
INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

Tips to help you prepare for the job interview

Visit Career Resources on the web at
www.franklin.edu/students/resources/careerresources.html
614-341-6430 phone
614-341-6221 fax

Before the Interview

Research the Potential Employer

Do your homework!

Before the interview take time to research the prospective employer. A little time researching can make a big difference in the interview. By researching the company, you can build your confidence for the interview and appear more prepared during the interview. Job candidates who have taken time to research a prospective employer show initiative and motivation.

Research Sources to Get You Started

Internet

Start your search engine and locate the potential employer's web site or company profile on these sites:

- www.monster.com
- www.jobfind.com
- www.hotjobs.com
- www.careerbuilder.com
- www.careersite.com
- www.jobweb.org
- www.employmentguide.com
- www.thevault.com

Public Library

The public library is a gold mine for research and job hunting. Do not miss the Main Columbus Metropolitan Library's tour of career-related materials. The tour is held each Wed. at 9:30 a.m. in the Business and Technology Division.

Business Directories

The library has directories that list company information. You may want to check out:

- *Almanac of American Employers*
- *Dun's Employment Opportunities Directory*
- *Job Seeker's Guide to Private and Public Companies*
- *Dun and Bradstreet's Reference Books*
- *Standard and Poor's Register of Corporations*
- *International Directory of Company Histories*

Marketing Materials

You can call the company you're interviewing with and request marketing materials, such as sales brochures and annual reports. These materials will give you an overview of the company.

Business Publications

Local and national newspapers, magazines, trade journals, and other periodicals have valuable information about many companies.

Interviewing Guidelines

1. Know Yourself - Review your accomplishments.
2. Know the Company - Do your homework! Research the potential employer before the interview.
3. Brainstorm about Questions to Ask - Prepare and write down several questions to ask during the interview.
4. Practice Answering Interview Questions - Practicing will help you feel more comfortable with your answers, but do not try to memorize specific words. Remember accomplishments, specific examples, and ideas.
5. Take Extra Copies of Your Resume and Reference Sheet
6. Dress Conservatively and Professionally
7. Think Positively - Before you leave for the interview, put yourself in a positive frame of mind. Be confident about the interview.
8. Plan to be on Time or Slightly Early
9. Be Polite to Everyone You Encounter
10. Expect everyone you meet to be evaluating and interviewing you—you never know whose input will be included.
11. Introduce Yourself in a Confident Voice and Shake Hands Firmly
12. Establish Good Eye Contact with the Interviewer
13. Remain Standing until Offered a Seat
14. Avoid Nervous Mannerisms
15. Take Notes on Important Information - Ask the interviewer if you may take notes. Notes will help you remember your conversation and spark questions.
16. Tailor Your Answers to Fit the Organization's Needs and the Specific Open Position - Stress how you will benefit the organization.
17. Keep in Mind that Salary and Benefits are Usually Discussed at Follow-Up Interviews
18. Project Assertiveness, Enthusiasm, and Optimism
19. Be an Interested Listener and Observer
20. Be Yourself and Relax

DO

- ✓ DO wear professional clothing for the interview.
- ✓ DO brainstorm answers to interview questions before your appointment.
- ✓ DO research the company before your interview.
- ✓ DO give yourself a pep talk before the interview.
- ✓ DO arrive 10 minutes before your interview.
- ✓ DO bring an extra copy of your resume and cover letter.
- ✓ DO bring addresses and phone numbers of previous employers and references.
- ✓ DO act enthusiastic about the job.
- ✓ DO ask yourself, “What problem can I solve for this company?”
- ✓ DO help the interviewer develop a picture of your ambitions and expectations.
- ✓ DO mention any volunteer work you have performed.
- ✓ DO listen to the questions before you respond.
- ✓ DO turn your negatives into positives.
- ✓ DO ask for a job description or job responsibilities.
- ✓ DO ask “What is the next step in the interview process?”
- ✓ DO write a thank you note to the interviewer.
- ✓ DO review your interview and make notes for your next one.

