

GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

Brought to you by your Career Services Office

Get to know your Career Advisor and to schedule a mock interview,
please contact the Career Services Office.

Comprehensive Guide to Preparing for an Interview

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Helpful Tips to Prepare for a Successful Interview

Dress for Success: Make sure you look professional for every interview; pay close attention to attire and hygienic factors. (See Dress for Success on page 5).

Give Employers Options to Contact you: Cell Phone and Email.

Date-Book/Planner: Make sure you are organized when you are job searching and interviewing. Write down the time/place of the interview and the name of the interviewer. Make sure you are on time for your interview.

Portfolio: Bring a few extra copies of your resume, references, letters of recommendation, salary history, lab reports, high-quality document samples from school/work projects, certificates, awards and transcripts.

Bring black pens to complete applications, if necessary.

Prepare driving directions to the company location for each interview, call ahead, or use an internet map service to obtain directions.

Self-Assessment

In order to successfully represent yourself in an interview, you need to complete a thorough self-assessment. This exercise will help you to document your attributes and career goals.

My strengths are:

My weaknesses are:

I enjoy:

My short term goals are:

My long term goals are:

Outlining Transferable Skills:

List your experience in each area:

Customer Service:

Technical:

Administrative:

Computer Applications:

60 Second Commercial

Prepare a concise yet descriptive answer to the inevitable introductory interview questions. Develop your own 60 Second Commercial using the following worksheet to identify your career goals, qualifications, key strengths and attributes. It is critical to address the aspects of your professional, academic and extra-curricular experiences that relate to the role for which you're interviewing. We also recommend addressing why you're interested in this particular job opportunity/industry/company in your answer.

Interviews often begin with the question: "Tell me about yourself." Your 60 Second Commercial is an ideal response to this question.

What is your long-term career goal? How would the job you're seeking now impact your ability to reach that goal?

What are your most relevant skills?

What are examples of experiences that have allowed you to utilize/hone those skills?

What are key attributes that differentiate you from other candidates?

What are examples of relevant jobs or experiences you've had?

How have those experiences prepared you for this role? How did those experiences impact your career direction?

Dress for Success

First impressions are critical. The desired overall goal should be a tailored, conservative, well-groomed look that does not draw too much attention, yet still flatters you. You want the interviewer to focus on your face, not clothing.

Get a good night's sleep. Someone who looks tired might convey a lack of energy and passion for the position.

Take a shower. It will help you look sharp, alert, and healthy. Shampoo your hair - one of the first things the manager will look at is your hair which makes a huge statement about your overall hygiene and cleanliness.

Brush your teeth. Get the manager to remember your ideas, skills and personality, not what you had for breakfast. Brush, floss, and use mouthwash.

Use deodorant and antiperspirant. The manager will think that you are as cool as a cucumber. Rub a little on your hands and you'll have a nice dry handshake too.

If necessary, use eye drops. Get the red out and your eyes will twinkle.

Trim your nails. Guys, long dirty nails are a turn-off that most hiring managers will notice when they reach to shake your hand. Ladies, managers won't be impressed if long nails might prevent you from completing the tasks associated with the job for which you are interviewing.

Hair styles. Choose a simple style that makes you look good. Get the manager to focus on your face, your expressions, and your eyes – not your hair style.

Avoid strong perfumes and or colognes. Many people are allergic to perfume/cologne. Don't leave a negative lasting memory!

Makeup. Less is better. The idea is to look professional so you'll be taken seriously.

Shave (for guys). A two-day stubble looks great on the weekend, but not in a job interview. Always shave before an interview.

Body piercing. One or two ear piercings are fine, while a half dozen or more become a distraction. Don't wear tongue jewelry or any facial piercings to a job interview, because it might be a distraction.

Avoid excessive jewelry. For men, a wristwatch and a ring are plenty. For women, a watch, a ring, a necklace, and a pair of earrings are enough.

Check your clothes. Make sure they fit properly and feel comfortable. Check for holes, tears, splits, stains, missing buttons, runs, frayed hems, worn cuffs, puckers, pulls, or wrinkles.

