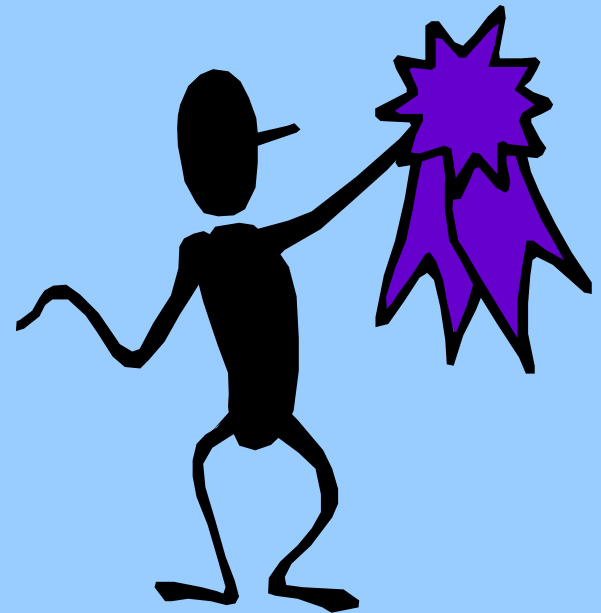


Mastering the Interview

FAPAC Annual Conference
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← Your stomach is in knots

← You're sweating profusely

← Your heart is pounding



**It's not the flu, it's the
interview!!!!**

What is an interview?

- **You are selling a product, and the product is YOU!!**
- **An interview is a sale, and you have the chance to make it or break it.**

Two things you need to know:

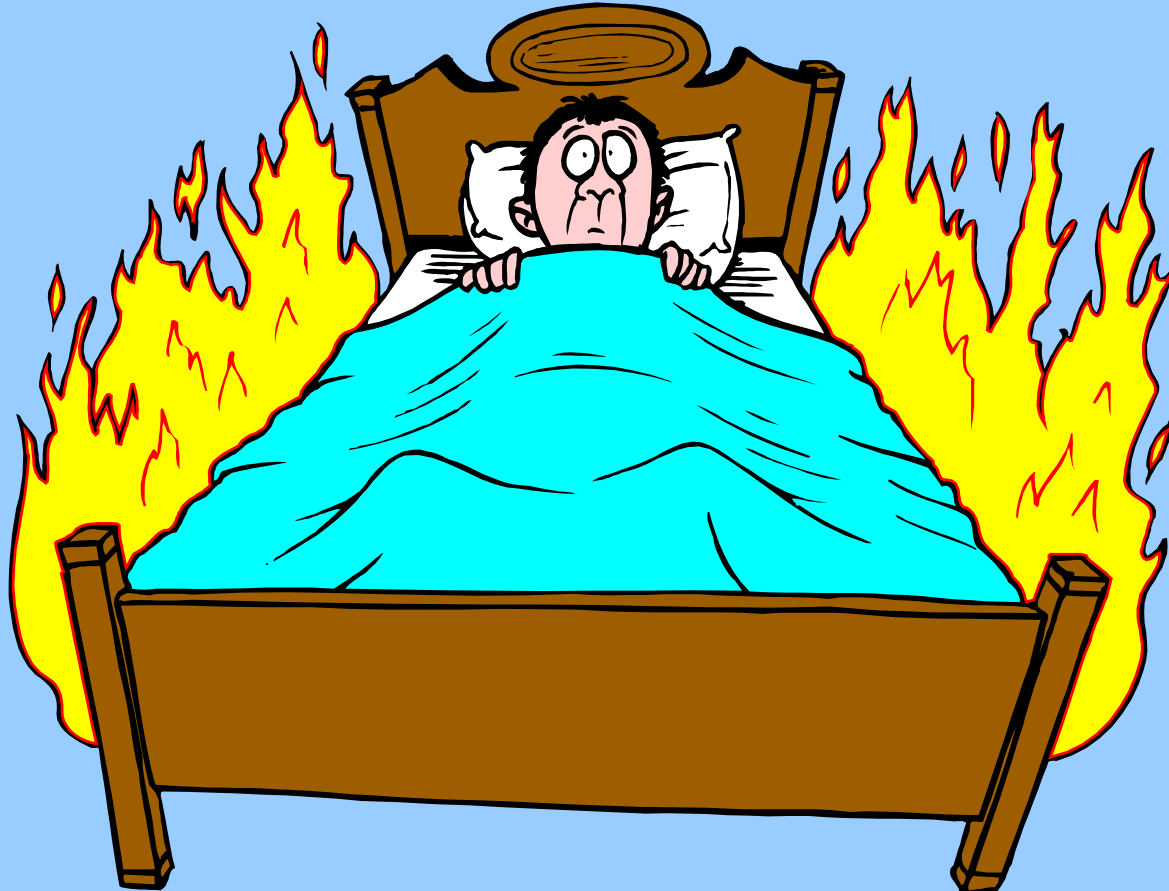
What does the buyer want?

