

Job Search Workshop

The Interview

The Interview

The Interview is a business meeting. The employer has work and you have skills. The employer's purpose is to find out if you are capable of the position and if you will fit into the company. You will also be able to determine if the company is a fit for you. Your job is to present yourself as the best candidate for the specific position. You are not pursuing any position, but position that is open.

Preparing for the interview

What to say and do during the interview

Commonly asked interview questions

What to do after the interview

Preparing for the Interview

When an employer calls to set up the interview, thank them for the opportunity. Ask if they would like you to bring anything.

Make sure you correctly record the location of the interview. Be prepared to arrive 10 minutes early.


Plan your wardrobe. Dress conservatively. You can always adjust your work clothes to a casual work environment.

Prepare a list of questions for the interviewer

Plan what you will take: resume, notepad, functioning pen, list of questions, letters of reference

Research the company. What is their Mission Statement? Are they expanding? Are they starting new ventures? What is their market?

Research the position. Know as much as possible about the responsibilities and expectations.



Dress for Success

- ▶ Different industries have different expectations of how candidates and employees should dress. Research the company. How are employees dressed on their website? In their parking lot?
 - ▶ Corporate: conservative suit, long sleeve shirt and dress pants, blouse and skirt
 - ▶ Business Casual: No jeans, t-shirts, sneakers or gym wear. Wear dress pants, or a skirt with dress shirt. Jackets, ties and business suits are inappropriate for a more casual work environment
 - ▶ Casual: Clean jeans free from rips and holes, Polo style shirts or casual dress shirts
 - ▶ No Dress Code: Opt for casual style, look professional rather than sloppy
- ▶ Always be well groomed, conservative jewelry and makeup, clothes should be clean and ironed, little or no perfume

Questions for the Interviewer

This is your opportunity to find out more about the position and the company.

- ▶ What is the work environment?
- ▶ How many people work in the department?
- ▶ Is there travel involved in the position?
- ▶ Are there opportunities for Professional Development?
- ▶ Any other questions that may have arisen during the interview

This is not the time to ask about pay or benefits. Wait until you have been offered the position.

Be Prepared for the tough questions

Tell me about yourself

What is your strength? Weakness?

What kind of work environment suits you?

Give me an example of when you....

Why is there a gap in your work history?

Why are you the best person for this job?

Why should we hire you?

Tell me about yourself

Be brief, honest and concise

Keep information limited to how your experience, skills and talents pertain to the job

Mention the assets you have, as they relate to the job

Tell the employer why you are excited about the job opportunity

What is your strength? weakness

Mention your top strength and provide an example of when you successfully used it.

Make sure this strength is a requirement of the job you are pursuing.

Be honest.

Your weakness should not be something that will prevent your success.

Present your weakness with the way you are overcoming it.

Use this question to demonstrate how you have used a weakness to grow professionally.

What kind of work environment suits you?

Do your research. What type of environment does the company have.

Take clues from the job description. If they say teamwork and collaboration or work well independently. You can answer that you have succeeded in being part of a team or working independently

Talk about what you like, NOT what you don't like

Don't get too specific, especially if you don't know the company culture

Give an example of how you have excelled in a work environment

Give an example of when you...

- ▶ This question will depend on the position, the company, and the interviewer. The job description will give you clues about what to expect. Be prepared with concise, honest examples.

For example,

A customer service position may ask:

Tell me about a time you delivered excellent service to a customer.

Tell me about a time you wish you had handled a customer differently

A construction position may ask:

Tell me about a time you were under a lot of pressure. How did you cope?

Give an example of when you had to make a split-second decision on the job site.

Why is there a Gap in your work history?

Explain the time you were not working without getting too personal. Be honest but brief.

Focus on what you did during this time to develop yourself

What skills and abilities did you gain during this time that you can offer the company

Keep your answer positive and upbeat

Why are you the best person for the job?

Why should we hire you?

- Compare the skills, experience and requirements for the position to your assets
- Identify the company's needs and how you can fulfill them
- Avoid mentioning why you are better than other candidates, focus on what you will do for the company.



Interview Do and Don'ts

- ▶ Do your homework, research the company, their website, news articles related to the company
- ▶ Arrive 10 minutes early
- ▶ Make a good first impression.
- ▶ Listen carefully and respond in a clear direct manner. Don't run circles around the questions
- ▶ Be positive and honest
- ▶ Thank the interviewer for the time
- ▶ Do NOT speak poorly about past or present employers
- ▶ Don't falsify information. Be truthful
- ▶ Don't speak over the interviewer, listen carefully and be sure they are finished speaking
- ▶ Don't use the interview to discuss pay or benefits, wait until you are offered the position



Telephone Interviews

- ▶ Confirm all the details: time date and who you will be talking to
- ▶ Be available to take the call
- ▶ Find a quiet, comfortable spot with no distractions. Clear the room – no kids, pets, TV or radio on.
- ▶ Charge your phone
- ▶ Answer the call yourself. When you answer, be professional: “Jane Doe speaking”
- ▶ Have your resume handy
- ▶ Don't smoke, chew gum, eat or drink during the interview
- ▶ Take notes
- ▶ Put your phone on Do Not Disturb so beeps and buzzes aren't interrupting your call
- ▶ Treat the phone interview as you would an in-person interview. Be prepared for the tough questions and to sell yourself as the best candidate for the position

After the Interview

- ▶ Ask about the process. Will there be second interviews? When do they expect to make a decision? Will they be contacting everyone or just the successful candidate?
- ▶ Thank the interviewer
- ▶ Assess the interview
 - ▶ What questions were asked? Where you happy with your responses? What would you change? If you get a second interview, what questions would you have?
- ▶ Send a brief thank you note or email to the interviewer. Use this a reminder that you are excited about the job.