

# Interviewing Skills



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rf1EmgHPVsU&list=PLOdeaKKa\\_ZaiOP0Wf4pcw2-BYol6OmfFH&index=7&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rf1EmgHPVsU&list=PLOdeaKKa_ZaiOP0Wf4pcw2-BYol6OmfFH&index=7&t=0s)

# THE INVITATION TO INTERVIEW

- Try to arrange interview at a time that puts you at advantage:
  - First and last are most memorable
  - Morning is best
- Ask for the name of the interviewer
- Attempt to identify how much time is scheduled for the interview

**Be friendly, respectful, and professional when asking for this information**

# COMPANY SPECIFIC RESEARCH

- Research and identify as much as you can about the company
- Research better prepares you for interview, increases confidence, and provides greater advantage over other candidates
  - The target company
  - Department of the target job
  - Its leadership team, strategy, and current events
  - Products, competitors, and accomplishments

# COMPANY SPECIFIC RESEARCH

- Sources include:
  - Internet search, use O\*NET
  - Company website, brochures, materials
  - Industry journals
  - Interviews with employees and business leaders
- Share specific research information during the interview – **WHY?**
- Identify if the company is the right fit for you and your career goals

# THE INTERVIEW PORTFOLIO

- **Interview Portfolio:** small folder containing relevant documents that are taken to an interview
- Use a professional looking business portfolio
- Take original documents and copies
  - ALWAYS get originals back
- Keep on your lap throughout interview
- Place personal commercial on the top of your portfolio for easy access
  - Do not read, but glance for information if needed

# THE INTERVIEW PORTFOLIO

Include copies of:

- Awards
- Calendar
- Cover letter
- Letters of recommendation
- Note pad and pen
- Performance appraisals
- Personal business cards
- Personal commercial
- Reference list
- Résumé
- Transcripts
- Other relevant items pertaining to the job

# PRACTICE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Practice answering common interview questions – **See Handout**
- Practice projecting a professional image
- Avoid simply answering “yes” or “no”; instead, analyze responses
  - Support response with examples of skills and/or experience and sell your skills

**Practicing helps avoid nervous gestures**

# PRE-INTERVIEW PREPARATION

- Practice day
  - Travel to interview location (company)
  - Walk to specific location (do not go into office)
  - Note nearest public restroom
- Interview attire—clean and professional
- Customize interview portfolio
- Write a draft thank-you note



# INTERVIEW DAY

- Look in the mirror for professional appearance
- If you smoke, refrain from smoking prior to the interview
- Be on time
  - Arrive 15 minutes early, but only enter meeting location 5-10 minutes prior to interview
- Go to the restroom and freshen up
  - Check hair, clothing, makeup (if applicable)
  - Turn off phone, throw away gum

# INTERVIEW DAY

- Make every interaction positive
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist
- Take a seat and relax
- Avoid using mobile device
- Use positive self-talk
  - Mentally tell yourself you are prepared

From the minute you enter the building, assume your interview has begun

# INTERVIEW METHODS AND TYPE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- **One-on-one interviews:** involve meeting between applicant and a company representative
- **Group interviews:** involve several applicants interviewing with each other while being observed by company reps
- **Panel interviews:** involve applicant meeting with several company employees at the same time

# TRADITIONAL FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

- Applicant and employer
  - Communicate confidence
  - Identify how knowledge, skills, and abilities are an asset to the company
  - Stand up straight, smile, shake hands, and introduce yourself
  - Listen carefully to the interviewer's name and use it during the interview
  - Sit only after being invited to sit
  - Do not answer your phone if it rings, turn it off and apologize

# TRADITIONAL FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

- Body language
  - Pay attention to yours and interviewer's
  - Sit up straight, sit back in chair, and relax
  - Be calm but alert
  - Keep hands folded on lap or ready to take notes
  - Do not lean on furniture
  - Make eye contact, but don't stare
- If given the opportunity, share your 60 second commercial