- *What kind of individual is right for the position?*
- *What attributes are needed?*
- *What skills are required?*

What is the buyer concerned about?

- *What issues are present that need to be dealt with?*
- *What baggage might be attached to you?*
- *Relocation, travel, etc?*

It's Not A Nightmare
If You Prepare !



Don't wait for the actual interview to be scheduled to begin preparing...

- **Put together a work history - where and when - keep it updated**
- **Prepare a list of experiences and accomplishments - keep it updated**
- **Go through a mock interview; work on areas that need improvement**

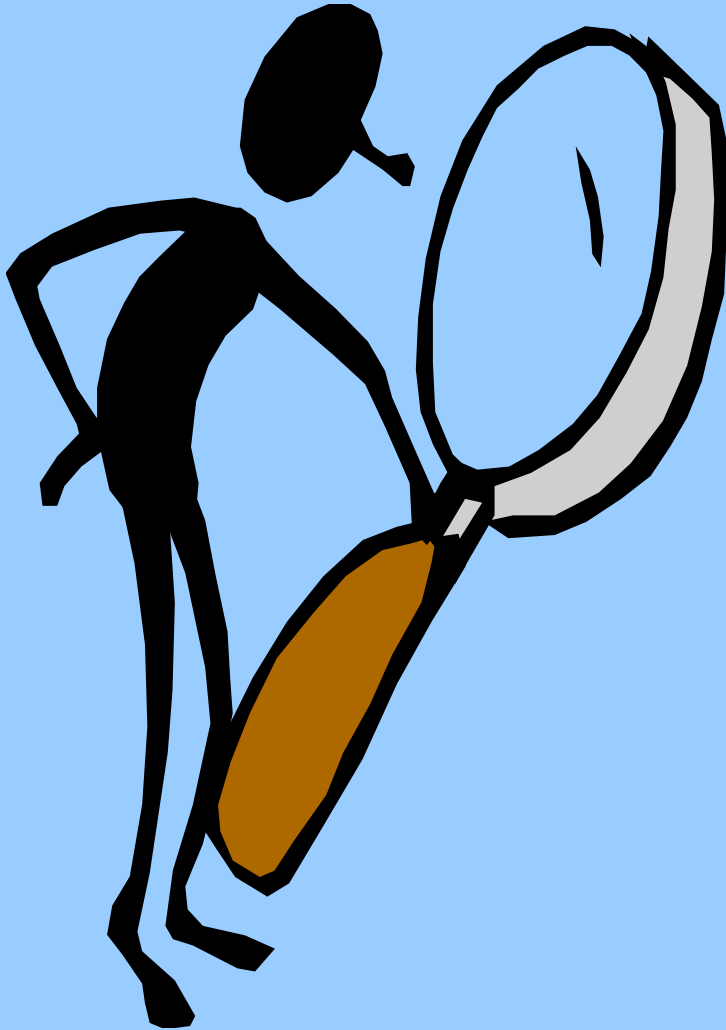
Prepare for the Real Job Interview

- ⌞ Get the position description, critical elements, KSA's, competencies, etc.**
- ⌞ Understand the required skills, experience, etc.**
- ⌞ Talk to someone who has done the work**
- ⌞ Look at samples of the work products**
- ⌞ Prepare to answer the question, “Why are you the best person for the job?”**

What Skill Sets are Required?

- **Decision Making & Problem Solving**
- **Leadership**
- **Motivation**
- **Communication**
- **Interpersonal Skills/Team Building**
- **Planning & Organization**
- **Critical Thinking/Analytical Skills**
- **Ability to Influence Others**

What Will They Be Assessing?



- **Ability in Oral Expression**
- **Poise**
- **Drive**
- **Sociability**
- **Self-Confidence**
- **Practical Intelligence**
- **Personal Appearance**
- **Emotional Maturity**

First Impressions are Everything!

