

# Proponent Adds New Instructor Interview Preparation Guide: Are you Really Ready?

By Lorin Anderson, President

Interviewing for a new position can be one of the most exhilarating experiences of your career. It's a time for surveying your past accomplishments and taking some pride in how far you've come. It also represents a critical moment—a time when you see that next career plateau within reach. But if you're not properly prepared it can turn out to be a regrettable experience, in which anxiety took over and scuttled your chances.

The following information will help you present your best self the next time you have an opportunity to be interviewed for a Teaching Professional or Director of Instruction position. We've included a list of questions that our Proponent Members who do lots of hiring tell us they use during interviews.

If you haven't been on an interview in a while for a Director of Instruction position you may be surprised to find that many of the top clubs now treat a Director of Instruction interview as formally as they treat a Head Professional interview. Candidates may meet with multiple groups from the facility, have a meal or two at the club, provide a few lessons or a clinic to the selection committee and generally spend a half- to full-day on the property.

To help you prepare properly and manage the interview portion of the Job Search process, we've just added a brand new **Instructor Interview Preparation Guide** to The Job Search menu on the members-only website. Coupled with our **Instructor Resume Evaluation Guide**, you now have two powerful tools available whenever you are looking for a new position.

So, remember: Prepare well and you will perform well. Here are the areas we've covered to help you prepare to ace your next job interview:

- Pre-interview due diligence
- Preparations the day before the interview
- What to do on the day of the interview
- How to handle the informal greeting and meals during the interview
- Tips for performing well during the formal interview
- Golf clinic and individual instruction expectations if asked to teach during the interview
- Closing questions
- Follow-up after the interview

### Interviewer Pet Peeves

We asked our members who conduct a lot of interviews of instructors to list some of the things that set off red

## Are You Ready to Answer These Questions?

The following questions have all been used by Clubs and Academies who were hiring instructors. If you are asked one of these questions on your next interview, how would you answer? Our new guide includes many more questions to help you prepare for just about any topic that may come up.

- Tell me about your most challenging student experience.
- What are some of your favorite swings on Tour, past or present? And why?
- What other interests do you have outside of golf?
- How do you feel you would fit in within a structured program that wants to see things done a certain way?
- Why do you think you could build a private lesson book from scratch?
- What are your beliefs regarding the golf swing?
- Why would you like to leave (or have left) your current position to join our organization?
- Have you set yourself continuing educational goals and if so, could you please share them?
- What books are you currently reading?
- How do you teach to different levels of players?
- Why have the European's dominated the U.S. in the Majors and Ryder Cup?
- What type of teacher would you define yourself as?
- Who do you consider to be your mentor?
- What is the biggest mistake you see young teachers make?
- Tell me your thoughts on coaching vs. teaching?
- How do you use social media to further your teaching?
- What intrigues you about working at our club?
- What new programs have you introduced at your current position?
- Why did you choose this profession?
- What continuing education courses have you attended over the past three years?
- What are you looking for in this job that you don't have in your current position?
- What are the ways you measure success in your job?
- What new teaching program would you want to implement at our club?
- What do you think is an appropriate reaction to a student who is resistant or fights your advice?
- What do you feel is the most important thing that you can contribute to the success of the operation?

flags. The following were the most common issues mentioned:

- Condescending remarks about another teacher.
- Someone who arrives at the interview and doesn't know basic information about the company or club that was easily available to them.
- Taking yourself too seriously.
- Not asking the interviewer any questions.
- Not having researched the current instruction programs at the facility.
- Showing up late.
- Too many one word answers, not enough detailed answers.
- Answers that focus too much on what the candidate wants rather than what they can do for the facility.
- A sense of entitlement. Some young teachers don't know what they don't know and they often come off as being a bit arrogant.
- Overly casual terms like "guys", "hey", "what's up", etc.

### What those hiring are looking for...

When asked what they look for when evaluating candidates during the interview process, the following were some of the the most common attributes mentioned:

- The quality that I look for is a good personality. Someone who will complement my style of doing things. Not someone who is similar, but someone who is different, so we can balance each other out.
- I am looking for someone who is intelligent. Someone with a high level of intelligence can be trained to be a good teacher.
- It is a definite plus to be a good player. I would hire a good player over another candidate who doesn't have a good tournament resume.
- I always ask, "What is your teaching style and method of teaching?" I like to hear this come out without a lot of thought, it shows me they know what they teach and they believe in what they teach. This, believe it or not, is often a weak area among instructors.



- I like to ask, "What did you get done last year?" This is my all-time favorite question. I like to see the candidate spring into action and talk about their continuing education, the total number of lessons they taught, and describe their goals and how they measured up to them. This answer tells a lot as most golf professionals can be very busy, but they cannot equate it to productivity.

### If You're the Interviewer...

*Inc Magazine* had an interesting article by Jeff Haden that talks about how interviewers need to ask very specific questions if they are really going to learn what they want to know about a candidate. The article included nearly 15 favorite questions from a variety of CEOs in different industries. Our **Interview Preparation Guide** includes some of the ones that would be most useful when interviewing an instructor, including the following:

*Interview questions: Everyone has them. And everyone wishes they had better ones. So I asked smart people from a variety of fields for their favorite interview question and, more importantly, why it's their favorite and what it tells them about the candidate.*

**Discuss a specific accomplishment you've achieved in a previous position that indicates you will thrive in this position.**

"Past performance is usually the best indicator of future success. If the candidate can't point to a prior accomplishment, they are unlikely to be able to accomplish much at our organization-or yours." – *Dave Lavinsky, Growthink co-founder and president*

#### Who is your role model, and why?

"The question can reveal how introspective the candidate is about their own personal and professional development, which is a quality I have found to be highly correlated with success and ambition. Plus it can show what attributes and behaviors the candidate aspires to." – *Clara Shih, Hearsay Social co-founder and CEO*

**If we're sitting here a year from now celebrating what a great year it's been for you in this role, what did we achieve together?**

"For me, the most important thing about interviews

is that the interviewee interviews us. I need to know they've done their homework, truly understand our company and the role... and really want it. The candidate should have enough strategic vision to not only talk about how good the year has been but to answer with an eye towards that bigger-picture understanding of the company--and why they want to be here." – *Randy Garutti, Shake Shack CEO*

#### So, (insert name), what's your story?

"This inane question puts an interviewee on the defensive because there is no right or wrong answer. But there is an answer. It's a question that asks for a creative

response. It's an invitation to the candidate to play the game and see where it goes without worrying about the right answer. By playing along, it tells me a lot about the person's character, imagination and inventiveness." – *Richard Funess, Finn Partners managing partner*

