

INTERVIEWING

WHAT DO EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR?

Someone who has experience related to the field, strong leadership skills, good communication skills, and a strong work ethic. Their ideal candidate is innovative, motivated, professional, and dependable.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK - Make a good impression at your interview by doing a little homework beforehand

- Be prepared to sell yourself; Show enthusiasm and interest; Know yourself
- Research the company and the position. The more you know about the company and the job you are applying for, the better you will appear in the interview.
- Find out as much key information as you can about the company, its products and its customers.
- Prepare for the actual interview by practicing your answers to common questions.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask the employer.
- Most interviews follow this pattern: (1) you answer questions about your experience and qualifications, then (2) you ask questions about the job
- Rehearse your interview with a friend. You should be able to convey all pertinent information about yourself in 15 minutes. Tape yourself to check your diction, speed, and body language.
- Prepare your interview materials before you leave. Bring several copies of your résumé, a list of professional references, and, if appropriate, any work samples. Make sure they are all up-to-date.
- Dress professionally. You will be judged in some respects by what you wear. When in doubt about what to wear, dress conservatively.
- Bring a pen and notepad to jot down any information you may need to remember.
- Know what you want and why – don't be afraid to let the employer know that you want the job!

MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION

Before the actual interview

- Be on time, preferably 10-15 minutes early
- Be positive when meeting others
- Have a firm handshake

During the Interview

- Show self-confidence and work to establish a rapport with the interviewer
- Make good eye contact, listen well, and respond in a clear voice
- Have 2-3 questions prepared to ask at the end of the interview

After the Interview

- End with a handshake and thank the interviewer
- Send a thank you note within 24 hours of interview
- Follow up with a phone call within 7-10 days of the interview

COMMON JOB INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

By rehearsing interview questions, you will become more familiar with your own qualifications and will be well prepared to demonstrate how you can benefit an employer. The following are examples:

- Tell me about yourself.
Make a short organized statement of your education and professional achievements and professional goals. Then, briefly describe your qualifications for the job and the contributions you could make to the organization.
- Why did you leave your last job?
The interviewer may want to know if you had any problems on your last job. If you did not have any problems, simply give a reason, such as: relocated away from job; company went out of business; laid off; etc. If you did have a problem, be honest. Show that you can accept responsibility and learn from your mistakes. You should explain any problems you had (or still have) with an employer, but do not describe the employer in negative terms. Demonstrate that it was a learning experience that will not affect your future work.
- What are your best skills?
If you have sufficiently researched the organization, you should be able to imagine what skills the company values. List them, and then give examples where you have demonstrated these skills.
- What is your major weakness?
Be positive; turn a weakness into a strength. For example, "I often worry too much over my work. Sometimes I work late to make sure the job is done well."
- Do you prefer to work by yourself or with others?
The ideal answer is one of flexibility. However, be honest. Give examples of how you've worked in both situations.
- What are your career goals? **OR** What are your future plans?
The interviewer wants to know if your plans and the company's goals are compatible. Let him/her know that you are ambitious enough to plan ahead. Talk about your desire to learn more and improve your performance, being as specific as possible with your plans to meet your goals.
- What salary are you expecting?
You probably do not want to answer this one directly. Instead, deflect the question back to the interviewer by saying something like: "I am willing to negotiate for a position I am excited about, such as this one. What are you planning to pay the best candidate?" It is, however, important to know current salary ranges of positions for which you are applying.
- What have I forgotten to ask?
Use this as a chance to summarize your good characteristics and attributes and how they may be used to benefit the organization. Convince the interviewer that you understand the job requirements and that you can succeed.

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

1. Can you tell me what a typical day would be like?
2. What are the major responsibilities of this position?
3. Can you explain the typical career path of someone entering this position?
4. Can I progress at my own speed or is it structured?
5. Does this firm recommend taking night classes during the first year?
6. How often are performance reviews given?
7. Does this organization promote from within?
8. How much exposure to, and contact with, management is there?
9. What are the commonly experienced satisfactions and frustrations of this job?
10. What types of training programs do you incorporate?
11. Some of my strong characteristics that I believe are applicable to this position are_____. What specific characteristics are you looking for?

Tips to Remember:

1. Pick 2-4 questions to ask and choose only those that apply to the position.
2. Sometimes, the questions you ask the interviewer influence him or her more than the questions that you are asked.
3. Never inquire about salary, benefits, and/or company perks at an interview!!

JOB INTERVIEW TYPES

Stress Interviews are a deliberate attempt to see how you handle yourself. The interviewer may be sarcastic or argumentative, use silence, or may keep you waiting. Calmly answer each question as it comes. Ask for clarification if you need it and never rush into an answer. The interviewer may also lapse into silence at some point during the questioning. Recognize this as an attempt to unnerve you. Sit silently until the interviewer resumes the questions.

Screening Interviews are meant to weed out unqualified candidates. Providing facts about your skills is more important than establishing rapport. One type of screening interview is the telephone interview.

One-on-One Interviews are used once it has been established that you have the skills and education necessary for the position. The interviewer wants to see if you will fit in with the company, and how your skills will complement the rest of the department. Your goal in a one-on-one interview is to establish rapport with the interviewer and show him or her that your qualifications will benefit the company.

Committee Interviews are a common practice. You will face several members of the company who have a say in whether you are hired. When answering questions from several people, be sure to make eye contact with the each member of the group.

Group Interviews are usually designed to uncover the leadership potential of prospective managers and employees who will be dealing with the public. The front-runner candidates are gathered together in an informal, discussion-type interview. The goal of the group interview is to see how you interact with others and how you use your knowledge and reasoning powers to win others over.

Lunch Interviews have the same rules as interviews held in an office. The setting may be more casual, but remember it is a business lunch and you are being watched carefully. Use the lunch interview to develop common ground with your interviewer. Follow his or her lead in both food selection and in etiquette.

Telephone Interviews are merely screening interviews meant to eliminate poorly qualified candidates so that only a few are left for personal interviews. You might be called unexpectedly, or a telephone call to check on your résumé might result in an interview. Your mission is to be invited for a personal face-to-face interview.

Use the space below to write out YOUR ANSWERS to possible interview questions:

Behavioral interviewing is a style of interviewing that more organizations are incorporating into their hiring process. The basic premise behind behavioral interviewing is this: the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation. It focuses on experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities that are job related.

Critical points about behavioral interviewing:

- ~Employers predetermine which skills are necessary for the job for which they are looking and then ask specific questions to determine if the candidate possesses those skills.
 - ~Always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely.
 - ~Your interview preparation should include identifying examples of situations where you have demonstrated the behaviors a given company seeks.
 - ~Before the interview process, identify two or three of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points during the interview.
- Use specific and detailed responses, not general responses.
- ~Briefly tell them about the situation, what you did specifically, and the positive result or outcome.
- Include these three steps in your answers: situation, activity, and result (or remember SAR).
- ~Whenever possible, quantify your results with numbers. Numbers illustrate your level of authority and responsibility. For example, “I was a shift supervisor” could be “As a shift supervisor, I trained and evaluated 4 employees.”
 - ~Be prepared to provide examples of when things did not turn out as planned. What did you do?
- Your résumé can serve as a guide when answering these questions, so familiarize yourself with your experiences listed on your résumé.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions:

- ~Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
- ~Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment to solve a problem.
- ~By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.
- ~Tell me about a time when you had to go beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
