

The Secret to Surviving Multi-Phase Job Interviews

By Barbara Poole, founder of www.employaid.com



When Jessica was invited to interview for a senior human resources role with a large, well-known entertainment company, she was excited. That is until eight weeks later when she was still in the interview process.

After having initially met with the recruiter she was invited back for a second interview to meet with the person who would be her boss. They got along famously and she felt confident she would be receiving an offer shortly. Then she got a call from the recruiter asking her to come in and meet with "the team" - the small group of three she would supervise. That was fine with her as she wanted to have a clear understanding of what she might be getting herself in to.

That interview also went very well and they all seemed to hit it off. So when the recruiter called again, Jessica was sure it was to offer her the job. Instead this time they wanted her to come back and meet with some of the creative managers that she and her team would have to interact with on a daily basis.

Naturally she smiled and agreed.

Again it was a seemingly great interview, and she felt confident an offer would be forthcoming. However, now in the seventh week of interviews she was once again asked to meet with someone - her boss's boss. To her it seemed reasonable, but still, she was running out of excuses to give her current employer and, quite frankly, tired of the whole affair. So she very politely and diplomatically informed the recruiter that she would come in for this final interview at which time they either needed to make her an offer or she was withdrawing her candidacy.

A bold move to be sure. However, it apparently worked. At the end of this final interview, Jessica was handed an offer letter to take with her and to consider. She did - overnight - and accepted the next day.

Multiphase job interviewing has its good and bad points. Consider these:

It can be a long, time-consuming process for both the organization and the job seeker ultimately resulting in a lot of different opinions about a single candidate

It can offer candidates the opportunity to ask lots of questions to get multiple perspectives on an organization and gain a better sense of what they would be taking on

It can give organizations more confidence that a job seeker is in it for the long haul by the mere fact that the candidate is willing to go through the process

So for anyone who is about to embark on a new job search, here are the ABCs of multi-phase job interviewing:

Ask at the start. At the end of the initial interview with the recruiter, ask about their interview process. They may not lay it out person-by-person, but they should generally be able to advise a candidate of who might be involved in the interview process and final decision.

Be patient. Most candidates should expect two to three interviews before being offered a job. At a minimum there is the recruiter and the supervisor. So be patient and don't be alarmed when asked to participate in more than a couple of interviews. However, if it appears like the interviews just keep on coming it's okay to ask how many others to expect and even if interviews could all be scheduled on the same day, after work hours or on weekends.

Continue to look. By all means do not stop interviewing with other organizations. Just because a candidate has multiple interviews with one company does not mean they are guaranteed the job. There may be several other candidates going through the same process for the same position.

When it is all said and done, multiphase interviews are a company's way of ensuring they are making the right decision, something all job candidates should be focused on, too. So be sure to use the time to your advantage.