Acing the Interview

Connecting students to global careers!

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Agenda

• What are employers looking for?
• Conversation about you
• Preparing
• Process & types of interviews
• Image & Body Language
• Interview Questions
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What do employers say they’re looking for?

Strong skill sets
- Communication Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Technical Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Teamwork Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Problem Solving Skills

Personality Characteristics
- Honesty/Integrity
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Work Ethic
- Motivation/Initiative
- Academic Achievement
But, what they’re really looking for is...

- how will your personality fit in this organization
- how interested are you in doing the work
- how long do you plan on staying here
- can you work in a team setting
- can I (or we) count on you to get the job done

A conservative estimate is that you will spend at least 2100 hours a year working at an organization and it wants to be sure it knows what it will get out of you.
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Interviewing – A conversation about you

• If you’ve been called for an interview, then it means at least two things...
  - you have the minimum qualifications
  - someone thinks you can do the job

• The best types of interviews are the ones where you evolve into a conversation with your interviewer
  – If you get to this point, hopefully your conversation will begin to center around your passions and interests
  – If your interview is just question, then answer, question, then answer, it might not be going so well
Interviewing = Personality

Interviews are all about how your personality is going to “fit” into:

- an organization’s culture
- a team’s group dynamics
- a supervisor’s working style
- the various personality types

The interviewer really is trying to dig at or probe into what type of personality you have so it is best to act as natural as possible to allow your personality to come out.
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Preparing for the Interview

Prepare so well that you don’t care how well you do

Enter the interview with a strong confidence in you

The less nervous you can be, the more likely your personality will be natural

You will not have a perfect interview – it doesn’t exist

Bad interviews are not bad – there are just ones that you can learn from

Interviewing is a practiced skill – the more you do it, the better you will get at it
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Telephone

Done by Human Resources representative to screen through potential candidates

Usually 30 minutes

**Tip:** Stick to the information you sent in

Avoid verbal tics

*No umms, hmms, likes, you knows*

Have everything in front of you – resume, notes, and calendar

Make sure you have a quiet space with a good connection (especially if using cell phone)
Skype

• Becoming more common
• Often after a screening interview/before an in-person interview
• Setup the room ahead of time
• Dress professionally
• Watch your posture
• Look at camera, not the screen
• Have 2-3 questions prepared
• Follow-up with “thank you” email
Panel Interview

Usually made up of 3-6 people from the same or various areas of organization --- *possibly not always the areas you will be working in!!*

Why organizations like them?

• Way for organization to save time and to gain a group consensus
• You will not have to interview with each candidate individually and repeat yourself – all parties hear the same answers
• Interviewers can ask questions relative to their department, unit, or division

How to be successful at time?

• Research and identify (if possible) the interviewers
• Choose the person(s) on the panel who seem to favor you, but...
• Don’t ignore the others
  • this will ultimately be a group decision, and your “friend(s)” on the panel may be able to sway any doubters
Mealtime/Social Setting Interview

Social skills & emotional intelligence

Build rapport

**Tip:** Your manners should be impeccable

- Have a pleasant and open attitude
- Thank the interviewer for the food
- Eat less and order an easy to eat meal
- Do not drink (if you do drink in this setting keep to a minimum)
  - Candidates often get too relaxed and begin “letting their guard down”
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Image – the 1st impression

60% is... the way you look
  - What you are wearing? Do you look professional?

30% is... the way you physically present yourself
  - Positive body language

10% is ... what you say
  - Answers to questions
How to dress for an interview

How NOT to dress

What to Wear to Your Job Interview

Interview Attire for Men:
- Clean shaven face or neatly trimmed beard
- Two-piece suit
  - Closed and pressed
  - Conservative colors like navy and dark gray
- Long-sleeve shirt, even in summer
  - White or light blue solid color
- Empty pockets to eliminate bulges
- Conservative tie
- Belt matching color of shoes
- Leather shoes, black or cordovan
  - Polish right before
- No earrings
- Clean, trimmed fingernails

Tips:
1. Lay out your interview outfit the evening before and check for stains, tears or missing buttons.
2. Make sure your interview clothing is clean and well pressed.
3. Except for women’s earrings, avoid body-piercing jewelry.
4. Avoid perfume, cologne, and aftershave.
5. Men should be clean-shaven. A carefully trimmed beard or mustache is also acceptable. Avoid stubble that looks like a few days of growth.
6. If possible, cover your tattoos.
7. Wear clothes that fit.
8. Do not wear flashy jewelry or watches.

