

INTERVIEW SKILLS

Prior to the interview

Research Companies

- Go to the website - read and research
- Specifically understand:
 - the industry
 - size of the company
 - their top competitors
 - what recent accolades they have received
 - what benefits they offer
- You want to work there--what else do you want to know?

Ensure a Smooth Arrival - test drive to office location at same time of day as your interview, know how long will take, where you will park

Find out specifics for the interview meeting – how many people will you be meeting with? how long should you expect to be there?

At the Interview

What to wear?

- Look professional - suit if possible, or ask recruiter about dress code. If unsure, dress business formal. Better to be more formal than casual.
- Minimal jewelry, make-up, perfume/cologne
- Remove or cover tattoos and piercings?

What to bring?

- Extra copies of resume
- List of references
- Any requested paperwork or forms
- Pen and paper to take notes
- Professional bag/purse/briefcase to carry it all

MAKE SURE

- You are not wearing anything that might distract from conversation!
- Cell phone is on silent!
- You do not fidget, bite nails, play with hair, etc!
- Do not bring coffee, drinks, food (water bottle ok) or chew gum!
- Show confidence: have good posture, stay engaged and enthused, be yourself, make eye contact and smile!

After the interview

- Thank interviewer for his/her time
- Get a business card or contact information
- Send a thank you letter/email within 24-48 hours

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

- Make sure you are in a quiet location where you can concentrate on the questions and your answers
- Make sure you are in a place where you will have reception if using a cell phone (however, LAN lines are best)
- Have pen and paper handy to take notes
- Remember this is a real interview!
- The phone interview is an opportunity to give your sales pitch. Be sure to:
 - Provide a detailed account of your work experience.
 - When asked, “why are you interested in this position,” work to persuade the recruiter why you are interested in and the best fit for the role.
 - Prepare a list of questions to ask regarding the job. This preparation shows you are interested and have researched the role.
- In the phone interview, you may be asked:
 - Questions about your background, including:
 - Education
 - Work History – have a story for everything on your resume
 - Questions about your work experience
 - Targeted Selection Questions
 - “Why are you interested in this position?”
 - “Do you have any questions for me?”

TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW: EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS:

- Tell me about yourself. . .
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Why do you want to work for this company?
- Why did you choose your major?
- What are your future plans? Five years? Ten years?
- Why should I hire you?
- Why do you want to work for this company?

BEHAVIORIAL-BASED INTERVIEWS

Past behavior predicts future performance. To find out about the past, questions are asked to ask the individual for specific examples.

- Looking for very specific examples – from work, school, teams/clubs – avoid personal or outdated examples.
- Avoid using “generally”, “usually”, “we” – keep things specific to “I”.
- Keep each answer to 3-5 minutes.
- Take time to think of your best answer – silence, asking to take a moment or repeating the question is ok!
- STAR Method
 - Situation: Succinctly explain background to interviewers. Assume they know nothing about the situation.
 - Task: Explain what you were required to do.
 - Action: Provide the action steps you took in the situation.
 - Result: You must provide the result of your actions. The interviewer needs to hear what you have accomplished from the example.

EXAMPLES:

- Tell me about a time when you were in charge of a group project or you held a leadership role in a student organization...
- Describe a major challenge you faced and how you handled it...
- Tell me about the last time you gave negative feedback to another person...
- Describe the last time you had to influence another person quickly...
- Tell me about a time when you felt you were right and others were wrong...
- Tell me about a time you did not perform up to your full potential...

AVOID:

- Failing to give specific examples: Instead of, “that happens to me everyday,” provide a specific example (even if the example was from yesterday).
- Failing to answer questions: “I don’t have an answer to that question,” shouldn’t be an option.
- Failing to give a result: A great example is meaningless to others if you don’t explain the results of your actions.
- Providing a negative example without telling what you learned from it: “I handled an angry customer. He was rude to me. He ended up dropping our insurance.”

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEWER:

- Formulating your questions will help you prepare for the interview
- Have about 10 prepared, ask 2-5 (**only** ask questions for which you really want to know the answer)

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Can you tell me more about ____ (something from your research)?
2. To whom would I report?
3. How and how often will my performance be evaluated?
4. What type of training will I be provided upon starting? Future training?
5. What upcoming projects do you anticipate?
6. Can you describe a typical day in ____ position?
7. What is the career path for ____ position?
8. What is the next step in the interview process?

PRACTICE SESSION:

1. Tell me about a time when you provided superior customer service.
2. Tell me about a time when you had to prioritize items that you had to accomplish. What was the situation and what did you do?
3. Give me an example of a stressful situation. How did you handle that situation?
4. Give me an example of when you were disappointed in your performance.