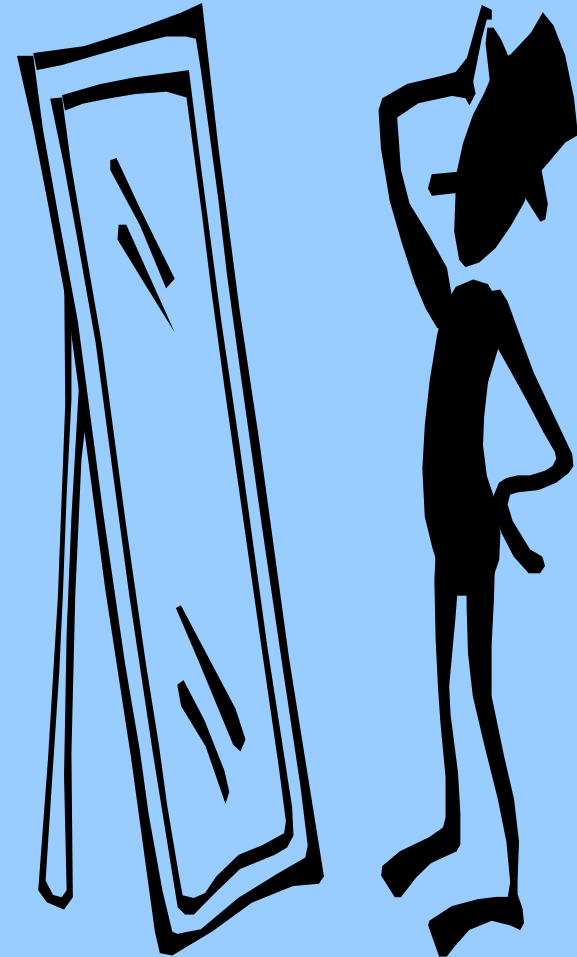
Conscious decision to hire or not can be made in first few MINUTES of interview.

- Chemistry**
- Body Language**
- Appearance**
- Speech Patterns**



MIRROR, MIRROR, on the WALL....

- **Body Language** (*relaxed, poised, lean forward, back*)
- **Speech Patterns** (*quiet, measured, loud, excited*)
- **Comfort with Eye Contact** (*direct, intermittent, rotational for panel*)



**PRACTICE BEFORE THE
INTERVIEW**

Eye Contact Sprinkler Technique

- **Begin a response through eye contact with the person that asked the question.**
- **Like a sprinkler, rotate your eye contact to meet eyes with each interviewer consecutively before rotating to the next person.**
- **End your response with the person that asked the question.**



Lose the Nervousness

“...nervousness is caused by the fear of looking ridiculous to others.”

“When you are nervous, you are focusing on yourself. Try to focus on how you are helping other people by sharing with them the knowledge you’ve acquired.”

From “Job Interviews for Dummies”

Put things into Perspective

- **You might not get this job offer after the interview but it's not the end of the world.**
- **There will be other job opportunities.**
- **Use this experience to gain knowledge and prepare for future interviews.**

Thinking about an interview this way might help to calm your nerves.

Preparing for the Interview



Research the Job

- **Go online - check out the agency's mission, goals, structure, etc.**
- **Talk to People - find out the internal workings of the office and position**
- **If you haven't already done it, study the position description.**

Evaluate your Strengths





Identify your major accomplishments-

- something you did well**
- something you enjoyed**
- something that involved a problem you solved**
- something that you're proud of**

An accomplishment begins with a situation or problem that requires action and ends with a result.

The Opening Commercial

“Tell us a little about yourself...”

-  **Brief remark on background such as schooling, how long with Government, or other item of interest**
-  **Highlight current position and a bit about your job responsibilities**
-  **Mention one or two significant accomplishments, pulling in your skill strengths**
-  **Mention prior positions, focusing on how they relate to the position you are applying for**

Two Types of Skills

- **Learned Skills**

- *auditing books and records*
- *running a computer program*
- *creating a floorplan*

- **Intuitive Skills**

- *persistence*
- *efficiency*
- *creativity*
- *adaptability*
- *patience*

Identify the Skill Sets

- **Take a look at what you identified as accomplishments;**
- **List the skills that went into making it happen**

Your Greatest Strength

As you list your accomplishments and identify the skills that went into them, take a look at what skill sets pop up most frequently.

The one or two that you see a lot of might be the ones you use to answer the question of “What is your greatest strength?”

Interview Process

What is the Process?

↘ **Overview of Process**

↘ **Open-Ended Questions - can't be answered with "yes" or "no"**

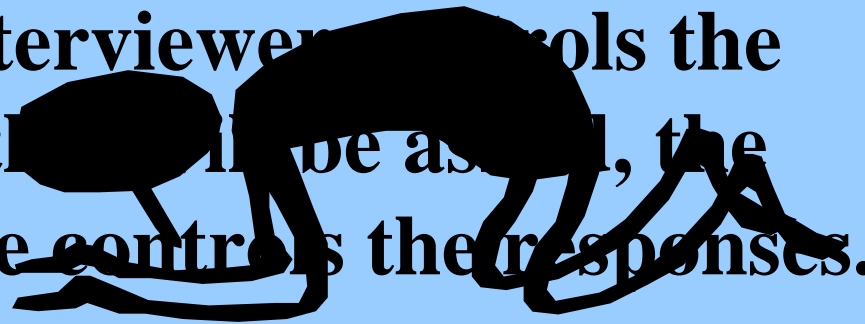
↘ **Probing Questions - get to more specifics**

↘ **Closing Remarks**

Who's In Control?

