

INTERVIEWING

Your résumé successfully got you the interview. Now what?! Use these tips to prepare:

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW...

- Know the exact time and place of the interview. Get directions and write them down; do not rely on your memory. Ask who will be conducting the interview. Know how to pronounce each person's name.
- Research the company. Read the website, Google it, search trade magazines and press releases, etc. See "How to Research an Employer..." on page 27.
- Know your résumé well! Review your qualifications / experience so that you are comfortable giving specific examples.
- Practice reviewing typical interview questions (*see pages 28-29*).

WHAT TO BRING TO THE INTERVIEW...

- At least 5 copies of your résumé on good paper and also 5 copies of your "List of References" page in a clean folder / portfolio / binder.
- A pen and note paper.
- Your appointment calendar (to schedule a second interview, if needed).

DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW...

Appropriate dress will make a strong first impression by conveying your professionalism and that you respect the employer enough to put effort into your appearance.

Men:

- Neutral (e.g., navy, grey, brown, black) business suit & tie
- White or light colored shirt
- Dress socks and polished shoes

Women:

- Neutral (e.g., grey, navy, black, brown) business suit (skirt or slacks)
- White or light colored blouse
- Shoes with low heels (2 in.) that allow you to walk with ease

For Both:

- Hair should be well-groomed
- Keep jewelry to a minimum.
- Go light on scented products (e.g., cologne, perfume, hair products, laundry detergent).

ON THE INTERVIEW DAY!

- Arrive no more than 10-15 minutes early to demonstrate that promptness is one of your values. It also gives you time to relax before your interview.
- Greet the employer with a smile and a handshake. Introduce yourself by stating your full name, and tell them you are pleased to be there. This reflects your communication and interpersonal skills.

ON THE INTERVIEW DAY *(continued)*!

- Relax! It's normal to be a little nervous, and employers expect it. Rest your hands on your lap or on the table with your résumé. Sit up straight.
- Answer questions honestly and concisely. Remember, you are selling yourself to the employer so focus on your strengths and the positive aspects of any given situation. Don't answer with just "yes" or "no" — a solid, detailed response should take no longer than 90 seconds - 2 minutes.
- Be prepared to ask questions (3 minimum!) to the employer to show your interest in the company, the job, and working for them.
- Provide them with your List of References, if asked for them.
- Ask when the final hiring decision will be made. If you need to contact them, call in a week or so.
- End on a positive note. Reiterate your interest in the position, and point out that you are a good choice to fill it.
- Remember to shake hands, smile, and thank the interviewer for his / her time.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW...

- Send a thank you note to the employer within 24 hours (email or hand-written) thanking them for the time they spent with you and highlighting again why you are a good "fit."
- Make notes of what went well and what you would like to improve.
- If you haven't heard from the employer by a given date or within 2 weeks, call to check on your application status and to express continued interest.
- If offered a job, be prepared to accept it. It is also professional to ask for a few days for consideration of the offer before accepting or rejecting it.
- If the employer informs you the position was filled (via a phone call or form letter), don't be discouraged. You can request to be considered for other positions available within the company in the near future. Inquire how long the company keeps applications, and thank them for their consideration.

Feeling anxious about your upcoming interview?

Make an appointment at the Office of Career Planning
to conduct a **Mock Interview**
with one of our Career Counselors!

HOW TO RESEARCH AN EMPLOYER PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW

(This list is not exhaustive, so be aware of what additional information you need to seek out based on the individual employer with whom you are interviewing!)

1. Name of the company, its office location(s), and the physical address of the office in which you would seek employment.
2. The number of employees in the company.
3. Who is the CEO/President/Owner of the company? What is the general organizational hierarchy for the company?
4. What is the mission of the company? What are the values of the company?
5. What are the company's basic products and/or services?
6. Describe their current business operations. (Access recent news articles and the annual report for findings).
7. What are the company's current challenges? How can you, as an entry-level employee, add value to the company and assist them with those challenges?
8. Who are their competitors? In what ways do they compete?
9. What is the title of one of the entry-level jobs you could apply for at this company? What would you do in this position?
10. What are the differences in responsibilities among the various departments (e.g., what are the differences between the sales and marketing departments)?

Some sources for you to utilize in finding the above information are:

Company/Firm website	Job/Career Boards	LinkedIn
Annual Reports	Current News Articles	Alumni/Networking Contacts

INTERVIEW ADVICE FROM KING'S COLLEGE ON CAMPUS RECRUITERS

"Tell me your story."

"If you can't talk for 2 minutes about each point on your résumé, don't put it on there!"

"Don't be afraid to sell yourself. We want to know what you can bring to our company."

"Be sure to answer the question that is asked. Keep your focus."

"Make an assertive effort to market yourself, as in, 'This is what I have to offer you.'"

"The depth of your answers and your questions are both important. You should have examples on the tip of your tongue."

"If you don't know our company or what job you are applying for, we will not hire you."

"We expect you to attend our on-campus employer information session."

COMMON QUESTIONS EMPLOYERS ASK DURING INTERVIEWS

Tell me about yourself.

This is the time to present brand and give your elevator pitch—sell yourself and your unique qualities to the employer.

Why do you want to work for this company?

Review with the employer some of the reasons you believe this company would be the best place to apply the skills you have acquired.

Why did you choose this career?

You can describe why you chose your major or a significant / life event that directed you to this future career path.

What are your short-term goals? Long-term goals?

