



RANDOLPH COLLEGE

Founded as Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1891

Career Development Center West Hall, Ext 8116 www.randolphcollege.edu/cdc

ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE THE OFFICE VISIT AND NEGOTIATING OFFERS

Have you ever heard the saying, "**A first impression is a lasting one?**" Well that holds true in all situations, but even more so in those that may lead to internship or employment opportunities. The actions you take not only affect you and your future, but could also affect other students. The key to making a professional presentation and the best impression possible is to **THINK BEFORE YOU ACT**. Failure to adhere to a few very simple rules could ruin your chances for potential opportunities. Below you will find some tips that may prove helpful to you in the future. As always, if you have questions or concerns about specific situations, please stop by the Career Development Center and make an appointment with a career counselor.

Quick Guide To Professional Etiquette

- Show Up For Appointments/Events
- Be Honest
- Pursue Opportunities Only If Truly Interested
- Learn How To Wait Effectively
- The Office Visit
- Thank You Is A Must
- Bow Out If Not Interested
- Offers, Negotiating Salaries, and Making a Decision
- Additional Tips

Show Up

Once you have made a commitment to attend or participate in an appointment, interview, or event, it is expected that you will show up. The best course of action is to do the right thing and show up **ON TIME**. It is good to arrive 15 minutes early for an appointment, **and it is mandatory for on campus interviews**. If you must cancel, do so as early as possible and no later than three days prior to the scheduled appointment.

Be Honest

When presenting yourself on a resume, application, or in person, **TELL THE TRUTH!** Any information that you provide as experience may be called into question. If you have provided false information, eventually it will catch up with you. There is no faster way to destroy an opportunity than to lie about or exaggerate your qualifications. In most organizations, lying on your employment application is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Only if Interested

It is a bad idea to pursue an opportunity that you are not genuinely interested in. Prepare for opportunities by researching potential organizations. This will allow you to screen organizations and pursue only those for which you have a sincere interest. If your goal is to get practice in the application process or interview process, take advantage of a Mock Interview through the Career Development Center. Your lack of interest in an opportunity shows through in the way you prepare and present yourself. You should also know that

recruiters have a way of spreading the word about negative experiences. By following through with an opportunity that you are not interested in, you have taken a spot away from another student who may have had a shot with that organization.

The Waiting Game!

If you have made a connection with an organization and have been told you that you would be contacted within a specified period of time, **WAIT** until that time has passed before you try to contact them again. You never know what is going on within an organization or what may be keeping your contact person from contacting you. Once the established time period has passed, you are free to contact the organization again. Make sure that you are polite and let them know, "I was told that I would receive a call from Contact X within two weeks and that time has passed. I am calling to inquire about my status. I am also interested in knowing how long it will be before I should expect to hear something." Calling an organization before the agreed upon time may be an inconvenience to your contact and might leave the impression that you are impatient, so be careful.

The Office Visit

Office visits are where jobs are won or lost. During an office visit you will meet a number of people who will evaluate you on the basis of your qualifications as well as on your personality fit with that firm. The people you talk with will be asking themselves: Would I like to work with this person, or have them working for me?

Format of the Interview

Office interviews usually consist of a series of interviews with several individuals including your potential supervisor, co-workers and higher-ranking staff members. Your day could include a tour, meal, and a group interview. You may encounter written applications, tests or even assessment exams determining your fit with other employees. Second and other subsequent rounds will differ.

Depending on the company, interviews may be informal, behavioral or case. During the office visit it is common to talk to at least two types of interviewers: fairly new employees who have been with the company two to ten years, and those who have been with the company for more than ten years. Keep in mind that every employee you meet, from the person who picks you up at the airport, to the recent alum you meet with for lunch, to the people with whom you formally interview, is evaluating your qualifications and "fit" for the position.

In some instances, companies will assign each interviewer a specific quality or skill to probe during the interview. One interviewer will probe for leadership ability, another for analytical ability and another for communication skills, etc.... After the process is complete, all the interviewers will meet to discuss the candidate and an offer may be made.

Purpose of an Office Visit:

The office visit serves two primary purposes:

- Allows the company to get a more in-depth assessment of the candidate prior to making a job offer.
- Allows the candidate an opportunity to see the company and some of its people first hand, in order to make a wiser decision if an offer is made.

Preparing

Preparation for the company visit should not be taken lightly since the visit is the final step for most companies in deciding whether to make a job offer. Make an extensive list of questions after reading all the materials provided by the company, since you will have ample opportunities to ask questions. Avoid asking questions that can be answered by reading the literature.

If you don't have any questions, this will weaken an interviewer's perception of you for two reasons:

- You give the perception that you are not inquisitive or not interested.
- You cause the interviewer to scramble for what to do next and therefore create a negative impression.