Wear clean, freshly-pressed clothes. Send your jacket and pants off to be dry-cleaned and pressed. Have your shirt or blouse laundered, starched, and pressed. Looking sharp shows respect for the manager and the job.

Smoking. Do NOT smoke the day of your interview.

What to Wear

For Men

- Dark business suit (dark blue, dark grey or black)
- Single or double-breasted is acceptable
- Dark or black leather shoes and dark socks
- A businesslike tie (not a skinny tie), with a subtle pattern

For Women

- A business suit, with slacks or skirt is acceptable (beige, dark grey, navy blue, black)
- Women have a little more freedom with color, but keep it simple.
- Hosiery or trouser socks to match suit or skin tone
- Conservative pumps - heels no higher than two inches

When Meeting your Interviewer(s)

- Give a firm handshake and smile.
- Relax, be confident, and be professional.
- Maintain good posture and eye contact.
- Answer each question thoroughly and relate it to the job for which you are interviewing.
- Ask questions related to the position and the company.
- Never ask about benefits and salary - let the interviewer introduce those subjects.
- At the end of the interview, thank the interviewer(s) for the opportunity and ask what the next step in the interview process will be.
- Ask for a business card to send a thank you letter.

Tips to Remember

- Turn off your cell phone. Do not let it be a distraction when interviewing.
- Do not chew gum. If you are a smoker, no smoking before the interview.
- Most importantly, approach every interview with confidence and enthusiasm!

Types of Interviews for Today's Job Seeker

Telephone Screening Interviews

- To screen candidates in today's economy, when recruiting budgets are tight, many employers turn to telephone interviews as an effective and affordable way to identify prospective hires.
- As employers increasingly rely on telephone interviews to screen candidates, students need to be prepared for that possibility.
- When phone interviewing candidates, employers can assess how quickly candidates think and respond. It is an opportunity to focus on the applicant's communications skills, and see if they are suited for a particular position in the company.
- **Phone Interviewing Tips**
 - Remember to sell yourself / sound enthusiastic.
 - Make sure you are interviewing in a quiet setting. Check with your career services office for an available interview room with a phone.
 - Have your materials in front of you (resume, pen, pad of paper, documentation about school and work projects).
 - Thank the interviewer(s) for the opportunity and ask about next steps in the interview process.
 - Smile – you'll sound more confident and enthusiastic when you speak!

Campus Recruiting Interviews

- Campus interviews may include an employer presentation and separate interviews with Human Resources and a Department Manager.
- The purpose of the interview is to screen applicants. The second round interview will often be conducted at the company.

Panel Interviews

- A panel interview entails at least two, but usually three or four people interviewing a candidate at the same time. Your objective is to make each member of the interview panel feel involved. You can accomplish this with eye contact and body language throughout the interview.

Series Interviews

- It is not unusual for a candidate to interview with several different people during the same day.
- In a series interview, you may interview with five or six interviewers in a row. Be prepared to answer many of the same questions repeatedly. The key is not to appear bored or frustrated by the repetition.
- This is a test of your composure, stamina and your professionalism as well as your ability to control your own stress levels.
- The interviewers meet after the interviews to discuss each candidate they interviewed.
- Remember preparation is the key to your success in any type of interview. Always be prepared to address common interview questions.

Technical Interviews

- Many technical questions are based on what you learn during the first two or three semesters in school. Employers want to know that you know the basic functions of the role. They are interested in how you arrived at your answer.
- Technical interviews may address your senior project. What is the project application? What type of equipment did you use? This could include both hardware and software.
- Technical review courses will assist with your interview preparation.

Typical Interview Questions:

- Why did you choose DeVry?
- Tell me about your biggest accomplishment in school.
- Have you ever had a conflict with a classmate or professor? How was it resolved?
- Tell me about the different equipment you have used in school and for which assignments you used them.
- Tell me about the software applications you have used and how you have used them.
- Describe your ideal job coming out of school.
- How has your education prepared you for your career?
- If I were to ask your professors to describe you, what would they say?