Do Not!

- ✘ DO NOT haul out materials other than your resume.
- ✘ DO NOT try to lead the interview.
- ✘ DO NOT discuss your personal life or hobbies.
- ✘ DO NOT speak negatively about your previous employer.
- ✘ DO NOT bring up questions such as salary or benefits on the first interview.
- ✘ DO NOT sit down until you are asked to sit.
- ✘ DO NOT talk too loudly or too softly.
- ✘ DO NOT arrive late.
- ✘ DO NOT lie about anything.
- ✘ DO NOT be afraid to ask questions.
- ✘ DO NOT talk too much - answer questions directly.
- ✘ DO NOT become defensive.
- ✘ DO NOT give an exact salary - give a range.
- ✘ DO NOT appear desperate.
- ✘ DO NOT offer only “yes” or “no” answers.

Questions to Expect

1. Tell me a little about yourself. Share a short professional summary about yourself. You may want to ask the interviewer to narrow the scope of the question by asking “I assume you would like me to give you a better sense of what I’m looking for. Is that right?”

2. Why did you leave your last job? Keep in mind that the answer to this question is relevant only insofar as it relates to your ability to do the job for which you are now being interviewed. Do not be defensive or derogatory to your previous employer.

3. How much do you know about the company? Do your homework before the interview! Use your research to show how motivated and interested you are in the company.

4. Tell me about your last job. Interviewers are looking for two key parts to your answer. They want to see if you were enthusiastic and motivated in your last position and if what you did in that position is related to what you will do in the new position.

5. What are your strengths? Match your strengths to the qualifications required for the position.

6. What are your weaknesses? Be truthful, but be brief—do not ramble. Try to turn weaknesses into opportunities for growth.

7. Where do you hope to be five years from now? Have a plan, but do not make it detailed. In today’s business environment, you need to stay flexible and ready for

change.

8. What is it about our company that appeals to you? Interviewers are trying to figure out if you have done your research and why you are interested in their company.

9. Knowing what you know about this job and our company, would you make changes if you were offered this position? Be careful, use your research, and speak generally. Do not make suggestions that you do not have solid information to back up. Be positive about the organization’s current situation.

10. Describe a typical day in your last job. This helps verify your resume information. It always allows the interviewer to see if you can provide and prioritize relevant information.

11. Why should I hire you? Interviewers want you to convince them that you’re the right candidate. Tell them that you can make a contribution to their company. Be sure to back the statement up with specific examples and qualities you possess.

12. Tell me about your previous boss. Do not bad-mouth anyone. Be diplomatic and focus on management styles instead of personal issues.

13. Do you consider yourself a team player? You better in today’s business environment. Be prepared to give specific examples of team tension, leadership, etc. Also be prepared to define “being a team player.”

14. What's the biggest problem you faced in your last job and how did you solve it?

This question is about challenges—what you consider a challenge and how you handle challenges.

15. If I were to call your former boss, what would he or she be likely to say about your strengths and weaknesses?

Remember, the interviewer may talk to your former boss. Give an honest answer, bearing in mind that most people, when they're asked to give a reference, rarely give you as much praise as you think you deserve or as much criticism as you're afraid they might unload.

16. What do you think you can bring to this company? Be aware of the company's needs for the position you are interviewing for. This question simply means "why should we hire you?" or "what can you do for us?"

17. What did you like best about your previous job? Target the pieces you liked best about your previous job that match what you could be doing in the new position.



18. What did you like least about your previous job? Not liking something about a previous position is okay, but make sure that it's not a requirement in the new position.

19. What do you like to do in your spare time? The interviewer is usually just trying to get some insight into you as an individual. Mention a few hobbies or pastimes you enjoy—keep the list short.

20. How satisfied are you with how far you've advanced in your career? Be proud of what you've accomplished. The interviewer is trying to figure out how ambitious you are.