Questions do not have to be profound. For example: "Tell me about your career," and "How do you enjoy working for XYZ," are appropriate. Good questions will cover a wide range of topics including:

- corporate goals and direction
- career enhancement
- market growth opportunities
- company's competitive environment
- research and development
- evaluation systems
- career paths of recent hires
- community lifestyle

Questions such as: "So what do you all do?" or "What are the benefits?" do not sit well with most interviewers.

You can ask the same questions of several people since most interviews are carried out in a face to face discussion and no one will know what you asked the last person or will ask the next person, however, be honest and consistent. If you play the game of trying to give each person you talk with the answer you think they want to hear, you may contradict yourself.

One thing frequently overlooked, but extremely important, is personal preparation. Factors that constitute good personal preparation include:

- leaving personal problems at home
- wearing appropriate business dress for the type of company involved
- having a well-groomed appearance

Remember to bring papers, pens and take copies of your resume and transcript. Ask the company representative if there is anything else they would like you to provide. Remember names and titles of those people you meet. You can also ask for the interviewer's business cards in your interviews.

Arrival

Most candidates arrive the night before the company visit. If flying, avoid very late flights or the last flight. When checking into the hotel, check for company messages. Also bring your credit card. Most hotels will ask to imprint a credit card for any charges not covered by the company. Companies may not cover entertainment costs, long distance phone calls or food expenses. It is not advisable to indulge in the locked liquor refrigerator or pay-per-view movies. Remember to schedule a morning wake up call with the front desk, allowing plenty of time to get cleaned and dressed.

Know where and when you will be meeting with the employer. Get accurate directions and a map if you need assistance. If driving, be sure to ask about parking.

Social Reception

Often companies will arrange a time for candidates and employees to socialize on a more informal basis the evening before the interview. Refreshment and light hors d'oeuvres may be served. Remember this is an additional opportunity to speak with employees, learn more about the work environment and discuss mutual interests. Despite the temptation, avoid hanging out exclusively with your friends who may also be interviewing with the company. Make honest attempts to be outgoing and to meet as many company representatives as possible. If alcohol is served and you are underage, don't be tempted. Even if you are of legal drinking age, the best rule of thumb is to keep your head clear and don't drink.

Dinner

Interviewing over breakfast, lunch, dinner or a weekend barbecue is a good way for an interviewer to talk business in a collegial environment while keeping an eye on a candidate's social skills. A meal allows prospective managers and colleagues to evaluate how well you handle yourself in a social situation. This is useful because many positions require entertaining or deal making away from the office. You may be a skilled negotiator, but you must also know how to conduct yourself properly in an extracurricular setting.

Before you head for the restaurant, think about the questions you want to ask and the achievements you want to cover.

Helpful Hints for the Restaurant

- Brush up on your table manners. Ignorance of appropriate manners is no excuse.
- Order light. Remember that your primary goal should be to talk rather than to eat.
- Place your napkin in your lap as soon as you are seated.
- Take your cues when ordering meals from your host.
- Don't become lax in your presentation style – it is still an interview.
- Avoid exotic and messy food. Food should not be a distracter.
- Don't begin eating until everyone is served.
- Downplay dietary differences.
- Ordering wine or a cocktail can be an issue. The best rule of thumb is: When in doubt, don't drink.
- Never smoke even if your interviewer does.

Seven Things to Never Order at a Meal Interview

Spaghetti, pizza, French onion soup, most expensive item on the menu, least expensive item on the menu, food that requires fingers or a bib.

Reimbursements

Companies generally pay for travel expenses associated with an office visit. This usually includes air or train fare, hotels, meals and cab fares. **It is best to verify that a company will pay your expenses before you incur them.**

Always collect receipts for expenses. Often during the office visit, companies will schedule a time to fill out reimbursement forms. However if they don't, be sure to ask to whom you should send your receipts to and get a copy of the proper forms needed for reimbursement before you leave the office. Remember to keep your expenses within a reasonable range.

Thank You

Thank you notes are not simply formalities -- they are necessities. Thank you notes should be sent to contacts, recruiters, and anyone else with whom you had a meaningful interaction. Hand-written, word-processed or e-mailed notes should be sent **within two weeks** of the interaction. If you missed the cut off, **SEND THE THANK YOU NOTE ANYWAY**, better late than never.

Bow Out Early

If you have pursued an opportunity and have decided that you are no longer interested, let someone know. This can be done tactfully by sending your contact a thank you note letting them know that you appreciate their time and energy, but you are no longer interested. Simply not calling back or avoiding future contact is **UNACCEPTABLE**. If you bow out early, you may provide an opportunity for another interested student.

