

Career Services

Interviewing Workshop

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression.”

**State University of New York
College at Brockport**

Topics to Be Covered

- Preparation
- What happens during the interview?
- Types of Interviews
- Portfolios
- Salary Questions Follow-up
- Follow-up

Interview Phases

- Self – assessment (before)
- Preparation (before)
- Actual interview (during)
- Review (after)

Why Interviews?

- See the candidate first-hand
- Probe for detailed information about the candidate
- Sell the job and the organization
- Allow candidates to assess their interest in the organization



Employer Perspective

Can you do the job ?

Will you do the job ?

Will you fit in ?

Candidate Perspective

Can I do the job ?

Will I do the job ?

Will I fit in?

Importance of Career Planning



What is Self-Assessment?

- A process through which you analyze:

strengths and weaknesses

skills and abilities

interests and values

goals and aspirations

Why Self-Assessment?

- Identify strengths to discuss in interviews
- Builds confidence
- Articulate match between you and the employer in a persuasive way

Questions to Consider

- What type of work setting?
- What is important to you? (security, money, making a contribution)
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Where do you want to be in five years? In ten?

Researching the Organization

- Identify industry issues and major news items in the field
- Find out products / services / reputation / competition / mission statement
- Most common recruiter complaint?

**Candidate is unfamiliar
with the organization.**



Interviewing - Preparation

Analyze responsibilities or job duties:

- knowledge required
- skills and abilities
- personal characteristics

Interviewing - Preparation

Research the organization

- annual reports
- field research / personal visits
- your network
- Internet
- library
- professional organizations
- Career Resource Room

Interviewing - Preparation

Relate your background to the employer's needs

Why should I hire you ?

Review full-job description.

- Qualifications (screening criteria ?)
- Personal traits
- Skill sets



Interviewing - Preparation

Select appropriate apparel

- minimal cologne
- professional hairstyle (avoid trends)
- minimize wardrobe color
- quality clothes
- minimal jewelry
- body art

Interview Attire



Why Advance Planning?

- Shows you're taking the job search and organization seriously
- Helps you be more comfortable and confident in the interview
- Helps you stand out from other applicants



Interviewing - Preparation

Prepare your responses

- Practice commonly asked questions
- Write out behavioral answers (stories)
- Mock interviews / field research
- Prepare questions for the employer
- Identify experiences, accomplishments, skills, goals, values (actual examples)



The Day of the Interview

- Arrive early / present yourself on time
- Bring extra resumes, portfolio of work, tasteful notepad, references - anything requested by the employer
- Relax
- Maintain positive attitude
- Make a favorable impression on support staff and receptionist



Types of Interviews

- Screening
- Traditional
- Group
- Phone / Video Conferencing
- Presentations
- Behavioral

Screening Interviews

- Allows candidate and interviewer to assess fit and interest
- Typically 30 minutes or less
- Used on on-campus interviews, job fairs, open houses

Traditional Interviews

- One to one
- Typically conducted by manager or human resources person
- Asks common interview questions

Group Interviews

- Group of candidates with a group of interviewers
- Group of interviewers with one candidate
- Becoming more frequent
- Allows organization to assess team skills
- Candidates walk a fine line between assertive and too aggressive
- Address everyone
- Eye contact for all
- Thanks to all

Phone / Video Interviews

- Allow plenty of time
- Be comfortable (some candidates dress up)
- Arrange to have no interruptions
- You may need to reschedule if they call at a bad time
- Notes at your fingertips

Behavior-Based Interviews

- Used by 70% of organizations
- About real-life incidents and how you react
- Based upon past experiences
- Helps interviewer see how you react in different situations
- Self-assessment can help you anticipate and prepare for behavior-based questions



Behavior-Based Interviews

Interviewer looks for:

- situation or task and action taken
- what did candidate do or say in given situation?
- effect or results / changes?
- detail in describing past performance / not future performance
- dimensions / behavior skill sets

Typical Behavior-Based Questions

- Tell me about a time you were involved in a project. What was your role? What did you contribute?
- Describe a time when you had to work under pressure. What was your role? How did you react? How did you contribute to the situation?
- Tell me about a time in which you disagreed with your supervisor? What was the outcome?

Handling Behavior-Based Questions

- Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)
- Analyze your own background. List jobs, internships, class projects, volunteer work. Select 3-5 projects to analyze in detail.
- Projects – What was your role, What did you offer? Contributions? Skills used or learned? Outcomes? What would you do differently? What are you most proud of?



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Tell me about yourself. Expand on your resume.
2. Why are you applying for this position?
3. Why did you leave your last job ?
4. Where do you see yourself in five years? In ten?
5. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
6. Describe a typical day in your current job.
7. Why did you select your major ?
8. What kind of supervisor do you prefer ?

During the Interview

- Shake hands before and after the interview
- Get names and titles of interviewers (business cards)
- Speak clearly and to the point
- Listen to the question - ask for clarification
- Ethics - be honest and bring up only positive points

Non-verbal Factors

- Punctuality
- Clothing
- Grooming
- Handshake
- Eye contact
- Posture
- Expression

Verbal Factors

- Can carry on an informal conversation
- Grammar and word usage are professional
- Voice sounds confident and self-assured

During the Interview

- Tell them why you want the job
- Emphasize strengths
- Follow their lead
- Be prepared for questions (self-assessment)
- Find out the next step / Timeline

Practice responses to common questions

- Give responses that reflect strengths

How do you solve problems?

