



Interviews:

An interview is an opportunity to showcase your skills and accomplishments, and show the employer you are the best candidate for the job or internship. Essentially you want to explain why you want to work there, why they should hire you and that you possess the personal qualities they need (motivation, drive, strengths, etc.)

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- Research the employer.
- Identify your strengths and skills for the specific position.
- Compile examples of accomplishments and scenarios that showcase your skills.
- Prepare questions for them.
- Practice with a mock interviews.

DURING THE INTERVIEW:

How to Dress

- If you have a suit, wear it, even if the employer is in a casual industry.
- If you don't have a suit, dress in professional work attire that is clean and pressed.
- Keep jewelry/perfume/cologne to a minimum.

Making the first impression

- Plan to arrive at least fifteen minutes early. If you are late, call to let them know.
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist and indicate who you are there to see. Remember the interview starts the moment you hit the door and doesn't end until you drive away.
- Know how to pronounce the interviewer's name.
- Shake hands firmly.
- Maintain eye contact with your interviewer.

Your attitude

- Show confidence, interest, assertiveness, and enthusiasm.
- Be yourself. Smile, relax, and be friendly.
- Be honest.
- Be courteous, polite, and respectful at all times.
- Allow the interviewer to lead the interview.

Verbal Communication

- Pause for a moment before answering questions. Take time to formulate a well thought out, organized response.
- Answer questions thoroughly by stating results and using examples.
- Don't monopolize the conversation or ramble on. Answer questions succinctly.
- Make sure to answer each part of the question asked.



Nonverbal Communication

- Make eye contact when speaking.
- Always wait until you have been offered a seat, or until the interviewer sits.
- Be aware of your posture the entire interview.
- Do not talk with your hands too much.

Your Past

- Don't be evasive. While past failures need not be volunteered, do not try to cover them up. If you do
- have a blemish on your record, do not make excuses. Give a simple evaluation of the situation, and
- what you learned from it, and move on.
- Never speak poorly about former supervisors, colleagues, or employers. If you were unhappy, simply
- explain that it was not a good fit.

Be attentive.

- When introduced to others, remember their names.
- Pay attention. Do not ask question about information that was already addressed in the interview.
- Ask for a business card at the close of the interview to ensure that you have proper contact information.

Negotiating Salary

- The employer should be the one to introduce this topic. It generally will be discussed during the second interview or at the time of the offer.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Thank interviewers for their time and shake hands firmly with a smile.
- Indicate that you look forward to hearing from them soon and welcome them to contact you if they need any additional information.
- Send a thank you letter within twenty four hours reiterating your interest in the position. Email a thank you that day and ideally follow-up with a hand written version.
- Follow up promptly by providing any credentials, references, transcripts, or samples of work that might have been requested by the interviewer.

INTERVIEW STYLES:

All interviews are different. It is likely you will experience both of the following interview styles. The best way to prepare is to perform a mock interview to practice.

- Directed: interview will have a definite structure with an itemized agenda and specific questions.
- Non-Directed: less structured with broad, general questions. This may feel like a conversation.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Traditional Interview Questions/Direct Questions:

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?



- Why are you interested in this opportunity/company?
- How has your college career prepared you for this job/internship?

Ethical Dilemma: used to determine how you would respond in an ethical situation.

Puzzle Questions: used for positions where problem solving is important. To answer, walk the interviewer through the logical steps you would take to solve the problem. Sometimes there is no real answer.

Case Questions and Tests: Some employers will want you to showcase specific skills you have learned in areas such as finance and excel.

Behavioral Interview Questions: focuses on specific examples of past behavior as a means of predicting future behavior.

The best way to answer a behavioral interview question is to utilize the STAR method.

1. Situation: Discuss a specific situation or problem that you encountered.
2. Task: Explain the task goal.
3. Action: Tell specific actions which you took, steps you followed, obstacles you had to overcome, etc.
4. Results: Highlight outcomes, goals achieved, and accomplishments.

SAMPLE STAR RESPONSE:

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

Task (T): My goal was to generate new ideas, materials and incentives that would result in at least a 15% increase in advertisers from the year before.

Action (A): I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of The Review circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set-up a special training session for the account executives with a School of 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.

<http://www.drexel.edu/SCDC/resources/STAR%20Method.pdf>

Sample Behavioral Questions

1. Analytical/Problem Solving

- a. Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information, and make a recommendation.
- b. Give me an example of when you identified potential problems and resolved the situation.

2. Communication

- a. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- b. Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get a point across.



- c. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
 - d. Give me a specific example of a time when you had to handle an irate customer.
3. Creativity/Innovation
 - a. Tell me about a problem that you have solved in a unique or unusual way.
 - b. Describe the most significant or creative presentation/idea that you developed/implemented.
 - c. Tell me about a time when you created a new process or program that was considered risky.
4. Decision making
 - a. Tell me about a difficult decision you had to make within the past year.
 - b. Give me an example of a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed.
 - c. Discuss a time when you had to make a quick decision.
5. Goal Setting
 - a. Give me an example of an important goal that you have set and tell me how you reached it.
 - b. Tell me about a goal that you set and did not reach.
6. Flexibility/Adaptability
 - a. Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to changes over which you had no control.
 - b. Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a classmate's or colleague's working style in order to complete a project.
 - c. Tell me about a situation when you had to be tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.
7. Integrity/Honesty
 - a. Tell me about a time when you challenged the status quo to do what you felt was right.
 - b. Tell me about a time when you had to handle a tough problem that challenged fairness or ethical issues.
8. Interpersonal
 - a. Give me an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with.
 - b. Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual and how you dealt with it.
9. Leadership/Initiative
 - a. Tell me about a time when you were able to provide a co-worker with recognition for the work they performed.
 - b. Describe a leadership situation that you would handle differently if you had to do it over again.
 - c. Tell me about a time when you were in a leadership role and you were faced with resistance.
 - d. Tell me about a time when you showed initiative and took the lead in a team project.
10. Organization/Time Management
 - a. Describe a situation that required you to do a number of things at the same time.
 - b. Give me a specific example of a time when you were unable to complete a project on time.
 - c. Give me an example of a recent assignment that required the greatest amount of effort with regard to organization.
11. Strengths/Weaknesses
 - a. Describe for me a time when you failed at something and how you responded.
 - b. Tell me about a time when you did not live up to your full potential.



12. Teamwork

- a. Tell me about a time when you worked on a team and a member was not doing his share of the work.
- b. Tell me about a time when you had to work in a team in which the members did not get along.

Content gathered from the University of South Carolina's Career Center Website. Originally from Michigan State University and University of Maryland.