



## Preparing for the Executive Interview...

The executive interview is usually the final step in the process of candidate vetting that many of our clients prosecute. The executive interview is very different from the other interviews you have just gone through because you are dealing with the final decision maker one-on-one.

So how do you prepare for this type of interview?

### Discuss Strategy

Often candidates find themselves in front of executives for a final interview unprepared. Don't let this happen to you! Be prepared to engage the executive in a strategic subject (not a tactical subject) that is important to their business and that crosses over into your area of expertise. This is done by addressing your specific skills and/or job responsibilities from a strategic perspective. Know that tactics make up and support strategies and understand that the position you are applying for impacts the company's strategy.

Here are a few examples:

...where do you see the business in the next 3 to 5 years and what role do you see technology playing?

...how do you picture your organization in the next 3-5 years and what role do you see technology playing?

...from your perspective, what impact will technology have on your organization over the next 3-5 years?

### Stressful Questions

An uncomfortable situation for a candidate is meeting one-on-one with an executive or corporate officer who is not making the interview process easy for you. You feel they are trying rattle you. Executives operate under pressure and they expect everyone inside their organization to be able to handle pressure effectively. It's recommended to be prepared for the executive to ask you very difficult questions and/or a surprise question.

Here are a few examples:

...why should we hire a (woman, minority or person without a degree) for this role?

...you used to work for XYZ, I had an associate who worked there and he/she hated it, what was your experience?

...tell me about your worst performance review?



## Talking Money

There is a misconception that salary is not discussed or negotiated. With executive all too often it comes up at the worst possible moment. Executives have a penchant to discuss compensation and do it directly and up front.

Here are few examples:

...how much were you earning on your most recent position?

...what was your average bonus and did you miss any milestones?

...how do you feel about taking a step backwards in compensation?

## 30,000 feet

Executives, if they have technical questions, usually focus on things from 30,000 feet and above. This can be challenging especially if the executive is the last person you are meeting with in a chain of technical interviews. If you are asked about technology by an executive be sure to preface your answer by asking what specific area of the technology do they want addressed. Try to avoid 'diving right in' and try to ascertain the direction and from how high a level the executive is willing to approach the technology.

## Active Listening

Executives like to be answered directly so at all times answer the question directly, however, from time to time, try asking for more information before you blurt something out. Try restating the question in your own words which will allow the executive to add information that might clear things up and it will give you more time to fashion an answer.

## Passion

Passion is the most important aspect of your interview. Executives know that where a person's passion lies so does their happiness. It's important for you to be able to clearly state what you are passionate about and why and at the executive level take it a step further.

Here's an example:

...I'm passionate about management and that passion is a result of my experience mentoring subordinates.

(be able to cite specific examples from your career)