

Interviewing

The Employer's Perspective

The employer is most interested in knowing if you meet two criteria:

1. Do you have the **ABILITY** to do the job?
2. Are you a **FIT** with the team / company?

Types of Interview Questions

1. **Direct:** Often answered with a "Yes" or a "No" response.
Example: Can you perform the essential job functions?
2. **Open-Ended:** Generally the response to these questions is a NOT "Yes" or a "No".
Example: What motivates you?
3. **Behavioral / Situational:** The best indicator of how you *will* perform on the job is how you performed in the *past*. The employer is asking you to share a *specific* example from your past; not a general statement about how you typically handle such situations.
Example: Give us an example of a time when you made a mistake. How did you respond and what was the result?

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little about yourself?
2. Name two of your strengths.
3. What accomplishments are you most proud of in your career?
4. What would your peers or subordinates say about you?
5. Tell me about a time when you handled a difficult situation with a co-worker.
6. Why should we hire you?
7. Where do you see yourself (What are your goals) in five years?
8. Describe your personality.
9. What work environment is optimal for your satisfaction and productivity?

The STAR Approach

Prior to the interview, prepare 5-10 specific examples. Draw from your volunteer, school and work experiences. Develop examples that show your skills, qualities, and characteristics that are relevant to the job posting.

When preparing your responses for the interview, organize your examples using the STAR approach to create a story.

1. **Set the Stage:** Briefly mention the experience that you are referencing
2. **Task / Situation:** Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. Provide enough detail for the interviewer to understand.
3. **Action:** Describe the action you took. Keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what *you* did. Don't tell what you might do, tell what **you have done**.
4. **Result:** What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

Research the Hiring Organization

- Read and re-read the job description, highlighting all the essential skills and abilities.
- Study the company website: read Mission and Values, About Us, learn about the product and services, etc.

- Search for articles and press releases related to the firm, competing firms, and industry news.
- Review the company's financial prospectus or annual report if available.
- Talk to "insiders;" gather information from anyone who has worked at the firm, been a customer of the firm, or knows anything about their reputation.
- Online research sources such as [Vault Reports](http://www.vaultreports.com) (www.vaultreports.com) and [O*Net](http://onetcenter.org) (http:// onetcenter.org)
- Observe: park outside the business and observe the clients and staff that come in and out. Visit the lobby (if appropriate) and observe the culture and their approach to customer service.

Dressing for the Interview

1. Ask the person who schedules your interview about appropriate dress for their workplace.
2. Wear clothes that are clean, pressed, comfortable and neat.
3. Pay attention to personal hygiene: hair, nails, makeup.
4. Don't wear a fragrance.

During the Interview

- Arrive early; allow an extra ten or fifteen minutes to find a parking space and allow yourself time to relax. If you are unsure of the location of the employer, you may want to drive the route a day or two early so that you will know exactly where they are located and the time it takes to arrive there.
- The interview starts the moment you walk in the door. It is important to make a good impression with each person you are in contact with. You never know who may make the final decision regarding your employment.
- 50% of your communication is nonverbal. Your posture, walk, gestures, and eye contact are all part of your communication. Make eye contact with the interviewer when answering questions, shake hands firmly, and keep your hands in your lap during the interview.
- Finish strong. Be prepared to ask questions; this will show interest and knowledge of the company.
- Don't forget: Within 24 hours of the interview. Send a thank you note to each person who interviewed you.

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

Develop several questions to take to the interview. Write them down on a pad of paper and refer to them at the appropriate time.

Sample Questions:

1. How would you describe the corporate (company) culture?
2. What are the current challenges or goals for the company?
3. How has this opportunity become available?
4. What would a typical day (or week) look like?
5. What do you see as this position's greatest challenge at the present?
6. What are your immediate objectives and priorities for this position?
7. Where does this position fit within your organization?
8. How is performance measured and how is successful performance rewarded?
9. What are the company's growth plans for the next five years?

<p>For more Interview preparation, register for LCWC's <i>Interviewing</i> workshop</p>
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