While the interviewer controls the flow of the interview, the interviewee controls the content.

While the interviewer controls the questions that will be asked, the interviewee controls the responses.



Traditional Versus Behavioral

How would you deal with an irate customer?

What do you think...How could you...If you had to...

Tell us about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer. How did you handle it?

Give us an example... Walk us through a time... Describe...

*SOAR, PAR, CAR, STAR, RAP,
SAP, RATS, SHARE ... Whatever!*

Organize your responses

- Situation/Organize/Actions/Results*
- Problem/Action/Result*
- Challenge/Action/Result*
- Situation/Task/Action/Result*
- Situation/Hindrance/Action/Result/Evaluation*

Doesn't matter how - just get there!

Some of the Difficult Questions

? Tell us a little about yourself...

? What are your weaknesses???

? What do you see yourself doing five years from now???

? What can you do for us that someone else can't???





Mistakes Interviewees Make

Late to interview

Lack of tact or courtesy

Indecisive or vague responses to questions

Emphasis on money only

Lack of interest and enthusiasm

Limp, weak handshake

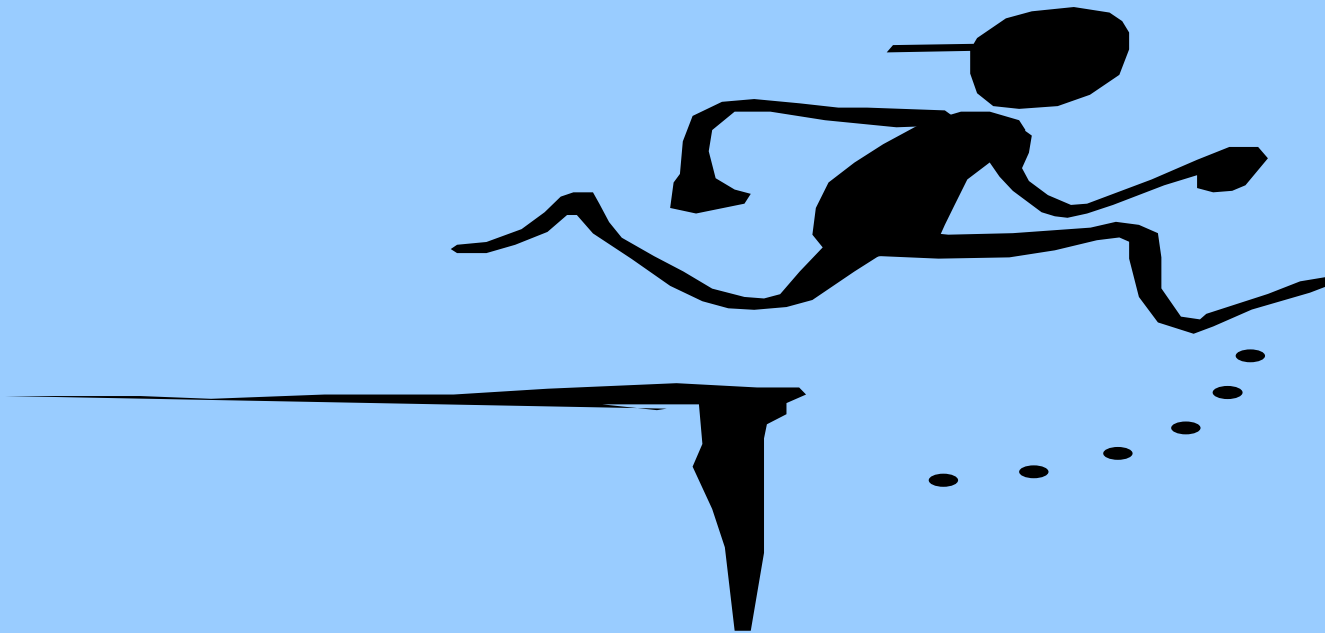
Lack of confidence in self



Things to Avoid

- **Do not disclose confidential information**
- **Do not criticize colleagues/managers/others**
- **Do not use only “I” or only “we.” Mix them in your responses, focusing on the one that is more important to the position you are applying for.**

