

Making a Great First Impression

Honing Your Interview Skills

April 1, 2015





Pegeen Walsh

Executive Director, Ontario Public Health Association

Pegeen brings over 20 years as an executive leading the design and delivery of a wide range of health and social programs, policies, research and partnerships that have supported individual and community health and well-being. As a Director at various government and non-profit organizations such as the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion and YMCA Canada and now the Ontario Public Health Association, she has done extensive staff and management recruitment, hiring, career coaching and training. She has designed and led workshops on various workplace topics, and especially enjoys supporting individuals with their career planning and development.

Session Purpose

- Offer tips on how to prepare for an interview.
- Provide insights about what to expect.
- Suggest ways to showcase your skills.
- Outline some ideas for the follow up.



First Pin Down the Details

- Be sure to ask about:
 - Time;
 - Location;
 - Names and titles of Interviewers;
 - Format;
 - Job description & other relevant documents; and
 - Selection process.



Interviews as Conversations

- Employer asks:
 - Is the applicant suitable for their position - are *they the right fit for the job.*
- Applicant asks:
 - Is the employer the *right fit for the applicant's skills and interests.*



A two way
conversation vs.
being judged



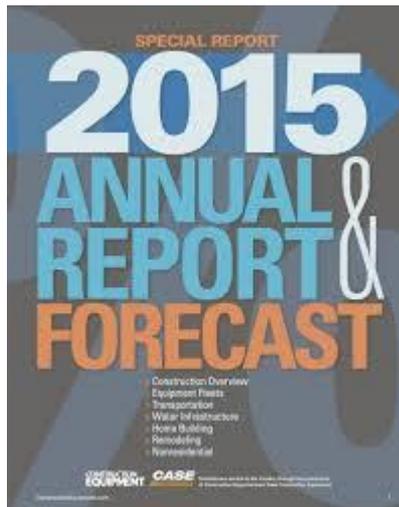
Thorough Preparation is a Must

- Understand the organization.
- Understand the job requirements.
- Prepare yourself.
- Anticipate the questions.
- Develop an interview road map.



Understand the Organization

- Use every available means to find out about the key issues:



Understand the Job Requirements - Sample Job

- Opportunity for a **forward-thinking professional** to work with a progressive **team that values initiative and innovation**.
- Work in a self-directed manner **collaborating with municipalities, community partners, priority populations, schools, hospitals, and workplaces**
- Meet the **requirements** of the Chronic Disease and Injury and Substance Misuse Prevention Program, **Ontario Public Health Standards 2008**.
- Involves **extensive community collaboration and mobilization, facilitating healthy public policy, program planning, development, coordination, implementation and evaluation, and consultation with the community**.
- Focus on **population mental health promotion and addressing the broad social determinants of health**.



Sample Job – Possible Interview Questions

1. **Requirements:** Minimum two years' experience in mental health or community health promotion programming grounded in community development, population health, health policy analysis and development, social marketing, media advocacy, application of health promotion theories and principles of adult education.
2. Experience in leading community projects, including demonstrated ability to facilitate community partnerships with diverse groups.
3. Ability to critically assess applied health research and develop detailed program proposals and reports.

Possible Questions:

1. *Describe some of the principles of adult education, community health promotion, social marketing*
2. *Tell me about a community project you've been involved with that involved developing partnerships with diverse groups.*
3. *Describe a recent report you developed that involved applied research or a program proposal.*

Sample Job – Possible Questions (Cont'd)

1. Demonstrated ability in **program planning and evaluation using evidence-based practices.**
2. Excellent **interpersonal, communication and organizational skills.**
3. Experience working with **minimal direction, and offering leadership** in a team setting.

1. *How would you go about designing a new program to tackle mental health among youth?*
2. *Describe a time when you ran into conflict with your colleagues, how did you resolve it?*
3. *Tell me about a time when you had to lead a group project and not everyone agreed with the direction you were providing.*

Sample Employer Assessment Tool

Name of Candidate	#1	#2	#3
Areas Being Assessed:			
Public health theories and concepts	/10	/10	/10
Communication Skills	/15	/15	/15
Facilitating Projects and Partnerships	/20	/20	/20
Developing reports and assessing research	/15	/15	/15
Program Planning and evaluation			
Initiative and team leadership	/5	/5	/5
Written test	/10	/10	/10
Total:	/85	/85	/85

Showcase Your Achievements

- Review your resume and cover letter against the job requirements.
- Prepare your “STAR” or “CAD-DO” stories:
 - the situation;
 - actions you took;
 - results achieved; and
 - what you learned.



Prepare Your Interview Roadmap

	STAR Story #1	STAR Story #2	STAR Story #3	Star Story #4	STAR Story #5	STAR Story #6
Skills Being Showcased:						
Public health theories and concepts	x			x	x	
Communication Skills			x		x	
Facilitating Projects and Partnerships		x			x	
Developing reports and assessing research	x			x	x	
Program Planning and evaluation		x	x		x	x
Initiative and team leadership		x	x	x	x	

Other Issues

- Phone Interviews
- Skype Interviews
- Second and Third Interviews
- Personality Testing
- Time Limited Written Test
- Presentations
- References



Questions You Might Ask

- Questions should be intelligent, thoughtful and respectful and show you've done your home work.
- Gauge them accordingly to the situation.
- Don't ask about salary, vacation and benefits until you get an offer.
- *What is the organization's plan for the next five years, and how does this department fit in?*
- *How will you measure my success?*
- *How would you describe your leadership style?*



Dos and Don'ts

- Be prepared.
- Practice your stories.
- Dress professionally.
- Breathe.
- Be yourself.
- Convey professional and positive energy through your body language.
- Don't rush.
- Don't assume that the interviewers don't like you just because they don't look at you or smile.

1first
impressions

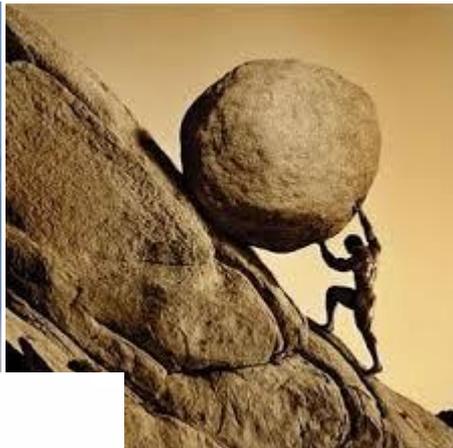


Follow Up

- Send a thank you letter, highlighting anything else you wanted to stress.
- Write down the questions you were asked to help prepare for the next time.
- Don't pester the employer for a decision.
- Ask for feedback if you're not selected.



Persistence Pays Off



**SUCCESS MEANS
HAVING THE COURAGE,
THE DETERMINATION,
AND THE WILL TO
BECOME THE PERSON
YOU BELIEVE YOU
WERE MEANT TO BE.**

GEORGE SHEEHAN



Questions

