

## **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PERSONNEL SERVICES**

### **Independent Study Course Number 4**

This is the fourth in a series of independent study courses offered to certificate holders and members of the National Association of Personnel Services (NAPS). By completing this independent study course, individuals can earn Continuing Education Units (CEUs) that can be applied toward the maintenance requirement that NAPS has instituted for individuals receiving the Certified Personnel Consultant (CPC) and Certified Temporary Staffing Specialist (CTS) designations after January 1, 1995. All individuals will be required to complete the examination section of this independent study course to receive credit. Those achieving a passing score on the examination will receive the .2 continuing education units (CEUs) associated with this particular course. Refer to the registration instructions on the last page of this study course for additional instructions. Future issues of *Inside NAPS* will include additional independent study courses.

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### **EDUCATING CANDIDATES INCREASES PRODUCTION**

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When I first started in the personnel industry, I thought getting the job order was the only “real” way to make money. I was with a company that didn’t place much value on the candidates. I was told the client is the person who ultimately signs your paycheck, so I concentrated all my efforts on marketing, getting job orders, and building my client base. It was a refreshing and rewarding moment when I realized how valuable the candidate is and that there could be no placement without both sides represented.

When I started my own company a few years later, I made sure to share that realization with my consultants. In our industry you have to interview, question, and recruit a lot of people to get the few that you can actually send out on an interview. However, I discovered that the people that I got referrals from weren’t always the people I placed. They were often people I had only interviewed who liked the way I treated them. Because I needed to interview many people and sometimes had no control over the amount of cold calls or recruits, I decided to create “benefits” to interviewing with me. These benefits mostly stemmed from a practice

I implemented of handing out a tip sheet after each interview with the following information:

#### **Successful Interviewing Tips**

1. Keep your resume short, simple, and “sizzling.”
2. Always send a “thank you” note after an interview.
3. Always fill out company applications completely. Never say, “see resume.”
4. Be prepared by role-playing questions you think might be asked on an interview. You can NEVER be too prepared.
5. Second interviews are just as important as the first.

6. If you are just starting your career or haven't had much experience, tell the employer, "I am like a sponge. I soak up information quickly. Moreover, I haven't already developed bad work habits."
7. Never take friends or family on an interview with you.
8. Never smoke, even if the interviewer asks if you would like a cigarette.
9. Never chew gum or suck on a breath mint during an interview. You may think it's not noticeable, but it is.
10. If the interviewer is not asking questions, it might be that he or she doesn't know what to ask. Remember to only offer information about yourself that pertains to the position you are interviewing for.
11. Never leave the company without some sort of additional information. You can ask, "When will a decision be made?" "When can I expect to hear from you?" "Will I be informed of the decision either way?" or "How many other people are interviewing for this position?" You can even ask, "What do you think my chances are?" Remember, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain by asking the right kind of questions and showing interest.

### **Dress For Success Tips:**

Keep in mind that what you wear is as important as what you say. Women look best in a suit and conservative blouse (nothing low cut or see through). Pattern-less hose (nude is best), and polished, uncuffed closed-toe pumps are preferred. Wear a moderate amount of makeup.

Men should wear a suit, long-sleeved pressed shirt, a clean tie that hangs to the belt, and shined shoes.

Suits are ideal for both men and women, because you can always take off the jacket if you are overdressed at a particular company. It is better to overdress rather than to dress inappropriately. Ideally, you should investigate proper attire at the company before the interview by dropping by or asking someone who works there, but that isn't always possible. It is perfectly alright to wear the same outfit to every interview, provided that it is a conservative, well-planned outfit.

Thanks to these tips, when all of my associates were out of candidates, I never was. Another big part of my success has been my ability to cultivate the candidate that represents ME on the interview. It's not uncommon to interview or recruit 10, 20, and even 40 people in order to send out one. I never took for granted that the candidate would know how to conduct themselves properly on the interview. How the candidate is perceived is doubly important when it is your own name and reputation that is on the line.

I used the following techniques successfully before sending out **anyone**, regardless of whether they were a receptionist or a CEO. **Everyone** needs to be educated about the job market. **Nothing** should be left to chance. First, I go over with the candidate what they are planning to wear. If someone was dressed impeccably when we met, I usually say, "What you wore the day we met is perfect for this interview." Secondly, just before the interview, I go over at least six of the questions that are likely to be asked along with the answers that

employers need to hear. The key with this technique is to let the candidate answer first. If they are on target, your work is easier.

### **Questions to Role Play with Your Candidates:**

#### **1. Tell me about yourself.**

Most people get tongue-tied on this question. They don't know where to start. Should they discuss their personal life? Should they give dates? Use "stick to business" as your rule of thumb and make sure your candidate emphasizes anything pertinent to the particular job he's interviewing for.

Another example of an appropriate answer might be something like this:

"I am dependable and a quick learner. I have two years experience as an analyst. I'm looking for a company that will give me an opportunity to use my skills while helping the company achieve its goals."