**Do not overextend yourself on
responses - be comfortable with silence**



*“Never should the unnecessary be volunteered by the unwary
for the unforgetting”*

**Do not become argumentative -
maintain your composure**



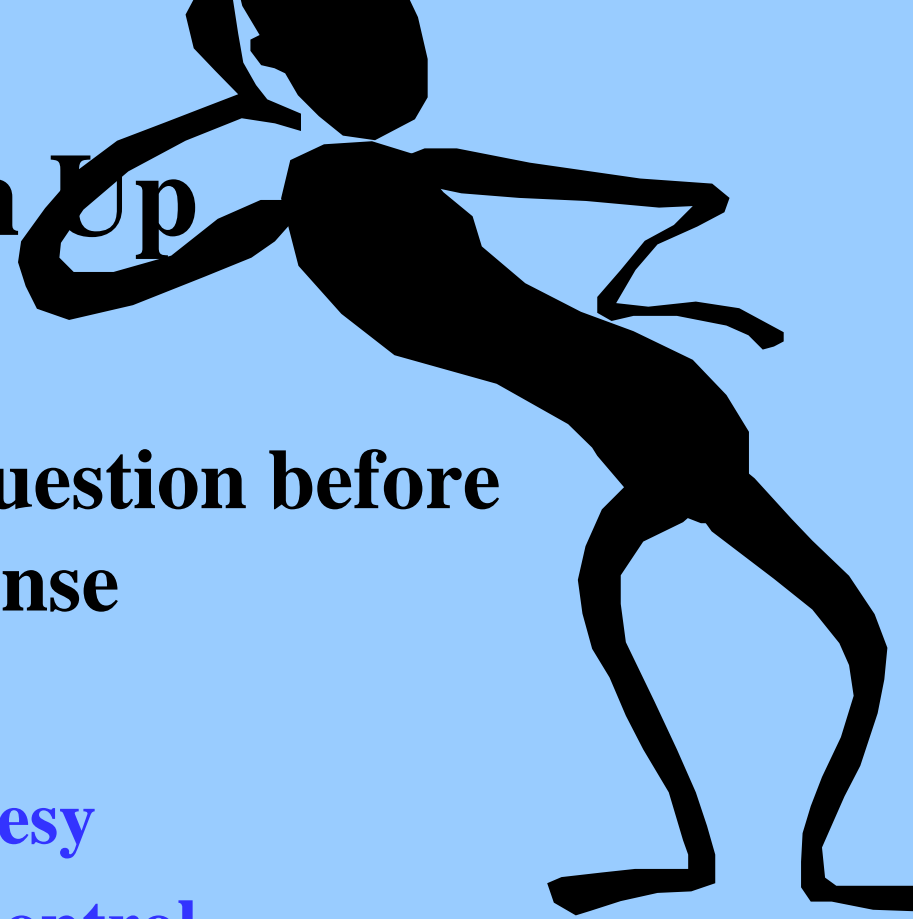


FIRE...READY...AIM

- **Do not begin responding before engaging your brain! Take some “think time” before speaking!**



Listen Up



- **Listen to the entire question before beginning your response**
 - Shows common courtesy
 - Shows restraint and control
 - Shows flexibility
 - Allows you to pick up important details about the job and the character of the business unit

Telephone Interviews

- Prepare for a telephonic interview just as you would a face-to-face interview
- *Dress as you would for a face-to-face interview - it will create a professional feeling and better posture and projection.*
- Keep your voice and energy levels up on a telephone interview; otherwise you may give the appearance of being bored or uninterested.
- *Smile as you talk - it will put warmth in your voice.*

More on Telephone Interviews

- *Reserve a location where you will not be interrupted.*
- **Don't have notes there - it will distract you.**
- *It can be confusing to know who is speaking if there is a panel interview going on. It is perfectly okay to ask who is speaking.*



The Panel Interview

- ➡ **Assume everyone there is important; don't write anyone off or ignore them during the interview**
- ➡ **Pay attention to introductions - use their names during the interview**
- ➡ **Give a firm handshake to everyone**
- ➡ **Use the sprinkler technique for eye contact**

Know What to Expect

Two Things Interviewers Look For:

- 1) **Job Expertise** - knowledge, skills, experience, technical expertise
- 2) **Personal Skills** - independence, risk-taking ability, motivation, honesty, etc.