# TRADITIONAL FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

## When Asked a Question

- Listen carefully – be sure to answer THE question asked
- Take a few seconds to formulate an answer
- Relate answers to job qualifications and how you can assist the company
- Keep answers brief, but complete
- Sell skills with examples
- Interject information about company

# INTERVIEW METHODS AND TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- **Structured interview questions:** address job-related issues where each applicant is asked the same question(s)
- **Unstructured interview questions:** a probing, open-ended question designed to identify if candidate can appropriately sell his/her skills
- **Behavioral interview questions:** designed for candidates to share a past work experience to demonstrate qualifications

# DISCRIMINATION AND EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

- Discriminatory questions are illegal
  - NON Job related
- If asked illegal or discriminatory questions:
  - Do not directly answer question
  - Address the issue
  - Protect your rights
  - It is inappropriate to disclose personal information
- Avoid making comments referring to:
  - Marital status, children, religion, age, or other area of protected rights



# SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND TOUGH QUESTIONS

- Be honest and factual
  - Do not go into details
  - State the facts
  - Tell interviewer that you have matured and realized that you did not handle the situation appropriately
  - Do not speak poorly of current/previous employer, boss, or coworker
  - Do not place blame on who was right or wrong

# PHONE AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY-BASED INTERVIEWS

- First interview may take place over the phone
  - May or may not be prearranged
- Consistently answer phone professionally, keeping interview portfolio accessible
- Try to be as accommodating as possible
- During a phone interview:
  - Be professional and prepared
  - Be concise with communication
  - Be polite

# PHONE AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY-BASED INTERVIEWS

- Video chat interviews are common
  - Designated time for connecting
  - Follow the phone interview tips
  - Prepare and treat as if a face-to-face interview
    - Plan ahead: venue, equipment
    - Dress professionally; it is visual
    - Maintain a professional environment: quiet and appropriate location
    - Speak to the camera; make eye contact

# CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- At close of interview, you may be asked if you have any questions – **ASK AT LEAST 1!**
- Have 2 questions prepared
  - Current event about the company
  - Next steps
  - Additional training

**Do not ask questions regarding salary, benefits, or vacations during an initial interview**

# CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Restate / State 60 Second Commercial
- Secure a business card
- Shake hands - Thank them for their time
- Communicate confidence, friendliness, and professionalism - Make a positive last impression
- Immediately after leaving the interview, complete the thank-you note and mail it

# SALARY NEGOTIATION

- If you are offered a second interview or job offer:
  - Contact references to prepare for reference checks
  - Know your salary requirements
    - Conduct and compare research to job posting
    - Start higher than your desired starting salary
      - You can always negotiate lower
      - Consider experience and/or lack of experience
  - If offered unacceptable salary, be prepared to negotiate, time to think about it, or decline the job offer

# PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTS, SCREENINGS, AND MEDICAL EXAMS

- Common types of screenings:
  - Criminal checks
  - Education verification
  - Driver's license history
  - Security checks
  - Employment checks
  - Credit checks
  - Reference checks
  - Drug testing

Must be  
job  
related

# PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTS, SCREENINGS, AND MEDICAL EXAMS

- Medical exams:
  - Legally, employers can require medical exams only after a job offer is made and the offer is usually depend on passing the exam
  - Exam must be job-related and required for all applicants for same job
  - Common exams include: vision, strength testing, pre-employment drug tests



# WHEN YOU'RE NOT OFFERED AN INTERVIEW

- Do not be discouraged
- Evaluate résumé and cover letter
  - Typographical or grammatical errors
  - Listed important skills that reflect needs of job
  - Have someone review cover letter and résumé
- Make every experience a learning experience

# WHEN YOU'RE NOT OFFERED A SECOND INTERVIEW OR THE JOB

- Review each step in interview process and assess yourself
  - Pre-interview preparation
  - Interview day appearance
  - Interview answers
  - Ability to interject company research into answers
  - Body language and attitude
- Maintain a good attitude
- Practice

# Questions OR Comments

