

Interview for a Receptionist Position

Good Interview (Interview 3)

- **Interviewer:** Hi, I am Jane Doe and I want to thank you for coming in today to interview for our Reception Clerk

Let me tell you a little about the job. It is our main receptionist in a very busy office.

You will most likely be the first point of contact for many people and therefore the person who creates the first impression people will have about our company. This is a busy job that requires the ability to multi task, and remain calm, and organized through many interruptions. Let's start by your telling me why you are interested in this job.

- ▶ **Applicant:** I've been a receptionist before; I like doing it and am very good at it. I can multi-task and handle interruption well. I am very organized and I like the challenge of trying to stay organized while a lot of different things are going on.

- ❖ **Narrator:** Start with why you think you would be a good receptionist for this company. Give the skills needed on the job that you possess and expand on them. Key in to the skills the interviewer used describing a successful receptionist. In this case, the applicant used the ability to multi-task, handle interruption and stay organized.

- **Interviewer:** Can you please elaborate on why you like working with people and tell me more about your skills that would make you a good candidate for this particular job.

- ▶ **Applicant:** I like to talk to people and help them solve the problems they may be having with the company. I spend time researching the company and its policies and practices, allowing me the ability to refer out and/or get to know other sources that could help the people I am dealing with.

- ❖ **Narrator:** Give specific examples as often as possible from your work experience, education or any volunteer experience. In this answer, stressing the fact that you research the company and want to know many avenues of referral as a receptionist is very positive and shows you take initiative.

- **Interviewer:** Please tell me about positions you have held where you had to multi task.

- ▶ **Applicant:** As I said, I have been a receptionist before and I know what it is like to run a front office. I remember what everyone sitting in my waiting room is there for. One may be here for an appointment with one staff person and another may be here for an appointment with a different staff person. I may have a call on hold while I am watching for that person's phone line to free up and I may have another person who just walked in and wants directions to some place on campus.

- ❖ **Narrator:** This is a great example of what a receptionist does and will be called upon to do. It demonstrates experience and prior knowledge of reception duties.

- **Interviewer:** Have you had any negative experiences while doing your previous reception job, and if so, what did you learn from it?

- ▶ **Applicant:** Some days it got a lot busier than one person could handle. We have eight staff members that I would schedule for and take their calls and on the exceptionally busy days I just learned to go to my supervisor and ask for help and she would assign someone as a backup.

- ❖ **Narrator:** Good answer and a situation that any receptionist could find themselves in. Always going to a supervisor for help is the correct procedure in any job situation. This is an additional question the interviewer could ask to get more information rather than probing for answers as was the necessary case in the first two interviews.

■ **Interviewer:** If you are asked a question that you do not know the answer to, how do you find the answer?

▶ **Applicant:** I do spend time researching the company on the web and depending on how much material they have out there; I will have a pretty good idea of the company. I would always go to my supervisor with any questions I may have about policy and procedures.

❖ **Narrator:** **Be prepared for this type of question by researching the company, granted you will not know all the answers but you will have a pretty good idea of the company climate and maybe protocol. Web sites can be very helpful. Remember past jobs may have had entirely different policies and procedures.**

■ **Interviewer:** We all have stressful situations at work; can you give me an example of a stressful situation that you encountered while you were a receptionist previously? How did you handle it and looking back on it now, is there anything you would have done differently?

▶ **Applicant:** A person came into the office and wanted to speak to one of our staff but did not have an appointment. I offered to make an appointment for another day because today was full, or would they like to talk to someone else—to which they said, “no.” That was not good enough, so the person said they would wait and see if anyone cancelled and would then take the appointment slot. I said ok and they waited but nobody cancelled and they left in anger. There is no other way to handle this.

❖ **Narrator:** **Be prepared for this type of question by researching the company, granted you will not know all the answers but you will have a pretty good idea of the company climate and maybe protocol. Web sites can be very helpful. Remember past jobs may have had entirely different policies and procedures.**

■ **Interviewer:** Do you have any questions for me?

▶ **Applicant:** What would a typical day on the job look like?

❖ **Narrator:** This is a great question because it again allows the interviewer to go over the job and even give more information to the prospective employee.