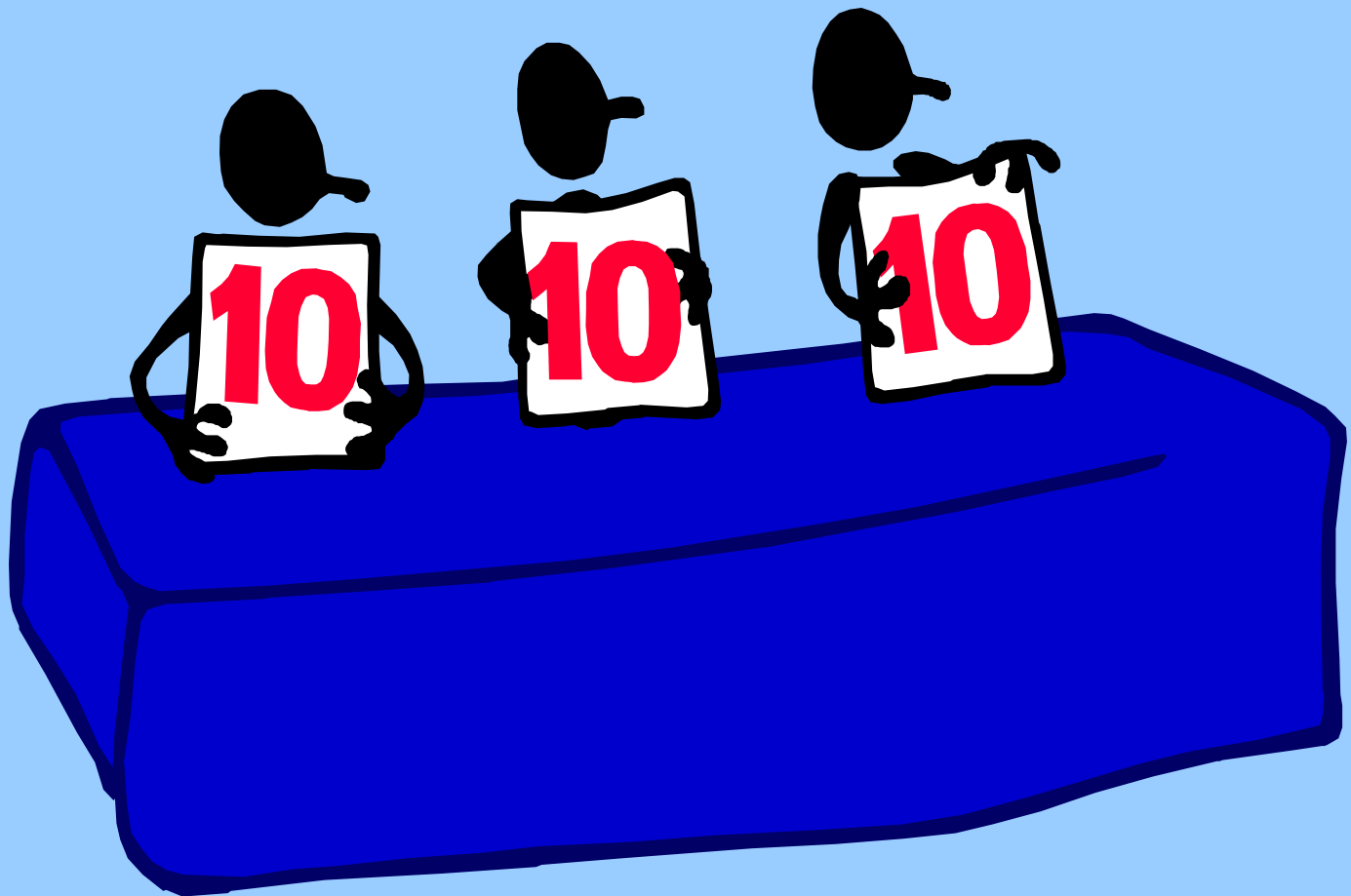
And the most important is...

Personal Skills

- *You can teach someone the technical skills they need to do a job, but can you teach someone to be motivated, trustworthy, enthusiastic, independent, etc.?*

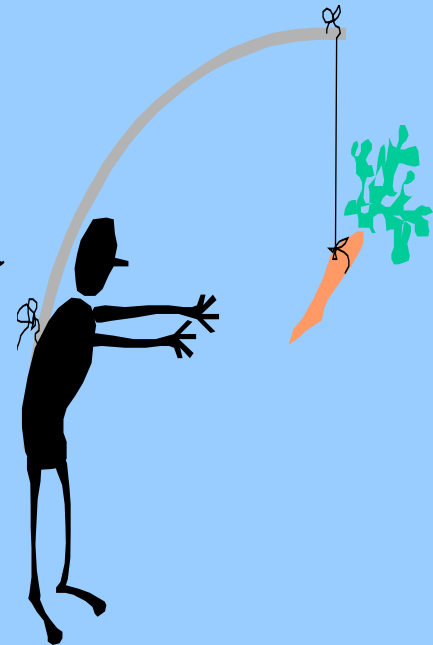


Some Final Thoughts....



