



# DEALER DIALOGUE

## TIPS FOR PROFESSIONALS PREPARING FOR A FIRST INTERVIEW

As you gain job experience, your resume grows. When prospective employers review your skill set and the places where you previously worked, they develop expectations about you. At a minimum, you want to make a good first impression upon your initial in-person or virtual meeting. With these tips and some extra planning, you should be able to exceed expectations and wow your future place of work. Here are five things to keep in mind before your first dealer interview.

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

Research the dealer as thoroughly as you can. Cat® dealers have websites and Facebook pages that offer details and insights about the company. Many dealers are family-owned businesses with long histories in their communities. Knowing their backstory and values can be an excellent way for you to establish a rapport with your interviewers and offer you a perfect platform to start asking them intuitive questions.

“What do you know about our dealership?” That’s likely to be one of the first questions you’ll be asked. Prepare ahead of time with a concise, straightforward answer. Familiarize yourself with the services the dealership offers and the kind of equipment they handle. Also, pay attention to their activities within the community. If you have connections to any events, groups or organizations linked to the dealer, that might be a great opportunity to find common ground with your interviewer.

### CHECKLIST

Most importantly, ask yourself the following questions before your interview:

- What is the dealership’s primary business focus?
- What products and services do they offer?
- Has the dealership grown over time and how?
- Who are the principals and how long have they been with the dealership?
- Which companies are the dealership’s main competitors?
- How have they performed financially over time?
- What is the dealership’s reputation?

### DISCUSS YOUR RESUME

Aim to speak in detail about all of the past experience listed on your resume. Dealers will usually ask open-ended questions to find out if you’re a good fit for the position. Be prepared to recount multiple instances where you used your skills and influence to



bring about positive outcomes to particular assignments, projects or responsibilities at your prior places of employment. If there are gaps of time between jobs in your work history or you switched employers frequently, don't worry — just be prepared to explain your career progression.

### **DEMONSTRATE YOUR TRAINING AND KNOWLEDGE**

Dealers may take you into their facility and ask more practical/technical questions. This is your chance to show off your own training and knowledge. During this portion of the interview, the dealer may have you observe worn parts. Here, you would explain what you look for when examining wear and how you would treat it. They might explain what a technician has found during an inspection and ask you how you would proceed. Be honest with your thoughts and knowledge on the matter. If there's something you don't know, ask attentive questions, show interest in the situation at hand and offer options on ways to resolve potential issues. These qualities demonstrate perceptive problem-solving skills, which are valuable to any dealer. Remember, when you are a guest in a facility, follow their safety protocols and show respect for their business practices.

### **DISPLAY YOUR TECHNOLOGY SKILLS**

In the industry, more and more tasks and tools are becoming automated. So, be prepared to talk about your specific computer skills and how they relate to today's ever-changing technological landscape. Be sure to share how you use the internet for

research purposes, refer to any software systems that help you complete certain tasks and describe any applications that might connect your work experience to the daily responsibilities found in the dealership.

### **DRESS THE PART**

Go to your interview ready to talk the talk and walk the walk. Dress your best to show off your professional side, but also come armed with the knowledge you need to communicate that you are ready to take on this job, starting on day one. Give them the opportunity to picture you as a valued member of their staff. They understand you are not going to know everything about their business, but if you arrive looking and sounding your best, you will prove that you have the potential to be an impressive addition to their team.

Every job contributes to your own developmental journey. Sometimes a learning experience is positive and sometimes it's painful. Regardless, at the end of any job, there are always takeaways that you can carry on to your next role. With that in mind, prepare a few lessons learned from your own journey that you can share in your interview. Cat dealers have a deep commitment to the skills of their technicians, the training they bring with them and the capacity for growth that they demonstrate on a daily basis.