

Interview Tips for Job-Ready Military Spouses **by Deb Kloepfel, MSCCN CEO and President**

A job-ready military spouse who qualifies for the job and interviews perfectly gets the job. If you haven't prepared a "knock-out" resume, or researched the corporate culture of the company you're interviewing with or managed to learn the corporate lingo, you're setting yourself up for failure.

Preparing yourself and your family for your new job entry is also very important. Corporate recruiters are trained to weed out applicants who aren't job-ready.

We went directly to Christine Hampton, a corporate recruiter for Concentra Inc., to ask what she looks for in applicants. Here is her advice on what not to do during a corporate job interview.

Do NOT be late. This may seem obvious, but three out of every ten applicants run one to five minutes late for corporate interviews. Corporate recruiters always remember the late applicant, but they never get the job. You can never provide a good enough excuse for being late. Consider if three out of every ten applicants are historically late for interviews, showing up 12 minutes early for an interview will put you ahead of at least three applicants!

Do NOT ramble. Keep your answers to "just the facts." Please, do not share intimate personal information with corporate recruiters. Bottom line, ramblers don't get hired. If you consume a corporate recruiter's time on extraneous information, you'll appear selfish and self-centered, even if you are not. Recruiters envision ramblers taking time away from co-workers in an office setting.

Time is money to a corporate recruiter. Remember this when you have the urge to tell them your life's story. They don't care whether you get along with your mother-in-law or commander's wife. They only care if you can do the job, while working as a team member inside their corporate work groups.

Do NOT hurry when completing your job application. Arrive early and give the application proper attention it requires. This is the No. 3 killer of job chances. The military's Transition Assistance Program (TAP) manual contains a master application that is a comprehensive reference to complete prior to filling out applications. Sloppy and rushed applications substantiate your lack of attention to detail. A quality writing pen is one of the primary tools of the trade for a job seeker. Ensure you have a good one and bring a back up. Bring a business card with your name, address, e-mail address and cell phone number on it. Don't give them your home phone.

Recruiters do NOT like screaming kids or barking dogs in the background when they call your home for a follow up phone interview, or to let you know you landed the job. Give them a phone number free of distractions. The fewer distractions you have during conversation the better off you'll be. Also, make the recruiter aware of any speech impediments you have. If you stutter, tell the corporate recruiter up front that you stutter. Tell them not to be embarrassed for you and ask them politely to allow you to finish your

sentences. Nothing upsets someone who stutters more than someone finishing their sentences for them. Plow through the sentence you're having problems with and you will earn the respect of the recruiter.

Do NOT have your cell phone on during an interview. A ringing cell phone during an interview proves you don't think ahead. Military spouses are natural organizers and "think-ahead" people. These two factors will place you way ahead of the competition.

Do NOT request altering the work schedule to accommodate your schedule as an applicant or as a new hire. You can negotiate the altered work schedule when you're established as a detailed worker. Asking for time off during your interview process or while on corporate probation is a risky move.

Do NOT tell the corporate recruiter you have other offers pending when you come in for the first interview. An employer wants to think they are important to you. There will be plenty of time to discuss other offers you have pending, if in fact one is made to you.

Do NOT speak negatively against your former employer, even if they deserve it. Corporate recruiters look for happy, enthusiastic, positive people. Gossip is gossip. Corporate recruiters are trained to detect a disloyal or disgruntled applicant.

Do NOT wiggle in your chair when asked a question you are not prepared to answer. Simply look the recruiter in the eyes, smile, nod your head, and say, "May I take a moment to think about that question?"

Do NOT answer a question you don't understand. Recruiters are trained to detect misleading or on-the-spot answers. Look the recruiter in the eyes, smile, nod your head and say, "I want to be certain that I heard the question properly. Could you repeat the question?" Recruiters value a detailed applicant.

Check out the company's web site. Company web sites offer valuable information about the values, culture and philosophy of an organization. Arm yourself with as much "intelligence" about the company before your interview.

Know the name and title of the person who is interviewing you. If you are unsure about who will conduct your interview, call ahead and ask politely to get the information!

When signing-in at the human resource desk, ALWAYS shake the hand of the receptionist when you introduce yourself. HR receptionists always let corporate recruiters know if you came in smiling, angry, rushed, frazzled, rude, or polite. Don't underestimate the "power" of the receptionist who announces your arrival to the corporate recruiter.

Are you willing to work required overtime? Your answer to this question is always a resounding "yes".

Never tell a corporate recruiter what you can't or won't do. Restrict your answer to

what you will do.

When asked to provide one of your faults, do NOT say you work too hard. Recruiters hate this answer. A good answer is, "My kids would have a ball with that question." Recruiters love an applicant with a sense of humor.

Then be honest. "I miss my support system back home. As a military spouse I have trained myself to be much too independent." That's the perfect answer! Recruiters also love independent thinkers!

Now you have all the information to be one step ahead of your competition!