Behavior Based Interview

How Behavioral Interviews are different from Traditional Interviews:

- Behavioral interviews are designed to assess how you react in various situations.
- An example of a behavioral interview question is “Tell me about a situation when you had to deal with a difficult customer.”
- Behavioral interview questions may address both personal and technical situations.
- You may be asked about situations in which you were successful. You need to take the time to recall past experiences. Prepare your stories before your interview using the STAR approach – outlining the situation, task, action and result. Be prepared with several accomplishments and several challenges (that you’ve been able to overcome) for the interview.
- Recall situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially involving coursework, school projects, work experience, customer service, initiative, leadership, and teamwork. These answers should have positive outcomes.
- Be honest. Be detailed. Don’t embellish. The interviewer will be able to identify if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- Take your time in answering behavioral questions.
- You may also be asked about a situation in which you were not successful. Recall the experience and what you learned from it.
- Behavioral interviews can be tough, if you are not prepared.

Example Behavioral Questions:

- Tell me about a time when you had to plan an event/assignment, which required attention to detail and follow through to completion. You can use school or work as an example.
- Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a conflict between yourself and a fellow student/coworker. What was the outcome?
- Tell me about a time when you were working on a project and, as a member of the team, you had to solve a technical problem.
- Tell me about a time when you were faced with a significant work challenge, and how you overcame that challenge.
- Tell me about a time when your supervisor gave you constructive feedback on your work performance. How did you react and what was the result?
- Tell me about a time when you owned a project from inception to completion. Walk me through the stages.
- Tell me about a time when you volunteered to take on a leadership role.

Ethics of Interviewing

- Be honest about what you say when interviewing. Communicate facts.
- Take every interview opportunity that is available. After each interview, send a thank you letter. Remind the interviewer of how and why your skills will be an asset to the company.
- Once you have accepted a job offer, inform all other potential employers of your decision.
- Do not extend an acceptance date unless it is necessary.
 - Example: You interviewed with another company and have not heard back from the recruiter. You should follow up to find out if you are still being considered for employment and if so, find out when they will make their decision.
- Never extend an acceptance date more than once. You will give the employer the impression you are not really interested in the position, and they may withdraw their job offer.
- With a strong pool of candidates in today's job market, it is important to realize the employer is in the driver's seat.
- When going through the interview process, always be professional.

The Second Interview

There are two primary reasons for the second interview:

1. It allows the organization to make a more in-depth assessment of the candidate prior to making a job offer. The organization is confident that the candidate who is invited to visit for a second interview has the skills and intelligence to do the job. The follow-up interview becomes an opportunity to confirm that there is a good match between the candidate and the organization.
2. It allows the candidate an opportunity to see the organization and some of the employees first hand and make an informed decision, if an offer is made.

Dynamics of the Second Interview:

- The second interview is usually conducted at the company facility and requires the same kind of attention that you devoted to the initial interview.
- In most cases, you have less competition, but the other candidates are also a strong match.
- You may be interviewed by the hiring manager, department staff, and/or the recruiter.
- The interview can either involve one-on-one meetings or meetings with more than one person at a time.

Key Factors to Remember:

- Attend to your appearance.
- Brush up on your technical skills.
- Be prepared once again to sell yourself.
- Have solid knowledge of the company, industry and position.

Second Interview Wrap Up:

- You are told the recruiters will get in touch with you to let you know if you will receive a job offer.
- Send a thank you letter to reconfirm your interest in the position.

Questions to Ask an Employer

For Human Resources

- What type of training program/orientation does a new employee receive?
- What is the career growth for employees in similar positions, who perform above expectations?
- Why is this position open?
- What are the working hours for this position?
- How large is the department in which the opening exists?
- Does your company encourage its employees to continue their education?
- How often are performance reviews given to employees?
- What benefits are available to employees?
- May I have your business card?

For a Hiring Manager

- What are the major responsibilities of the job and department?
- What would a new employee be expected to have accomplished in the first six months on the job?
- What are some of the projects the department is currently working on?
- Is there occasional overtime?
- How much contact can I expect to have with management?
- What are the greatest strengths of this department?
- May I have your business card?