

## During the Job Interview

### **Be Prompt and Prepared**

On the day of your interview you should plan to arrive 10-15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. Be sure to ask for accurate directions and take into consideration the distance you must travel to reach your destination, traffic you might encounter, parking, and even time zone changes if it's a long trip.

### **Below is a list of items you should bring with you to an interview:**

Academic transcripts  
Extra copies of your resume  
List of at least 3 professional references  
Pen and paper  
All of these items should be organized in a folio

### **Items you should not bring to an interview:**

Backpacks or book bags  
Large handbag  
Laptop computers

### **First Impressions Count**

When meeting someone for the first time, people often form opinions about others during the first 30 seconds or less! Your image and appearance are important factors that contribute to that first impression. When interviewing for a professional position most interviewers expect you to wear business clothing. A conservative well-tailored suit, shoes and accessories are considered appropriate business attire for an interview.

### **To make your best first impression:**

Make sure your clothing is clean and pressed  
Shoes polished  
Pay attention to personal grooming (hair, nails, etc.)  
Minimal use of perfume or aftershave  
Avoid wearing too much or large jewelry (no nose rings, big dangling earrings, etc.)

### **When meeting the person you are interviewing with for the first time you should:**

Smile and look alert! Nothing leaves a better first impression and communicates enthusiasm.  
Give a firm hand shake.  
Introduce yourself with confidence Example: Hello, Mr. Jones, I'm Sue Smith. It's very nice to meet you.

### **Commonly Asked Interview Questions**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your long range and short-range goals and objectives, when and why, did you establish these goals and how are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
3. Why did you choose this major? this career?
4. How would you describe your ideal job?
5. Describe a situation in which you were successful.
6. What do you think it takes to be successful in this career? in a company like ours?
7. Tell me about some of your recent goals and what you did to achieve them.
8. Are you a team player?
9. What motivates you?
10. Why should I hire you?
11. How would you describe yourself?
12. How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
13. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
14. Where do you want to be ten years from now?
15. Do you handle conflict well?

16. How do you determine or evaluate success?
17. What major problem have you had to deal with recently?
18. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
19. Do you handle pressure well?
20. How much training do you think you'll need to become a productive employee?
21. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
22. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
23. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?
24. What is your greatest strength?
25. What is a weakness you have?
26. What led you to choose your field or major study?
27. What college subjects did you like least? Why?
28. Why did you choose to attend your college?
29. How has your education prepared you for your career?
30. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
31. Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
32. What have you learned from participation in extra-curricular activities?
33. What were your favorite classes? Why?
34. Why is your GPA not higher?
35. How familiar are you with the community that we are located in?
36. Are you willing to travel? How much?
37. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
38. What do you know about our company?
39. Is money important to you?
40. Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
41. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
42. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
43. Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
44. What kind of salary are you looking for?
45. What have you learned from your mistakes?

### **The Behavioral Interview**

During the behavioral interview the interviewer asks questions that are aimed at getting the applicant to provide specific examples of how he or she has developed the required skill set for the job. Interviewers rely on this method to evaluate the candidate's experiences and behaviors and use them as indicators of the applicant's potential for success.

What employers are looking for :

- Work Specific Skills – Examples might include computer programming, CAD, etc.
- Functional or Transferable Skills - Skills that are transferable from one job to another, such as good communication or math skills.
- Adaptive or Self-Management Skills - Interviewers want to know....Are you dependable, a team player, a self-directed worker, a problem solver, a decision maker?

To provide the interviewer with the information needed, apply the STAR technique as outlined below:

**Situation or Task** : Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.

**Action You Took** : Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did – not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.

**Result You Achieved** : What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

Wherever you can, quantify your results.

**EXAMPLE:**

Situation (S): Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper and large numbers of long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.

Action (A): I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of our circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set up a special training session for the account executives with a Business Administration professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.

Result (R): We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year.

**Interview Quick Tip:** In behavioral interviews make sure you provide specific examples of situations. You will want to provide proof-by-example descriptions of your capabilities.

**Example Behavioral Interview Questions**

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
3. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
4. Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
5. Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
6. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
7. Please discuss an important written document you were required to complete.
8. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
9. Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
10. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
11. What is a typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
12. Tell me about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
13. Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
14. Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed.
15. Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.
16. Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker (or group member).
17. Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
18. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
19. Give me an example of a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
20. Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
21. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
22. Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

**It's Your Turn**

When the interviewer asks "Do you have any questions for me?" Are they just being polite? The answer is NO! The interviewer expects you to have questions. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your interest in the company and its industry. Make sure you have done your research and prepared questions that will show your knowledge and insights about the company. After both parties have answered all questions, communicate your enthusiasm about the job with a closing statement.

Example: Thank you Mr. Jones for taking the time to meet with me. Everything I have heard today has only increased my interest and enthusiasm about your company and the job. I would certainly welcome the opportunity to become a part of your organization.

**Interview Quick Tip**

Don't forget to ask the interviewer for a business card before you leave the interview. You will need this information when you follow-up after the interview.