Keep it Brief

- **Focus on keeping responses to under two minutes. Anything beyond that loses the interviewer's interest. Be concise, focused and specific.**
- **If they want to know more about a particular issue, they'll ask.**



Keep it Positive

If asked negative questions - put a positive spin on them. Don't fall into the trap of bashing yourself or others.

If you can't say something nice..."

Keep Selling Your Skills

- **Don't just tell them you're qualified - prove it through examples.**
- **Who will they remember? Someone who said "Yes, I can do that!" or someone who said "Yes, I can do that...I did it previously through...."**

The proof is in the pudding!

Keep It Relevant

- **Your responses should be framed to meet the needs of the organization/office you'd like to join.**
- **What do they need? That's what you've got to be able to sell!**
- **If they want an apple - don't sell them an orange - tell them about the many assets you possess that can make you the apple!**

Keep It On Target

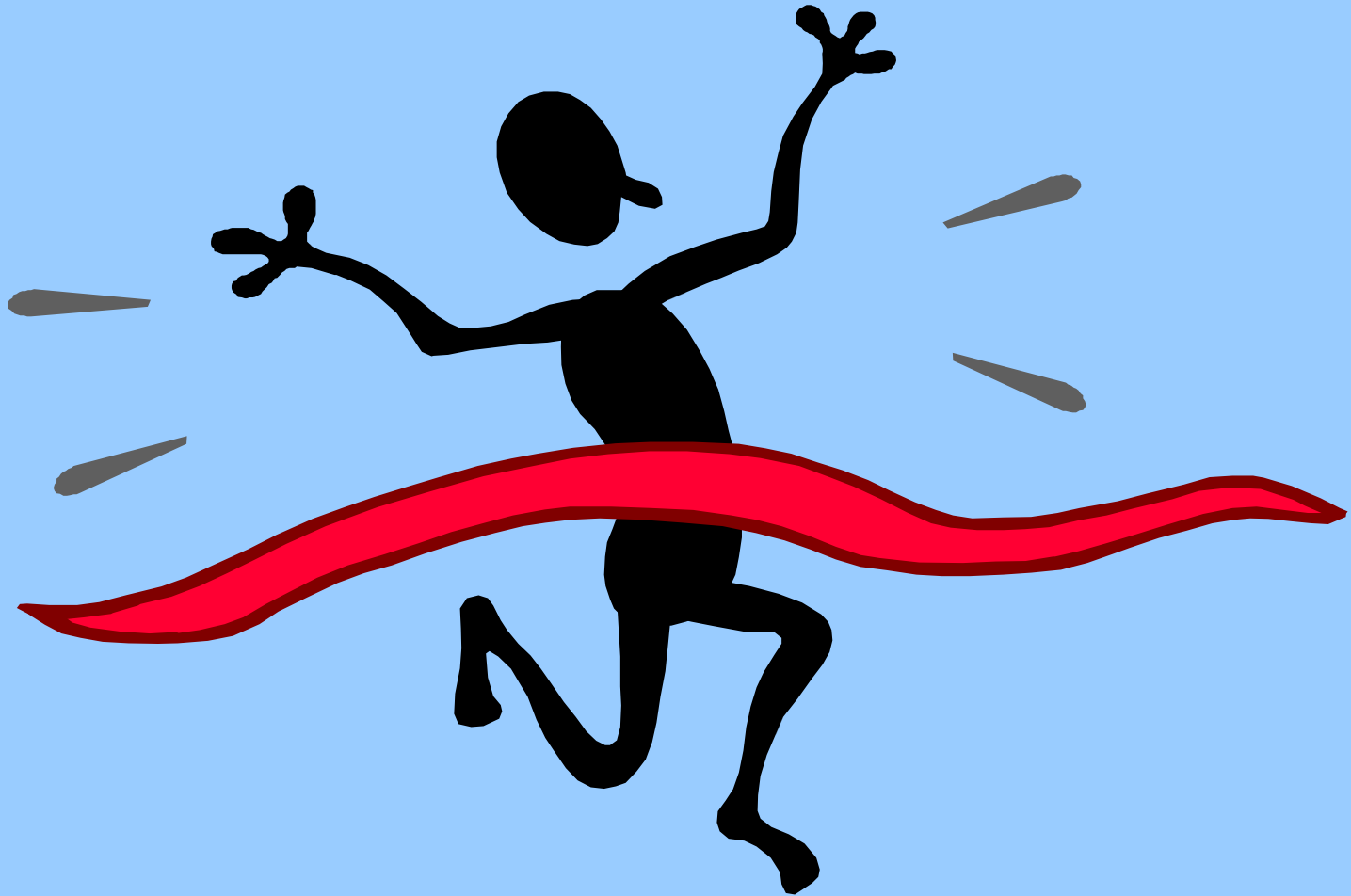
- **It's okay to ask for clarification on a question you don't understand.**
- **This demonstrates that you won't just shoot before aiming; a great asset to possess.**
- **However...if you need clarification on every question...you may not have done your homework!**



