

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interview is the most important step in the hiring process. It is a two way process. The employer evaluates you while you evaluate the employer. Your resume has assisted you in getting an interview. Now you have an opportunity to showcase your experience, skills, and characteristics, and how you could be the best candidate to meet the employer's needs.

Employer evaluates you:

- are you a good match for the organization?
- will you fit in with the other workers?
- are your career goals aligned with what the organization can offer?
- how well are you communicating your qualifications?
- are you projecting a positive professional image?

At the same time, you will be asking yourself:

- is this the type of work I want to do?
- will I like this type of work environment and the people?
- is there potential growth for me in this organization?

The Interview Before, During, and After

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW: PREPARE AND PRACTICE!

You will convince an employer you are the best candidate by

- knowing yourself and what you offer
- matching your abilities to the employer's needs
- communicating this effectively in the interview

1.

KNOW YOURSELF



Education: Look at your education as a whole, not only at your major. Be prepared to summarize your background, what you learned, and why you made the choices you did. Discuss in relevant details.



Experience: (Full-time, part-time, summer jobs, internships, volunteer work.) Be prepared to summarize all of your work experiences and discuss in detail any particular job. Which are the most important? What did you learn?



Personal Traits: Employers want to get to know you. They are hiring a whole person, not a job application or resume. Be prepared to describe what motivates and inspires you. What characteristics would you bring to the organization?



Activities: Your college and community activities illustrate your "social self." Do you get involved? Are you a leader? Are you team oriented? College and community activities are important because they can show how you interact with co-workers, supervisors, and possibly clients.



Career Goals: Be prepared to discuss both your short and long-range goals. Show how they relate to the job for which you are interviewing. Long range plans don't need to be set, but you can demonstrate that you have thought about them.

2.

DEVELOP A STAR STORY:

A well-structured story about a specific work experience

"STAR" Technique to Answer Interview Questions	
S SITUATION	Detail the background. Provide a context. Where? When?
T TASK	Describe the challenge and expectations. What needed to be done? Why?
A ACTION	Elaborate your specific action. What did you do? What tools did you use?
R RESULTS	Explain or quantify the results: savings, accomplishments, or recognition.

Situation:

Let me tell you about the class trip we took in my tourism school.

Task: We were required to visit a five-star resort for the final project but there were 26 of us and we were in "high season," the busiest and most expensive season to book hotels. No matter how hard our class tried to raise money through raffles and sales, time was running out and the funds were not growing.

Action: I suggested that we create a Buffet Day for the entire high school. We learned how to create buffets in our culinary class.

Result: Buffet Day was a success. We tripled our projected funds, making the trip affordable for all students in the class to pay for the hotel costs.

3.

CHECK THE WEBSITES

to learn as much as you can about the organization or company. Become familiar with their size, organizational structure, mission, and work culture. You'll be able to genuinely convey your knowledge and interest for employment. Try to obtain the names of those who will be interviewing you.

4.

REVIEW AND PRACTICE SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

that the employer may ask and questions that you may ask the employer (see inserted list). Use Career Track's *Practice the Interview* tool. To access, go to your myTC3 account, click on "Career Track," and then click on "my prep."

5.

KNOW THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

so you know what kind of interview to expect when the invite call comes.

PANEL | PHONE | SKYPE | GROUP | IN-PERSON

6.

PLAN YOUR INTERVIEW ATTIRE

to project an image that is appropriate for the position and the organization. Dress as well as your budget allows. Business attire at an interview is typically expected. First impressions are critical.

7.

BRING YOUR 'TOOLS,'

meaning your resume, list of references, in a folder or portfolio with writing pad. Have several hard copies of these with you to hand out to interview committee as needed. Include your list of questions for the employer. Also, remember to silence your cell phone.

DURING THE INTERVIEW: RELAX!

Be yourself! Present yourself with confidence.

GREETING

When first meeting a candidate, employers will make an initial assessment. When you meet an employer, stand straight, provide a firm handshake, and begin with some small talk.

ESTABLISH RAPPORT

As an interview begins, both the employer and candidate are trying to establish rapport. An employer may cite an item from your resume or commence the interview with an open ended question such as, "tell me about yourself" or "why are you interested in our organization?"

RESPOND TO INTERVIEWER'S QUESTIONS

Be conversational. Listen to the interviewer's questions. SMILE. Speak slowly and enunciate clearly. Take your time. It's OK to collect your thoughts. Give complete answers. Follow up with an example. Don't interrupt the interviewer.

Helpful Hints

- *Present a Positive Attitude.* Companies seek pleasant and positive people.
- *Sell Yourself.* If you don't, no one else will. Use facts and figures to quantify your experience and ability. Tell them the things that will benefit the company if they hire you.
- *Show interest in the job.* If you act cool they may not realize that you want the job.
- *Be Courteous.* Remember that everyone you interact with in the office and over the phone, including the receptionist, may be asked to evaluate you.

- *Expect to be nervous at the outset.* Nervousness is a natural function.
- *Ask for Clarification when you don't understand a question.*

CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW

- Final Impressions should be warm and professional. The employer should tell you how the process would continue from this point. If that does not occur, take the initiative to find out. Many employers will ask for references, so you should have those ready. Ask for a business card. Then end with a handshake and a statement affirming your interest in the position and thank the employer for his or her time.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

FOLLOW-UP THE INTERVIEW

- Thank the interviewer(s) by writing an email, hand-written, or printed note. Send immediately. If you have a group interview, send the note to the group's coordinator and ask him/her to forward to the other members of the interview team. Thank the interviewer(s) for their time and mention something that you enjoyed about the interview.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Interviewing for a job can be a daunting and intimidating experience. Follow the tips and suggestions offered to ease the nerves and enjoy the experience of interviewing so it feels like a conversation.