep enough to understand what the customer was looking for. Another competitor came by and offered a

more insightful analysis of the customer's needs and was awarded the deal. I learned that I shouldn't take some things for granted".

"Where do you see yourself in 5 years?",

When you are asked these question make sure to tailor the answer to the job and don't talk about personal objectives like starting a family. The purpose of this question is to know if you career goals align with the company's goals and if you are likely to stay in the new position for some time. Before attending the interview, check if the company's website has information about career paths for the position, training and development opportunities and projects. Then, consider how that aligns with your professional goals. From a grammar perspective, you can use future continuous and future perfect to answer the question among other tenses. For example: "I will be leading as many projects as the positions allows" and "I will have raised the number of students attending this institute through creative instructional methods". Remember that future continuous is used to talk about an action that will be in progress at a time in the future whereas we can use future perfect to describe actions we expect to be completed by a particular time in the future.

Uncomfortable questions

Questions that we typically find uncomfortable but are usually asked in a job interview. Dealing with tough questions is something we have to face so we'd better be up to it. We'll see how to weather those situations.

Being asked **why you were fired** from your previous job is one of the toughest questions to answer. The way of answering that question usually generates doubts and anxiety. Keep in mind the following recommendations to address this situation.

- The interviewer wants to know the circumstances of your dismissal, that the issue is not a problem anymore and that you are able to take responsibility for your actions.

- In relation to vocabulary, rather than saying "I was fired", soften your words by saying "I was let go". Next, provide an honest, short and to the point answer and then move on by focusing on the fact that you are looking for employment more in line with who you are.
- Don't badmouth your previous employer, keep negative opinions to yourself and show that you have learned from your mistakes.

For example:

- "When I accepted the job offer, I had been in transition for 6 months. I was anxious to get back to work and I didn't think things through. Later I realized that it wasn't the right job for me. Now I know that I work best where there is team spirit and everyone pulls their weight".

In an interview you may be asked **what you didn't like about your prior boss or what you think of your last or current boss**. Even if you hated your previous boss, neither rant negatively about him nor lie. A slur may be considered as unwillingness to accept accountability for your actions. Try to frame your observations in a positive or neutral light, express what you learned and be prepared to give specific examples like this: "Most of the time my prior boss and I were not on the same wavelength and that resulted in a breakdown in communication. Now I realized I should have spoken my mind and not be afraid of feeling an outsider. I've learned to express my thoughts articulately and to be more confident about my own viewpoint". If you are not on the same wavelength, you don't share the same opinion.

If you got along with your boss, don't say that you were great buddies, but focus on positive aspects of your superior's leadership style or way of working and what you learned from him. Bear in mind that your answer may indicate what it will be like to work with you and if you are able to tackle sensitive questions about colleagues, customers and others.

A truly uncomfortable question is "**What do people criticize about you?**", which is asked to know how well you take criticism and if you are confident. Saying that nobody criticizes you or that you are criticized all the time won't work. Besides, everyone should be open to criticism to grow and improve. Possible approaches include choosing things that aren't closely related to the desired position, turning a weakness into a strength or explaining how you improved on a weakness you had. The idea is to show that you can take criticism professionally and that you are willing to improve your skills. For example:

"Some years ago a boss I had told me that I made disparaging remarks about my colleagues' work. Up to that point I hadn't noticed that my comments had a negative effect on others as I was just focused on delivering excellent results. Since then, I have learned to be more tactful, offer suggestions and feedback that support and encourage my co-workers and that has worked out well."

Another tough question asked in job interviews is "**What's your definition of success?**", "how do you evaluate success?" or "what does success mean to you?" This type of questions is meant to provide your interviewer with an idea of your goals, motivations, performance standards, work ethic and personality. Your answer will also let the recruiter know if your idea of success fits with the company's definition of it. Doing some research into the organization may help you understand if the company measures success pursuant to the bottom line, social impact, innovation in product development, just to mention some aspects. In your answer include unique abilities and values that you can contribute such as teamwork, self-motivation and other soft skills. You can answer this question by giving specific and measurable examples of your successes at work and by relating them to the position you are interviewed for.

- "For me success means achieving goals that I have set for myself and that have been established by my superiors for me and my team. In my previous job I had to meet sales targets every quarter and when I exceeded them, I felt very happy. However, success is when my team

reaches its objectives thanks to the hard work and participation of everyone".

The question "**why should we hire you?**" really means "why do you think you are the right candidate for this position?". Your answer should be a sales pitch that shows what you can offer the employer and highlights your strengths that distinguish you as the perfect match for the opening. Review the job description and match your qualifications, experience and skills to the job requirements. Now, pay attention to your skills and accomplishments that stand you apart from other candidates. Tell the hiring manager something unique about you that will make them remember you. You can also indicate values that you share with the company and that you can take from the company's mission and values.

For example:

- "Based on what you've told me, your company is looking for an assistant teacher who can motivate and tutor teenagers. I have worked with children aged 11 to 16 for the past five years and I have developed strategies to keep them engaged and to provide an emotionally safe place. I have an innate ability to reach out to students and help them meet their academic goals. I am sure that my ability to tutor students in a professional but fun way will make a great contribution."

If an interviewer asks for your **salary** early on, being open about it can harm your ability to negotiate as you haven't had the chance to establish your value. You can tell the hiring manager, "I'll consider any reasonable offer but I'd rather talk about salary once I've known more about what the position involves". However, there comes a time to talk about money. It's best to give a salary range that will allow you to trade money off for benefits if you're offered a salary that hardly meets your expectations.

Let's see an example:

- Interviewer: What kind of salary do you have in mind?

