

INTERVIEWING

The first step you need to take in preparation for the interview process is to know yourself. Just as successful salespeople must know everything about the product they are selling, you must know your qualifications and be able to “sell” them to an interviewer. It is important to know what you have to offer. What are your skills, accomplishments, and goals? Interviews are not the time to simply tell what you’ve done, but to sell your skills and give examples of your accomplishments.

The best way to stand out is to conduct serious research on the company you are interviewing with.

You can gain an advantage during an interviewing by researching each company you plan to interview with. You should also use personal contacts, news publications, and other sources of information:

- Company websites
- [Glassdoor](#)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Library business and trade magazines
- Local newspapers

Asking questions is an important part of the interview process. Before the interview, compile a list of questions you plan to ask the employer. At the end of your interview, expect the interviewer to ask, “Do you have any questions for me?” Now it is your turn to “interview” the interviewer. It is your opportunity to show off your research and evaluate whether the position and organization have something to offer you. The questions you ask are just as critical as the responses you give.

INTERVIEWING TIPS

When preparing for an interview, take some time to practice your interviewing skills and gain feedback and coaching about your performance from a professional.

On the day of your interview you should plan to arrive 10 to 15 minutes before your scheduled interview time. Be sure to ask for accurate directions and take into consideration the distance you must travel to reach your destination, traffic you might encounter, parking, and even time zone changes if it’s a long trip.

Appropriate attire supports your image as a person who takes the interview process seriously. Even if employees of an organization dress casually on the job, you should dress up for the interview unless you are specifically told otherwise by the employer. All clothes should be neatly ironed.

Your clothing should be conservative and well fitted; it should not take center stage. You want to be remembered for your skills, not your clothing!

Avoid carrying a backpack or large purse to the interview, but bring a portfolio with copies of your resume, transcript, a note pad, pen, and a list of questions for the employer.

COMMONLY ASKED BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

The interviewer asks questions that are aimed at getting you to provide specific examples of how you have developed the required skill set for the job.

- Describe a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give an example of setting a goal and being able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Give a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Tell about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
- Tell about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Give an example of having to make a split-second decision.
- How do you typically deal with conflict? Give an example.
- Tell about a time you were able to successfully deal with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- Tell about a difficult decision you've made in the past year.

COMMONLY ASKED OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- Are you a team player?
- What motivates you?
- Why should I hire you?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would a friend or professor who knows you well describe you?
- What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
- Where do you want to be 10 years from now?
- Do you handle conflict well? 16. How do you determine or evaluate success?
- What major problem have you had to deal with recently?
- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
- Do you handle pressure well?
- Do you have a geographical preference?
- Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
- How much training do you think you'll need to become a productive employee?
- What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
- Describe your most rewarding college experience.
- What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?

GENERAL SAMPLES QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Can you describe a typical day?
- Is this a newly created position? If not, how long did the previous person hold it? Was the previous person promoted?
- How and when would my performance be evaluated?
- Where does this position fit into the company's organizational structure?

- What improvements need to be made on how the job has been done?
- Can you describe the company's culture?
- What do you see ahead for the company in the next five years?
- Does the organization support further education for its employees?
- When do you expect to make a hiring decision for this position?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Send a thank-you note as soon as possible after your interview. Either mail a handwritten letter on appropriate stationary within 48 hours or send an email within 24 hours. A sample thank-you letter is included on the website.

TIPS FOR PHONE AND VIDEO INTERVIEWING

While telephone interviews are still more common, video interviews are gaining popularity. Like phone interviews, video interviews are a simple cost- and time-effective way of interviewing over long distances.

Here are a few extra things to keep in mind: Well before the Interview-

- Download and register on the program you will be using. (Very often this will be Skype/Zoom or one of a few others.)
- Use an appropriate user name. Like your email address, it should be something professional.
- Test and check the hardware you will be using. Does your webcam and microphone work?
- Consider your background. This means no inappropriate or distracting items in view of the camera. Ask roommates or others to stay out of the room on interview day. Secure pets in another room. Consider using an on campus room in the library.
- Check room lighting to make sure you're easily visible in the camera
- Practice using the program (with an appropriate background etc.) with a friend to make sure everything is ready.
- If you're interviewing on a program like HireVue, you may not actually be talking to a person. HireVue uses text questions which you read and then are given an allotted time to respond. Know the time limit (usually three minutes) and practice keeping your answers to that length.
- Choose professional attire that will show up well on camera. Dark, subdued colors do better than light and bright ones.
- For the phone interview; energy and enthusiasm need to come across in your voice. Occasionally smile as you talk, as this will also come through in your voice. Talk slowly and clearly; avoid using a speaker.

INTERVIEWING ATTIRE

Appropriate attire for interviews and job fairs

These are general dress guidelines. Standards of dress may vary between industries and companies. Research the company culture for cues before an interview—and when in doubt, wear business professional attire.

Grooming

- Hair and facial hair should be neatly styled
- Nails should be clean
- No heavy cologne or perfume
- Natural style makeup

Attire

- Matching two-piece dark suit (navy, solid, or light stripes)
 - Skirt should be knee length and cut to cover your thighs when you sit.
- Conservative tie or bow tie (no flashy designs or colors)
- Dress shirt or blouse with a conservative neckline (mild or neutral color)
- All clothes ironed

Accessories

- Conservative accessories; no flashy designs or jewelry
- Padfolio, professional bag, or simple purse

Shoes

- Polished dress shoes, flats, or heels
- No sneakers or open-toed shoes
- Dark or neutral dress socks