

## Are You Ready for an unexpected Job Interview?

Most job seekers wait to polish up their interview skills until they are looking for a new position. Important interview opportunities, however, can present themselves at any time. For example,

- **Unplanned internal job openings:** There is a sudden opportunity to advance your career from within, and your boss recommends you as a candidate for the job. *Are you ready to communicate your contributions to the organization?*
- **A recruiter calls:** The position sounds like just the career move you've been wanting. *Will you say the right things to win the job or will you blunder your best chance?*
- **A former colleague introduces you to his boss:** They are building an exciting new division for their company and looking for new staff. *Will you entice his interest in you as a must-have new team member?*

Those who continually grow in their careers are always prepared for these situations. Their interview skills are sharp at all times. To know if your skills are sharp enough to handle a surprise interview, see if you can answer the following three questions:

### 1. Can you concisely state your value proposition in 30 seconds or less?

A value proposition is meant to intrigue your listener with a quick overview of your skills, expertise, and industry know-how. If you can offer a precise summary of why you are the perfect candidate for that job, you are more likely to get to the second or third interview. A concise value proposition can make a critical difference in winning you a new position.

### 2. Do you know your top five accomplishments, and can you communicate their impact to your employer's bottom-line initiatives?

A list of your top accomplishments will allow a potential employer to imagine what you can do for him or her. Accomplishments give employers a way to associate your skills with their needs—and a reason to remember you. Be prepared to list your top skills and show how they can help meet corporate needs.

### 3. Are you prepared to answer your own toughest interview questions, or do you hope they just won't come up?

Don't leave yourself vulnerable to questions like "If you're doing so well in your job, why do you want to leave?" A good recruiter or hiring manager will see you sweat and stutter and squirm; you'll lose their confidence and destroy a chance to get your dream

job. Think about the questions that will be your biggest pitfalls—and be prepared to answer them.

Be prepared to answer all these questions and more. With those answers in hand, you'll be ready for the unplanned interview so that you take your career from mediocre to marvelous with “always-ready” interview skills.

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