Offers-Salaries-Decisions

Wow--A Job Offer! Yes, it will happen!

Getting a job offer is exciting and is a great payoff to all of your hard work. Now comes the challenging part of the process, negotiating and deciding upon the job offer. Below are guidelines to assist you in responding to your job offers.

Don't be too eager to discuss salary with an employer. The rule of thumb is generally to let the employer bring up the topic first. (Be aware that this may not happen during the first, or even second interview, but during subsequent meetings.) Research salaries before an offer is made so you can determine the appropriateness of the offer; the Career Resource Library and the CDC web site contains information on salaries and salary negotiation.

It is not mandatory to disclose the name of other employers that have made job offers to you or to disclose the salaries they have offered. Instead, try to offer broad responses to these questions if asked, such as informing the recruiter that you have interviewed with other employers in the industry and have been offered a salary range (for example \$30,000 to \$35,000) rather than a specific dollar amount. However you choose to disclose this information, be honest. Do not lie about interviews, make up, or exaggerate salary offers in order to negotiate a higher salary.

Don't necessarily accept the first offer

Though it is going to be very tempting to accept the first offer and have the process over with, you need to evaluate how well the position fits what is important to you--work values and skills. Have you had other interviews with employers that are attractive to you? This is a good time to contact those companies, inform them that you've received an offer (no need to say from whom or the terms) and ask them when they expect to make a decision.

Request an extension on the offer deadline

Once you receive the offer, ask questions, obtain additional information that will be helpful to you in making a decision, and ask for some additional time to consider the position if you need it. Make sure you have the information you need regarding things that are important to you; not only salary, but also how often salary reviews are conducted, a full description of benefits, etc. Even if you are certain you will accept the offer, you should take some time to consider it carefully. You will negotiate a deadline with the employer, depending upon their time frame. The deadline could range from a few days to several months. You should confirm the deadline in writing with the employer.

Consider the offer

Solicit feedback from friends, family, faculty, and the staff at the CDC. Understand the entire compensation package, including insurance, retirement plans, salary and bonuses, training, vacation and relocation plans. The most important principle in weighing a job offer is to make sure you consider all relevant factors related to the various jobs. In evaluating any company's offer, the following factors should not be overlooked:

- The job itself. Does the day-to-day work appeal to you?
- Opportunity for advancement. How long can you anticipate staying in the position before being given more responsibility? In short, how are promotions handled?
- Location. Would you be happy in the area? If the answer is no, are there other advantages strong enough to compensate for that?
- Salary--is it enough for you to live on? If the salary is low, are there enough factors more important to you (promotional opportunities, location, challenge of the job, etc.)? Check out the average salary for your career field by reviewing national salary publications in the Career Resource Library and on the CDC web site.
- Who will you report to? Who will supervise your work?

- Assess the corporate culture, i.e. the working environment and expectations of the organization.

Negotiating the offer

The time to negotiate on any of the terms of the job offer is prior to acceptance. As a new hire, right out of school, it may be difficult to negotiate the salary offer. Negotiating salary offers includes several factors:

- Field you intend to enter
- Your specific position within that field
- Current supply and demand
- Size of the organization
- Economic climate
- How you compare with other candidates
- Other offers you have received

Prior to asking for a higher salary, you must be able to ascertain whether you are a prize candidate for the company or just a good catch. Some employers may ask you for a salary range and you may have to justify your answer. Factors that can be used in negotiating a higher salary are high GPA, strong career-related work experience, and/or numerous offers from within the same industry. It is important to remember that the entire offer package includes fringe benefits; don't just make a decision on salary alone without comparing the benefits packages offered by different employers.

Get the offer in writing

Once you have agreed on the terms of the offer, you should request a formal offer letter. This is your proof of the terms of the agreement. The offer letter should include:

- Description of the position being offered
- Compensation package, including salary and benefits
- Start date
- Work location
- Any other terms you have negotiated, i.e. relocation allowances

Be ethical in the job search

When you accept an offer:

- Notify the staff of the CDC (we get so excited when good things happen for you)
- Complete the CDC Graduate Survey online or the paper version available in the CDC
- Immediately notify any employers who may still be considering you for employment

Honor your acceptance of the offer from the employer as a contractual agreement. It is considered unethical to continue to accept interviews and office or site visits after accepting an offer. It is also unprofessional to renege on an accepted offer. The way you handle yourself reflects not only on you, but also directly on the College and will affect the future possibilities of your fellow students.

Accept or decline the offer in writing

Whether you are accepting or declining, notify the organization as soon as possible, but follow it up with a letter. Once you have accepted an offer, be sure to notify all of the other organizations that are pending. When declining an offer, you want to ensure that you maintain a positive reputation. In other words, don't burn any bridges!