21. Based on what I see in this resume, you seem to be overqualified for this position. What do you think? The interviewer is usually trying to make sure that you are not just taking their position until something better comes along. Reassure the interviewer. Confirm that you may be somewhat overqualified, but that can work to the company's advantage. Do not begin a debate or argue with the interviewer.

22. What kind of salary do you require? It's generally better to postpone discussions about salary until you're well into the interview, but if the interviewer insists, do not be too coy or evasive. If you need to discuss your salary request, do so using a broad salary range.

Questions to Ask

1. May I take notes?
2. How did you get started in the company?
3. What made you successful?
4. How would you describe the company's business, focus, mission, or goals?
5. What are the trends in revenues and profits?
6. Who are the company's major competitors, and what are the company's competitive strengths?
7. Where is the company going in the next three to five years?
8. How would you describe the corporate culture?
9. What are the specific responsibilities of the job?
10. What qualities would the ideal candidate have?
11. What would you expect of me in this position?
12. Is this a new position or has the job been held by someone else?
13. If it has been held by someone else, is the person still with the company? What about others who have started in this position over the past few years?
14. Have any of them been promoted? Into what positions?
15. Where can this job lead for a top performer?
16. What resources are available to perform this job?
17. How will I be evaluated? By whom? When?
18. What education and training programs does the company provide?
19. How will the final hiring decision be made? By whom? When?
20. Is there anything else I need to know?
21. I'm very interested in this position. What is the next step?

Behavioral Interviewing

Behavioral interviewing is a very popular technique for interviewing. Behavior interviewing is based on the idea that past performance is a predictor of future behavior. Behavioral interviewers ask questions to draw out specific examples of your past experiences.

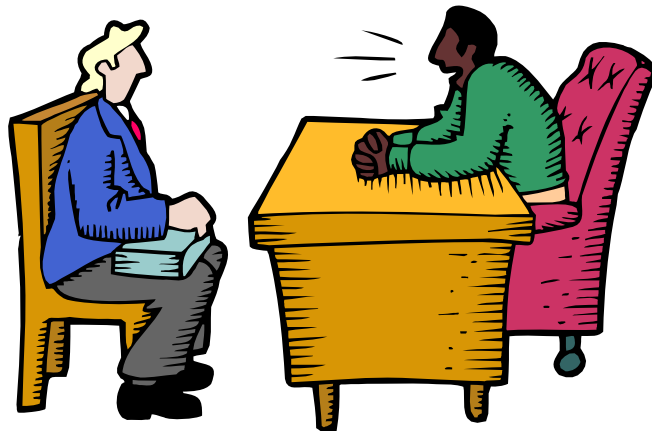
Behavioral interviewers are looking for answers that include specific examples

- explaining the related situation
- detailing the action you took
- justifying the ending result

Here are some examples of behavioral interview questions. Try to brainstorm about answers that include detailed, specific examples. Remember, you can use examples from work, school, or other professional situations.

Tell me about a time when you . . .

1. Encountered a difficult situation
2. Solved a problem
3. Were under pressure
4. Were criticized
5. Handled a difficult client/customer
6. Succeeded
7. Faced a challenge
8. Led a team
9. Implemented a new idea
10. Learned something new



Suggested Books

Job Interviews for Dummies

Joyce Lain Kennedy

Job Hunting for Dummies

Max Messmer

101 Great Answers to the Toughest Interview

Questions

Ron Fry

Knock 'Em Dead 2002

Martin Yate

The 101 Toughest Interview Questions: And Answers That Win the Job

Daniel Porot

The Complete Job Search Organizer

Jack O'Brien

Sweaty Palms: The Neglected Art of Being Interviewed

By Anthony H. Medley

Power Interviews: Job Winning Tactics from Fortune 500 Recruiters

By Yeager & Hough

Ready, Aim, You're Hired!

How to Job Interview Successfully Anytime, Anywhere, with Anyone

By Paul Hillman

