
Table of Contents

Employment

Interview Questions for You to Ask
Thank You Letter

Peer Learning and Self Study Guides

Culture Shock Workshop Guide

Interview Questions for You to Ask

In an interview both you and the employer are finding out about each other. Asking these questions will show general interest in the business, and the team you are applying to work with. These questions show you care about the position and how you might fit. Asking questions will also help you understand if you think the environment is suitable for you.

Please tell me important information I should consider about working with this company:

- On average, how long do people keep the position for which I am applying?
- What strengths and skills do you think I should have to best fill this position?
- What employee qualities are encouraged here?
- Is this a friendly environment or are people pretty serious?
- Would you tell me about the challenges I might find working here?
- Which companies, products or services are our competitors?
- Is there an opportunity for promotion from this position?
- How often will I be evaluated?
- What are the businesses strengths? What aspects need improvement?
- What will be expected of me in the first 3 months? 6 months? Year?
- Are we encouraged to participate in things outside of work, like a softball league?
- In what ways does the company recognize and honor work that has been done?
- Will I have an employment agreement?
- Will I work with alone or with a group?
- Who will I report to? What kind of person are they?
- Are we anticipating any major changes in the workplace?
- How many applicants do you have for this position?
- What training do you provide?
- Does the company provide or support higher education or advanced training for employees?
- Is there anything else I can provide you to help you make a decision?
- How soon can I expect to hear from you?

Not all of these questions would apply to any one position. These questions are just examples to either pick from or open your mind to asking questions that will help you make sure the job is acceptable for you!

Thank You Letter

Writing a thank you letter allows you the opportunity to share your reflections from interview including topics that were discussed and your decision to accept the job if it is offered to you. If you do not want the job you can write a short thank you letter stating that you wish to withdraw your application. If you do want the job, restate the qualifications and social skills you possess related to the requirements of the position and culture of the company. Be sure to send your thank you letter within a day of your interview.

Sue Kastensen
PO Box 63
Westby, WI 54667
608-634-6363
sue@gmail.com

January 20, 2012

Alex Wikstrom
Sun Dog Manufacturing
123 Swiggum St.
Westby, WI 54667

Dear Mr. Wikstrom:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me about the Shipping Manager job opening yesterday. I appreciate the opportunity to interview for this position.

Upon reflection, I believe I am a good fit for the Shipping Manager position and also for the company. I bring four years experience in shipping and receiving and I am familiar with nearly all of the tools you showed me. I learn quickly and will be able to master each of the computer shipping programs easily. My personality is well-suited to accommodate the variety of employees who will bring items to be shipped, and also the freight handlers that I will interface with.

Thank you for listening to me describe my past and what I have learned from my incarceration. Be assured that I have reflected upon, learned from, and moved beyond all types of criminal behavior. I am ready and willing to be a reliable benefit to Sun Dog Manufacturing.

I'm very interested in working with you and your team. I am a dedicated worker and can commit to supporting Sun Dog Manufacturing well into the future. Please feel free to contact me if you would like further information. My cell phone number is 608-634-1234

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Signature Here

Sue Kastensen

*** For many more examples, Search the Internet for *Thank You Letter Examples* ***

The goals and objectives below are meant to serve as a guide for individuals or groups working with the Fair Shake Reentry Packet; please adjust as needed according to your group or individual needs.

Goals and Objectives:

The goals of this workshop are to describe and discuss reentry culture shock issues from as many perspectives as possible. The people going home have the most pronounced culture shock, of course, but the people they are close to will have huge changes as well, and the waves may ripple even further into employment and beyond. We can all get through it more comfortably with a wider perspective and a more fluid and accepting awareness.

Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to describe culture shock issues and how they relate to reentry, identify some of the less-obvious but sometimes more-persistent cultural differences between life in prison and life outside of prison, and consider the perspectives of other reentry stakeholders.

Discussion: Use the text below for discussions if you'd like. We also encourage you to develop your own questions, or ask the group to come up with questions, around the many Culture Shock considerations. Real life examples have the greatest impact.