How do you make decisions?

How do you set priorities / goals?

How do you work with others?

How do you plan and organize?

Salary Questions

- Only discuss salary if the interviewer brings up
- Have a salary range in mind (prior to the interview)
- Try to get the interviewer to disclose range or actual salary first

“I understand the national average for someone with my qualifications for this kind of position is \$_____. Given the cost of living, I assume the salary is higher / lower or about the same.”



Illegal Questions

Any question that deals with marital status, sex, race, religion, age, national origin, citizenship

Questions must relate to the job.



Illegal Questions

- What is your maiden name?
- Age, birthdate, or questions which identify applicants as being over 40
- Do you have physical disabilities?
- Questions regarding nationality
- Have you been arrested? (may ask about convictions)

Illegal Questions - Handling

- Determine why the question was asked, then reassure the employer
- Ask why the question was asked, explaining you are unsure how it relates to job duties
- Answer the question, ignore the illegality
- Answer the question, stating that you don't think it relates to your qualifications
- Decline to answer the question saying you don't think it affects your qualifications

Asking Questions

- Most employers will ask if you have questions. May take up to 15 minutes of the interview.
- Asking questions shows you are interested, intelligent and thorough
- Develop questions prior to the interview
- Don't ask questions of salary, vacation and other benefits

Sample Questions

“I read in your annual report that your support for research has increased by 50%. Have you seen results from this increase?”

“A Wall Street Journal article stressed your company’s commitment to innovative marketing strategies. Do you think the article was accurate and why?”

Portfolios

- Tasteful and manageable in size
- May include writing samples, letters of recommendation, transcripts, lesson plans, work projects, certificates
- Used to support your responses to interview questions
- Don't randomly pull items out
- Never leave the portfolio with the employer unless requested

Conclusion of Interview

- Ask any final questions (both parties)
- Find out next step. When will you hear from them?
- Express interest (if appropriate).

“I’ve enjoyed this interview and am excited about opportunities with your organization. I hope you will invite me to the next step.”



Tips for Successful Interviewing

- Watch appearance / hygiene
- Avoid Nervousness (extreme)
- Firm handshake
- Maintain eye contact
- Be self-confident
- Avoid being overly self-critical
- Allow the interviewer to talk (don't interrupt)
- Don't criticize your current employer
- Avoid discussing controversial affiliations (religious, political)



Interviewing - After

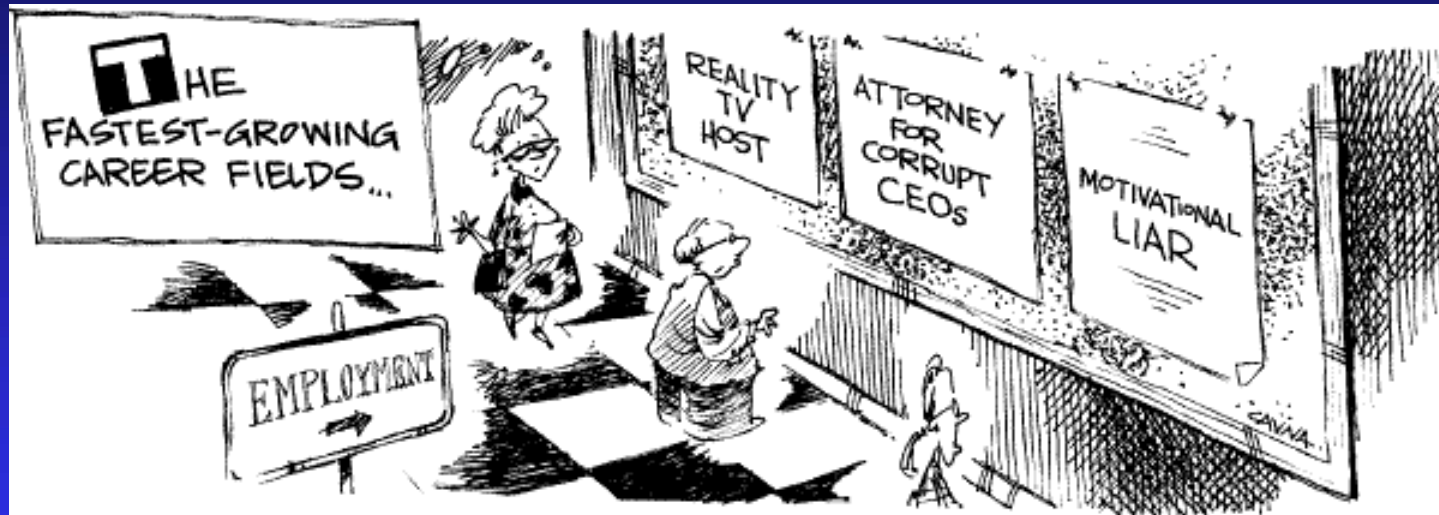
- Write thank you letters (include any important omissions, reiterate your interest and strengths)
- Analyze your performance (immediately)!
Keep a log of the interview with dates, facts, advice you were given, impressions
- Get feedback from peers / professionals
- Follow-up / stay in pursuit

No Failures, Just Lessons

Learn from every interview

Have fun!

The Job Market



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