#### **2. Where do you see yourself one year from now? What are your career goals?**

Most people will respond with an honest answer such as, "I want to grow and advance with the company. I'm ambitious and eventually want to be in management, moving up the corporate ladder."

That sounds okay, until you put yourself in the employer's position. He or she is thinking, "This person wants to advance too quickly" or, "this person wants my job." Or perhaps, "This person is not willing to do the job for which we are interviewing for as long as we need them in that position." Employ this rule of thumb: Be honest, but be generic. Consider:

"After a year with the company, I'll probably be looking for additional responsibility because I'm a person who enjoys a challenge. I would like to be paid accordingly for that responsibility but, most importantly, I'm looking for a company I can be with for years to come."

#### **3. What kind of salary are you looking for?**

This is the most dreaded question of all and yet one of the most important. There are two good responses: "I have been interviewing for position ranging between \$x and \$z. However, finding the right company is really most important to me, because I plan to be with that company a long time." Or:

"I'm currently at \$x, so I'd like to at least make a lateral move. Finding the right company for my future, however, is what is most important to me."

Both of these responses give a figure, but they also show some flexibility so your candidate doesn't lose out on an opportunity. His goal is to get the offer. He can always accept or reject it, but without an offer, he won't even have a decision to make.

4. **Would you consider less?**

The best tactic here is to have your candidate respond with a question. “When are your salary reviews?” or “What figure did you have in mind?” or: “A lot depends on your benefit package. Could you explain that to me?”

Make sure your candidate notices how asking a question gets him out of the “hot seat” and back in control.

5. **What did you like most about your last job?**

This answer should fit the job for which the candidate is applying. In other words, he shouldn't say, “A Fortune 500 atmosphere” if interviewing with a small company. Or, “interaction with coworkers” if the job requires him to work alone. Have him try something such as: “I enjoy paying attention to detail, the fast pace, and the team atmosphere.”

6. **What did you like least about your last job?**

When answering this question, make sure your candidate doesn't name a person or anything else that puts down the company. The interviewer will immediately picture him saying something similar about his company the next time your candidate is in the job market. A more appropriate response would be: “It's more than 20 miles from my home.” Or: “There wasn't enough work to keep my busy.”

7. **Why did you leave?**

Advise your candidate to be truthful, but if it's too negative, such as he had a personality conflict, have him think of another way to say it. For example: “I felt I had stagnated professionally and after discussing the situation with my boss, we both felt I would have more opportunity with another company. It was a mutual parting.” If he quit or was terminated and there was new management, he could also mention that there was a lot of turnover at that time.

Because of these simple steps, the difference between my candidates and other candidates soon became very noticeable. This “send out” strategy became mandatory in my company and it increased everyone's production. More importantly, candidates felt like I cared and sent referrals even if they didn't get the job. The extra time and effort you spend on educating all candidates either by doing a thorough “send out” or just by creating a “hand out” with suggestions will assuredly result in the desired outcomes for the candidate and higher billings for your firm. When I implemented these techniques, I doubled my income. I am positive that you will see results immediately.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU) REGISTRATION

Complete the registration information below and forward this page, continuing the independent study examination and your answers, plus payment to NAPS, 3133 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22305. The processing fee for the continuing education units for each NAPS independent study course is \$10 for members and \$20 for non-members. Feel free to reproduce the registration and examination page to allow additional individuals to apply for CEUs. Following receipt, each examination will be scored and CEU certificates will be issued to those who successfully pass the examination. Allow 3 to 4 weeks for examination scoring and CEU certificate processing.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_  
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Current NAPS member \$10  Non-member \$20

### EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

True/False questions. Circle the letter of the response you believe to be correct  
Be certain to answer all of the questions

According to the strategies suggested by Ms. Drain in “prepping” applicants for successful job interviews:

1. It is perfectly acceptable for applicants to state “see resume” on employment applications.  
T      F
2. The dress and appearance of the candidates ranks second only to what he/she says in the interview.  
T      F
3. It is better to overdress for the interview than dress inappropriately.  
T      F
4. Preparing candidates for secretarial and clerical positions is vastly different from those applying for managerial and executive positions.  
T      F
5. Applicants should only offer information about themselves that pertains to the position they are applying for.  
T      F

6. The best response to any interview question about career goals is to cite one's advancement objectives, including specific job ambitions with the firm.
- T      F
7. The question most applicants fear the most is what kind of salary they are seeking.
- T      F
8. Responses to questions about salary should be kept as general as possible and answered with another question when appropriate.
- T      F
9. When asked what they liked least about their last position, candidates should avoid responses that focus on the personalities of managers and co-workers or reflect negatively on their experiences with the former company.
- T      F
10. Time spent preparing candidates for the job interview will pay dividends in placements but result in few or no referrals.
- T      F