Quotes:

Quotes are 'fire-starters'. They are thought-provoking and effective for making a point or setting the stage for an open discussion. We suggest asking the group if they can provide a quote concerning culture shock and discussing it. We have provided a sample quote:

"Family and friends are waiting to greet you open arms, but not always with open eyes. Facing the unbelievable "newness" of home and the unwillingness of friends to listen leaves returning participants feeling more like strangers in their own country." – *Re-Entry Shock* by Thea Miller

Culture Shock study guide:

Several elements characterize all types of reentry...from ex-patriots moving home to people coming out of prison to students who study abroad, many feel these things:

- An idealized view of home life
- The expectation of total familiarity (nothing at home has changed while you've been gone)
- Anxiety to get needs met and create economic stability as quickly as possible.

People may struggle for various reasons as they reenter society. Attitudes and behaviors that ensure survival in prison (being intimidating, withdrawn, etc.) are counter-productive when it comes to establishing a stable social and emotional life. One must recognize:

- The culture shock of going from every move being dictated to having the freedom to make decisions - and the importance of making responsible decisions - and moving away from behaviors that lead to crime.
- The wisdom to invoke self-discipline and be pro-active rather than reactive
- That prison life is traumatic and in many ways dehumanizing. Being back in society has its own traumas. Basic human needs – food, shelter and clothing, are no longer provided as they were in prison which creates the challenge of having to provide for one's self; usually with minimal skills
- That facing challenges head on with optimism and strength increases your odds of achieving your goals and staying out of prison.

Exercises

Perspective:

Individual: Think of the lifestyle differences in prison and outside of prison, and then come up with situations where there may be a difference in how you would respond. One situation in prison and one outside of prison. Play the scenario out in your mind with one ineffective response and one effective response, and then consider why you would respond the way that you chose and the possible consequences.

Groups: Groups may create skits using the lifestyle differences and act those skits out.

Example:

Out of prison: You're walking down a crowded side walk and someone bumps into you.

Effective response: You say excuse me with a smile and continue walking.

Consequence: You continue on with your day without incident

Ineffective response: You scowl and ask the person "what's your problem?" and demand an apology.

Consequence: The person (who's having a bad day) believes that you bumped into them and he or she demands an apology from you. You stand your ground feeling that you were disrespected and the other person feels the same. Now what?

In prison: Someone bumps into you in the mess hall and doesn't say "excuse me". (This is a sure sign that a person lacks respect for you. However, in prison this comes with the added pressure of what those that witness the incident think.)

Positive response: You brush it off and continue on with your day understanding that the mess hall is a crowded place and they may not have realized that they bumped into you.

Consequence: Walking away could convey to the predators that you are prey. This is one of the many ways that a culture (prison) can dictate your actions.

Ineffective response: You use a violent response to prove that you're not soft and that you're worthy of respect.

Consequence: You'll end up in the hole and possibly create beef that escalates and lasts a lifetime.

In prison you're in survival mode and your options are limited. Even when you want to do the right thing you have to think about what everyone else thinks, not because you're considerate, but because your survival may depend on it.

On the outside you have options and it is very important to keep this in the forefront of your mind. People are most likely not looking to test your toughness.

If you take the prison mindset out into society with you it will eventually lead you back to where those behaviors can be accepted.

Other Culture Shock Considerations

Contribute to the Culture Shock list: There are important considerations that we are missing. When you think of topics to add, or change the ones we have, we hope you'll share your ideas with us (address on the cover). We'd like to share them if possible ~)

Worksheet

There are no right or wrong answers this worksheet is a tool to help you better understand culture shock and create effective ways to handle it.

1. Give an example of culture shock. What effects could it have? _____

2. What are some ways culture shock affects the reentry process? _____

3. Do you believe that culture shock is preventable? Explain your answer. _____

4. In your opinion what is the most effective way to approach culture shock? Explain your answer. _____