- Applicant: Before we can come to an agreement, I'd like to know more about the company salary structure. Would you be open to sharing the salary range you're considering for the position?
- Interviewer: Between \$20,000 and \$22,000.
- Applicant: I see. Let me tell you that I'm very excited about the position and knowing what skills and experience I'll bring to the table, I wonder if we can explore a higher salary of \$25,000. I've done research and found that the average salary for this position is around \$25,000.
- Interviewer: That would exceed what we're able to pay.
- Applicant: I'm afraid the range you mentioned isn't tempting to me. However, the challenges the position poses are very attractive and I feel that both of us are interested, so can we keep talking?

After the interview: A new stage in the recruitment process

In this class we'll concentrate on what happens **after the interview**. When we leave the meeting with the interviewer, the show isn't over. In fact, another stage starts to unfold.

Follow-up letters or emails are typically sent after an interview to thank the interviewer for their time, to stress your interest and remind the interviewer what you can do for the company. You may also add information to a question you didn't answer well and overcome objections the interviewer raised about your application. They are usually sent within 24 hours of the interview.

What's the typical structure?

- In the first paragraph indicate the reason for writing, that is, thanking the interviewer for the opportunity.
- In the second paragraph you can restate your interest in the job showing why you are well-suited for the position.
- If necessary, write a third paragraph to address objections raised by the interviewer or include insightful information to show that you have

thought about what you discussed during the interview, for example, some ideas on how you could add value.

- The fourth paragraph is about expressing your willingness to provide extra information to make the hiring decision easier.

If you receive a **rejection email** letting you know that you haven't been chosen for a position, it would be helpful to ask for feedback. That input will give you some information about what you can polish for your next interview. You're more likely to receive an answer if you don't ask "why wasn't I hired?" but "are there any qualifications or skills that were missing in my background?" or "do you have any recommendations concerning what I need to work on to enhance my interviewing style?". You can send the interviewer a short email asking if you could talk on the phone to get some feedback to improve your chances of landing a job. You could also send an email like this one: "Thank you for taking the time to interview me for the marketing assistant position on May 1st and for informing me that my application has been unsuccessful. I enjoyed meeting you and learning more about ABC Company. I would appreciate it if you could give me feedback to help me identify the areas I need to work on. I would really value your insight. Thank you for your time and I hope our paths cross again in the future." When you accept a job offer, thank the recruiter for the opportunity, show your enthusiasm and clarify any questions you have about the offer. After the first communication, whether in person or by phone, you should receive a written confirmation of the offer.

Let's read an example of an offer made over the phone.

- Meg: Hello. Meg speaking.
- Ryan: Hello, Meg. This is Ryan Gibson from ABC Company. I'm calling to let you know that after careful consideration, we'd like to offer you the position of executive assistant.
- Meg: Thank you very much. I'm delighted to hear that.

- Ryan: As we discussed, we are able to offer you a starting salary of \$30,000.
- Meg: That's good news. I appreciate your call but could you send me a written offer so I can review it in detail?
- Ryan: Sure! I'll send it to you by email this afternoon. If you have any questions, just contact me. Meg: Thank you for your confidence in me and I look forward to receiving your offer.
- Ryan: Bye-bye!

Writing an acceptance letter or email reinforces your professionalism and gives you the chance to document your new job title, salary, benefits and starting date. It should be addressed to the person who offered you the job. You should thank the hiring manager for the employment offer, accept the offer and indicate the terms and conditions of employment.

Here is an example that you can tailor.

- “Thank you for the opportunity to join ABC Company as an executive assistant. I am delighted to accept your employment offer and I am eager to be part of such an innovative company. As discussed, my starting date will be June 2nd and my starting salary will be \$70,000 per year. I will receive 21-day annual paid holiday leave and private health insurance. If there is additional paperwork that you need from me prior to the start date, please let me know. I would like to express my gratitude again for offering me this opportunity and I look forward to working with you.”

I'd like us to talk about the moment when we need to **hammer out an agreement**.

What if you are excited about the job, but you aren't satisfied with the salary or conditions? You can make a counteroffer to negotiate a better deal, so when the recruiter makes you an offer in person or by phone you can say: “Do you mind if I take a couple of days to analyse your offer?” Then, the negotiation may be conducted in person, on the phone or by email.

We'll read an example of a counteroffer sent by email which is ideal for people who get very nervous when negotiating. Plus, it leaves a paper trail.

- "I would like to thank you for extending me the offer for the position of engineer at ABC. As I have worked in the construction industry for over 10 years, I am sure the experience I gained and the skills I learned from this line of work apply to the ones necessary to successfully perform the job at your company. However, I have some concerns regarding the compensation package you sent me. While I am grateful for your initial salary offer, I respectfully ask you to consider an offer of \$27,000 that may better reflect the responsibilities the position involves and my experience. I am confident that I will contribute greatly to your team and I hope we can come to an agreement that is beneficial for both of us."

What happens when we choose to reject an employment offer? If you decide to turn down a job offer, it's convenient to write an email expressing gratitude for the offer and your rejection. Briefly mention the reason for saying no to the offer, such as your decision to accept another offer or to stay at your present job or the fact that you were looking for a different level of responsibility or other duties. If you don't like the company, a potential boss, its products or services, just indicate that you feel the position does not fit in your career. If your efforts to negotiate a higher salary were fruitless, indicate you must decline owing to the offered salary.

Let's look at an example.

- "I would like to thank you for offering me the opportunity to work at ABC Company as a personal assistant. I appreciate you taking the time to interview me and answering my questions about the company and the role. However, after much thought and consideration, I have determined that the position does not fit my current career goals. It has been a pleasure meeting you and I would like to express my gratitude for you time and support."