Interview Attire for Women:
- Two-piece, matched suit
  - Skirt should cover thighs when seated
  - Navy, black, gray or dark brown
- Tailored blouse, shell or knit top
  - Do not show cleavage
  - Avoid gaping at chest
- Leather Shoes
  - No nylons or platforms
- Carry only one bag or tote
- Avoid perfume
- Avoid heavy makeup
- Clean, trimmed fingernails
How to dress for an interview

WOMEN

• http://www.oprah.com/style/What-to-Wear-to-an-Interview-Professional-Outfits
• http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/beauty/makeovers/what-to-wear-job-interview#slide-1
• http://www.more.com/what-not-to-wear?sssdmh=dm17.647045&esrc=nwmu011013
• http://www.ehow.com/video_12255239_shoes-should-women-wear-interview.html
• http://pinterest.com/acemyinterview/job-interview-attire-for-women/
• http://www.nextavenue.org/article/2013-02/what-wear-ace-your-job-interview

MEN

• A suit, a tie, polished shoes
Image – the 1st impression

60% is... the way you look
- *What you are wearing? Do you look professional?*

30% is... the way you physically present yourself
- *Positive body language*

10% is ... what you say
- *Answers to questions*
Positive Body Language

1. Enter a room confidently and look pleased to be there
2. Smile!!!! – Show enthusiasm
3. Firm handshake – NO vice-like grip or dead fish hand
4. Sit back in your seat and place your feet firmly on the floor
5. Body spacing - Do not stand too close to someone – about three feet away is acceptable
6. Sit upright and lean forward slightly
7. Speak clearly and articulate
8. Control your tempo – don’t speak too fast or too slow
9. Avoid verbal tics and take pauses to breath
Image – the 1st impression

60% is... the way you look
- What you are wearing? Do you look professional?

30% is... the way you physically present yourself
- Positive body language

10% is ... what you say
- Answers to questions
Interview Questions

With any interview, there are the “asked questions” and there are the “questions-behind-the-questions”.

Questions are usually open-ended and used to probe deeper into you as a person.

Questions are not usually asked to make you look bad or perform badly during the interview.
Common Interview Questions

Tell me a little about yourself.

What do you consider to be your greatest strength? Weakness?

What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?

How do you think a friend, classmate, or professor, who knows you well would describe you?

Tell me what you know about our organization?

When presented with a variety of tasks, how do you prioritize your activities?

If you had the luxury of creating the ideal work environment, what would it look like to you?

Why should I hire you?
Behavioral Interview Questions

• **Give an example** of a time when you could not participate in a discussion or could not finish a task because you did not have enough information.

• **When have you** had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.

• **Tell me about a time** when you had to use your spoken communications skills in order to get a point across that was important to you.

• **Provide an example** of a time when you used your fact-finding skills to gain information needed to solve a problem; then tell me how you analyzed the information and come to a decision.

• **Give me an example** of an important goal you had set and tell me about your progress in reaching it.

• **Describe** the most significant written document, report, or presentation that you've completed.

• **Demonstrate for me** a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get the job done.

Behavioral questions are used to show how previous behaviors can be predictors of your future performance

There are no wrong answers to these questions!!!!

The key here is to be specific, but don’t get caught up storytelling!!
Be a STAR Interviewer

- **Situation**
  - Describe a particular situation you were
  - Set the scene: who, what, where, when?
- **Task**
  - Clearly state the goal you were working towards
- **Action**
  - Describe the actions you took to address the situation
  - Specifically focus on your contribution
- **Result**
  - Describe the outcome of your actions
  - What did you accomplish? What did you learn?
STAR: Example

Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone difficult on a team and how you overcame that obstacle.

**Situation:** While I was completing my Master’s Degree at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, I was assigned to work on group project with 4 other students for my health communication class.

**Task:** Our assignment was to develop a variety of educational materials and a workshop series for a local community-based organization called the Baltimore Health Initiative.

**Action:** One of the group members missed two consequently meetings or stopped responding to our emails. Since her part of the project was critical and the project deadline was quickly approaching, I suggested that we divide up her portion of the project amongst the group. This allowed us to proceed with the project without overextending a single person. The next time I saw the group member in class, I asked her if everything was ok.

**Result:** It turned out that she was involved in a car accident that resulted in some minor injuries. While she was feeling much better, her car was still in the auto body shop. I updated her on the progress of the project and offered to give her a ride to our next meeting. She was very appreciative and attended all subsequent meetings. The other team members were understanding, and we ended up receiving an A on the assignment.
How to prepare for a behavior interview?

• Review the job description and highlight all the soft skills mentioned
  • Leadership
  • Team-work
  • Communication Skills (both written and oral)
  • Problem Solving Skills
  • Time-management Skills

• Brainstorm scenarios from your past experiences that highlight these soft skills
  • Review your resume to help identify examples

• Then use the STAR technique to develop a response to potential questions
  • Provides specific evidence of your skills and capabilities
  • Vary your examples

• Do not memorize your answer → brainstorming and writing out a potential response, you will be able to recall past accomplishments with more confidence!
Illegal Questions & Asking Questions

**Illegal Questions**
Most employers are familiar with the laws regarding what questions they can ask and what they can not ask.
If you feel a question is inappropriate, don’t get upset and refuse to answer.

—Ask the question “Can you tell me how that pertains to the job?” in a polite and respective way

**Asking Questions**
You should have questions prepared. It is your chance to interview the interviewer. *Come prepared with 2-3 questions.*
Don’t ask questions that can be readily found on the company website
Ask questions that will directly affect you or shows your interest in the companies success
Clarifying questions are OK
Same questions you might use during an informational interview