Keep It Organized

- **There may be times when you are asked multiple questions rolled into one.**
- **Break down your response to outline the different steps you would take and how you would treat each, in order.**

Get to the Finish Line


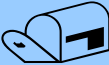





To Ask or Not To Ask

If you are applying for a job with a different company, you may want to ask some questions that show your interest/knowledge in that company.

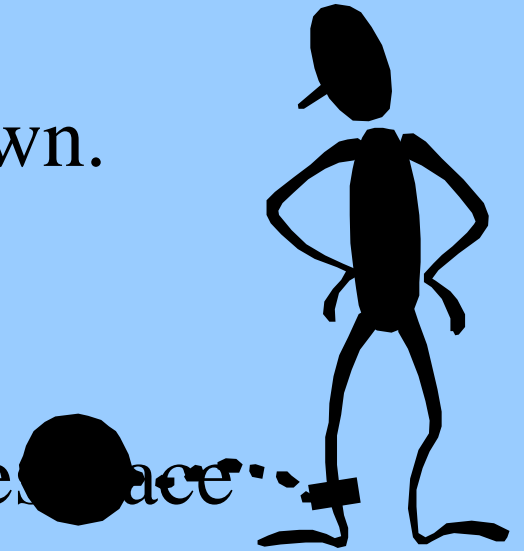
This isn't the time to open Pandora's Box - wrap up your interview with a final thought and get out before anything goes wrong!

In Summary....

-  **Know yourself**
-  **Know how to look the part**
-  **Know the business unit mission/purpose**
-  **Know the interviewing game**
-  **Know how to answer and ask the right questions**

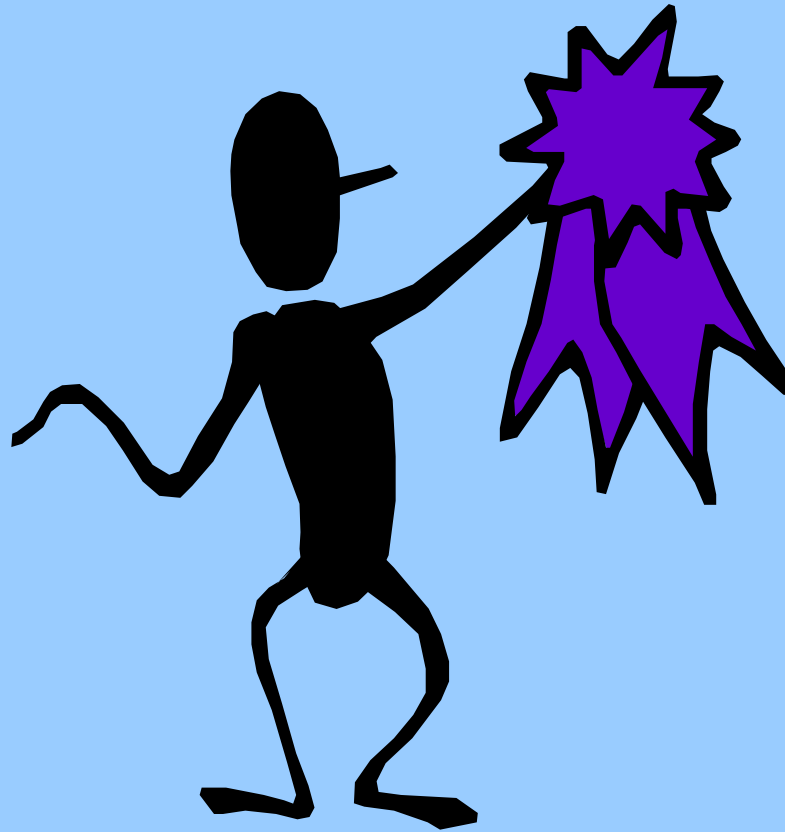
It's Over When It's Over

- ⚡ Don't let a rejection get you down.
- ⚡ Use lessons learned
- ⚡ Ask for Feedback
- ⚡ Know that you have put your best face forward
- ⚡ You've gained an experience that you can add to your portfolio.



How many times did Babe Ruth strike out?

Congratulations, You Did It!



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