Discuss your future employment plans. Short-term goals should focus on the immediate impact you want to have within your first 1-3 years of employment. Long-term goals can focus beyond 3-5 years (e.g., seeking a graduate degree, advancing to a higher level in the organization, etc.).

Why should I hire you?

Discuss how your education, experience, skills, and qualifications make you the best choice for the job. Give examples from your work experience, internships, or co-curricular activities.

What is your major strength?

This is your time to shine. Explain what your strongest skills are, relating it directly to the job for which you are interviewing.

Describe yourself in three adjectives.

Give examples of your best characteristics, and make it job related (e.g., hardworking, technologically savvy, creative, etc.).

What is your major weakness?

Be honest and talk about a genuine weakness. The key is to explain what you are *actively doing to improve* upon that weakness.

Describe your work / leadership style.

Relate this question to team experience (i.e., group project, sports activity), how you work and learn with others, and any leadership abilities that developed from that experience.

How would you handle a disagreement with a boss or co-worker?

The key is how you behaviorally reacted to conflict and what you did to resolve it. Sample response: "I've found that when conflict occurs, it helps to fully understand the other person's perspective, so I take time to listen to their point of view, and then I seek to work out a collaborative solution. As an example, I . . ."

Tell me about a recent problem you encountered, and how you handled it.

How you behaved in the past is a predictor of how you will behave in the future. Keep answers positive and specific.

How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
Draw on your strengths, and use examples that would positively describe you.

Tell me about a time you were a member of a team. What role did you play?
Focus on your openness to a diversity of backgrounds. Consider demonstrating how you handle conflict within a team.

Describe a contribution you made in a recent job or internship.
Give a concrete example. What was accomplished at your previous job / position that would not have been accomplished if you hadn't been there? Quantify, if possible. Describe what you learned during the process and translate it into how you'll contribute at this company.

Would you be willing to relocate?
This is not always a "yes or no" question. Let the employer know if you are willing to relocate or how far from home you are willing to travel.

What salary do you expect?
This question doesn't typically occur until the second interview. Should it arise however, show you've done your research by stating, "I understand from current labor market information that the typical range for a _____ in this region is \$-- to \$--." If they push you for a specific number, respond, "I am willing to negotiate depending on the specific requirements of the job and employee benefits offered by your company."

Is there anything that you would like to discuss that has not been covered?
Now is the time to speak about experiences that the employer really needs to know to consider you for the job. For example, leadership activities, or courses you have taken unrelated to your major but related to the position for which you are interviewing.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING

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

Employers predetermine which skills are necessary for a particular job and ask specific questions to assess whether candidates possess those skills.

Use the STAR method (*below*) when formulating your answers to help you include the most important aspects and positive results of your experience.

STAR METHOD

Situation:	Give an example of a situation that had a positive outcome.
Task:	Describe the tasks involved.
Action:	What action(s) did you end up taking?
Results:	What happened because of your actions?

EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

- Tell me about a time when you failed to meet a deadline OR Tell me about a time you failed.
- Give an example of an occasion when you conformed to a policy to which you did not agree.
- Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- Describe the biggest challenge in your life and how you handled it.
- Tell me about a situation when you dealt with a very upset customer / co-worker.
- How have you demonstrated leadership on the job?
- Describe a time when you had to make a quick decision. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when a situation changed at the last minute? How did you handle the change in plans?

ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes discrimination on the basis of national origin, citizenship, age, marital status, disabilities, arrest record, military discharges, or personal information (e.g., weight) illegal.

Any question that asks a candidate to reveal information that falls into any of these categories violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

SOME EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL ILLEGAL QUESTIONS:

- What is your marital status?
- What is your age?
- What is your sexual orientation?
- Are you disabled in any way?
- Do you practice a religion?
- Do you have children?
- What is your racial / ethnic background?

3 WAYS TO RESPOND TO ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

1. *You can answer the question.*
 - Be aware that your answer could negatively affect your candidacy.
2. *You can refuse to answer the question.*
 - Be aware that while this is your right, you can be viewed as uncooperative or confrontational.
3. *Determine the intent of the question and answer with a job-related response.*
 - Q: "Do you have children?"
A: "I can meet all the demands of the job, including being punctual and meeting deadlines."

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYER

An interview is a two-way conversation, or a dialogue, between the employer and you. You must learn more about the position to determine whether or not you want the job.

Employers are impressed with questions that reflect interest in knowing more about the company or the position being discussed. Some questions you can ask the employer to successfully determine if this job is for you are listed below:

- What are the normal work hours?
- Are there training programs offered?
- What advancement opportunities are available within the company? What is the policy for transfers to other cities?
- To whom would I report? Is it possible to meet this person?
- What is the greatest challenge of this position?
- Does the company have plans for new products or services?
- What are the skills and abilities you are looking for in the person who will fill this job?
- What are the organization's / company's strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition?
- How does upper management view the role and importance of this department and this position?
- What is the organization's plan for the next five years, and how does this department fit in?
- Could you explain your organizational structure?
- What do you most enjoy about your work with this organization / company / agency?
- How have various types of decisions been made?
- Could you describe your company's management style and the type of employee who fits well within it?
- What is the company's policy on providing seminars, workshops, and training so employees can keep up their skills or acquire new ones?
- How and by whom will my performance be reviewed? Are there specific criteria upon which I would be evaluated? How frequently is formal and informal review given to new employees?
- I read on the website that employees have recently done presentations at XYZ conference. Is that a typical opportunity in the job for which I am interviewing? Are there specific professional organizations employees have been encouraged to join?