



## ***THE SECOND (ON-SITE) INTERVIEW***

The company-site interview is typically the final step in the interview process before a job offer is tendered. Instead of meeting with a single recruiter, you may be meeting with three or more. Instead of a 30-45 minute interview, you may participate in a half-day or full-day of interviews. You also may be required to complete one or more tests.

The on-site interview is also your final opportunity to evaluate the organization. You will have the opportunity to see the inside of the organization and meet with key people – possibly some of the people with whom you will be working. As such, you will gain a better understanding of the work environment.

### ***Your Sponsor***

The recruiter with whom you initially interviewed has a vested interest in your succeeding at the company-site interview. This person, who may have been a screener, is now your “sponsor.” You represent what s/he views as a prospective new employee. Your sponsor’s professional reputation is on the line whenever a candidate is invited to the company site. No sponsor wants to hear the dreaded, “Why on earth did you recommend that person?” So don’t hesitate to prepare for your company-site interview by asking your sponsor questions prior to the interview. Examples:

- Who will I be meeting with?
- What will they be looking for?
- Can you provide additional material about your company?
- Will there be any activities scheduled during the day?
- What are their job titles and descriptions?
- How can I best prepare myself?

### ***What to Expect & What to Do***

The content of the interview and the day’s activities will depend on the type of position for which you are interviewing. For technical positions, interviewers will try to determine your technical expertise. Positions that require supervisory activities will include questions about your supervisory experience and style. A second interview, therefore, is a time for you to exchange specific information about the job and your ability to fulfill that role.

- Preparation should include in-depth research on the organization, beyond their website. Visit objective web sites and learn what has been written recently about the company.
- Prepare questions for the supervisor and your prospective co-workers.
- Several people may ask you the same questions as the day proceeds. Be consistent with your answers so that when the interviewers convene to discuss your qualifications, they have the same information about your strengths and qualifications.
- Be as enthusiastic in the late afternoon as you were when the interview began.
- Be observant and assess what the physical and social work environment is like. Do people seem to enjoy their work and can you envision yourself being happy here?
- Be nice to everyone – many people may have influence in the hiring decision.
- Collect business cards from all interviewers and send individual thank you notes immediately after the interview.
- A lunch and/or dinner may be included in the day’s activities. Because you are still being evaluated during meals, demonstrate excellent “dining etiquette.”
- Salary discussions or negotiations may occur – generally at the end of the day. Don’t be surprised if salary and benefit information isn’t broached until an offer is made. Know the salary range for comparable positions.

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### ***Travel Expenses***

Employers typically reimburse candidates for normal travel and lodging expenses. Some will make all the travel arrangements for you. Know an employer's travel policies and their reimbursement procedures before you agree to a second interview out of town. Demonstrate your good business sense by keeping careful records, documented with receipts, of all reasonable expenses.

Unreasonable expenses include flying first class, expensive restaurants, and entertainment not arranged by the employer. Room service meals are usually an unreasonable expense, but an employer would not expect you to leave a hotel in search of a restaurant when you are in an unfamiliar city, especially if you arrive late in the evening. Use the hotel restaurant whenever it is the most reasonable choice; charge the meal to your room to simplify reporting your expenses.

### ***Company Site Exams and Testing***

Be prepared for the possibility of taking one or more tests. Being asked to take a test is a good sign, because employers do not waste time and money on testing someone in whom they are not interested. Following are the five basic types of tests you may encounter:

**Intelligence/Mental Ability Tests:** These tests are designed to assess your critical thinking skills, including problem solving, mathematical aptitude, and memory. They are typically structured in a format similar to the SAT and ACT.

**Work Simulation Tests:** These tests provide you with example work scenarios or problems which you must work through to a satisfactory result.

**Specific Skills Tests:** For many highly specialized professions, they will test your skills in specific areas. These tests are often tied into certification, such as the CPA or CNE. A subset of these certification tests is the specific skills test. These tests are designed to ask questions at a detail level. They are very specific and you are more likely to encounter these tests in technical professions, such as engineering or computer science.

**Personality Tests:** These tests are often the best indicator a company has of candidates' personal values, beliefs, traits, and preferences.

**Honesty Tests:** These tests are usually reserved for jobs in high security areas or where there will be access to trade secrets, merchandise, or cash. Many of the questions are repetitive comparisons ("Do you like chess better than poetry?" and later "Do you like poetry better than chess?").

While these tests are all an attempt at standardization and greater objectivity, they are not foolproof. They still have a subjective element. Keep in mind that the purpose of such tests is to further qualify you for the position. Put forth your best effort and do not show discouragement during or after the test. If asked about the test, make a comment about it being "challenging" (for quantitative tests) or "interesting" (for qualitative tests).