

Interviewing Techniques

Department of Counseling & Career Services

Edison Hall, Room 100

Before the Interview....

- **Research the company:** Learn as much as you can about the company or organization (products/services, locations, culture, dress code)
- **Choose an appropriate outfit:** Wear a conservative suit or business-like dress. Choose a coordinated outfit, shine shoes, press your clothes and make sure your hair & nails are well groomed.
- **Know yourself:** Develop complete & thoughtful answers to commonly asked questions, prepare appropriate questions to ask the interviewer. Conduct a practice interview.

Interview

Dos

- Know the name of the interviewer
- Be on time--be early
- Maintain eye contact and be aware of your body language
- Be enthusiastic & emphasize the positive
- Follow the interviewer's lead
- Bring your resume, portfolio and references

Don'ts

- Address the interviewer by their first name
- Chew gum or eat candy, or smoke
- Criticize previous employers or professors
- Bring up salary issues on 1st interview
- Speak quickly or unclearly

Convince the Interviewer That You Are...

- **Competent:**
 - qualifications = job requirements
 - natural ability
 - reliable
 - assertive
 - positive attitude
 - self confident
- **Honest**
- **Intelligent**
 - strong communication skills
- **Likeable**

Difficult Interview Questions

Open-ended Questions

Tell me about yourself

Describe your work experience/ education

Career Planning Questions

Why did you choose this career?

What do you see yourself doing in five years?

Direct Questions

How does your work experience relate to this job?

What can you do for my company

Difficult Situations

Handling silence

The interviewer who talks too much

Values Questions

What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?

What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?

Offensive Questions

What are your marital plans?

Do you intend to start a family?

Dual Purpose Questions

How do you think a friend or co-worker who knows you would describe you?

What are your greatest strengths & weaknesses?

Why should I hire you?

Legal and Illegal Question Fact vs. Fiction

- Know your facts when it comes to what constitutes a legal or illegal question.
- Practice answers to these questions
- Consider what the employer is trying to determine and how you can make the situation work in your behalf.

Legal and Illegal Questions: Fact vs. Fiction

Examples of Legal and Illegal Questions

- Where have you worked before?
- Why are you interested in this company?
- What is your educational background (if a certain level is a job requirement)
- Who are references?
- What is your social security number?
- What is your address & phone number?
- Do you have a license for the field?(if required)
- Are you married? What does your spouse do?
- Do you have children or will you be starting a family soon? How many children do you have?
- What are your daycare arrangements?
- Are you physically challenged?
- Do you have a learning disability?
- How old are you? Have you ever been arrested? Are you a member of any social, religious, or community groups?

Role Play Questions

■ **Tell me about yourself**

- Although some people dread this question, it is really easy to answer. This is an open invitation to sell your skills & interests. The employer wants to see how you handle yourself with regard to your communication skills.

■ **Tell me about any of your weaknesses:**

- The employer is testing you. Do you recognize your limitations? Are you willing to work on them?

Role Play Questions

- **What prepares you for this job?**
 - The employer wants to see if you really know yourself & understand the career field & the type of work involved.
- **Of all of the jobs that you have had, which did you enjoy the most/least?**
 - The employer is attempting to determine what your relationship is like with your previous employer so that you can be placed appropriately within the organization

Role Play Questions

- **Why should I hire you?**
 - The employer is trying to determine what separates you from the other candidates. They also want a quality answer to present to their supervisor or the final selection committee.

Behavior-Based Interviews

- This interviewing technique is becoming increasingly more popular and, many feel, is more effective than more traditional techniques
- Behavior-based interview questions are designed to determine if a candidate has certain “key competencies”
- These interviews are usually reserved for the second interview, after the candidate has gone through the typical screening interview
- To prepare for a behavior-based interview, reread old research papers, think about any difficulties you encountered in previous jobs or during school, recount the steps it took to successfully complete a school or work project

Typical Behavior-Based Questions

- Give me a specific example of a time when a co-worker or classmate criticized your work in front of others. How did you respond? How has that event shaped the way you communicate with others? (**communication**)
- Give me a specific example of a time when you sold your supervisor or professor on an idea or concept. How did you proceed? What was the result? (**assertiveness**)
- Describe the system you use for keeping track of multiple projects. How do you track your progress so that you can meet deadlines/ How do you stay focused? (**commitment to task**)

Typical Behavior-Based Questions

- Tell me about a time when you came up with an innovative solution to a challenge your company or class was facing. What was the challenge? What role did others play? (**creativity & imagination**)
- Describe a time when you got co-workers or classmates who dislike each other to work together. How did you accomplish this? What was the outcome? (**teamwork**)
- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline. What things did you fail to do? What were the repercussions? What did you learn? (**time management**)

Asking Questions during an Interview demonstrates Interest, Talent and Enthusiasm

- What is the rate of employee turnover? (**HR Manager**)
- Why is the position open? (**HR Manager**)
- What would be my primary responsibilities? (**supervisor**)
- What would I be expected to accomplish in the first six months? (**supervisor**)
- What are some of the department's special projects? (**supervisor**)
- What do you like best/least about working for this department/company? (**co-worker**)

Asking Questions during an Interview demonstrates Interest, Talent and Enthusiasm

- Can you describe a typical workday in the department? **(co-worker)**
- Do you feel free to express your ideas/concerns here? **(co-worker)**
- What are the possibilities for professional growth/promotion? **(co-worker)**
- How much interaction do you have with superiors, colleagues, & customers? **(co-worker)**
- Do you have much opportunity to work independently? **(co-worker)**

After the Interview....

- **Write a thank you letter:** It is the most least used, but one of the most important tools in the job search. It should be sent within 24 hours of an interview. Express your appreciation for the time the interviewer spent with you, mention your most appropriate skills, as well as any abilities you may have overlooked during the interview. Indicate your availability & mention that you will call to follow-up on the status of the job.
- **Review the interview:** Write down your impressions of the interview, listing what you did right, as well as areas that need improvement. Note any unusual or difficult interview questions that were asked.
- **Follow-up phone call:** If indicated in your thank you letter, be sure to call the interviewer to inquire about the status of the job.