



# Interviewing: Dos and Don'ts

Kent State University  
Career Exploration and Development

## Tales From the Interview Room

- **Fell asleep, woke up & apologized because he had been out all night.**
- **Showed up for the final interview on the wrong day – twice!**
- **Wore a baseball cap because he was having “a bad hair day.”**
- **Removed her shoes, pulled out debris, and handed it to the recruiter.**
- **Brought his mother to the interview.**
- **Used his tablet to check stocks and e-mail friends during the interview.**
- **Tried to bribe the recruiter with basketball tickets.**



# Types of Interviews

## Common Types of Interviews:

- **Preliminary or Screening Interview**
- **Follow Up Interview or Second/Third Interview**
- **Behavioral Interview**
- **Telephone Interview**

## Additional Types of Interviews:

- **Graduate School Admissions**



## On the Horizon

- **A new trend is interviewing on Skype. It saves time and money for organizations.**
- **Skype allows employers and potential employees to conduct an interview via webcams. ([Skype](#))**



# General Rules For Interviewing

- **Be prepared!**
  - Know yourself.
  - Know the employer/industry/graduate school.
- **Before the interview:**
  - Confirm interview time, place & with whom (map route).
  - Bring resume & other relevant materials.
  - Be well groomed, dress neatly and appropriately.
  - Arrive early.



# General Rules For Interviewing

- **During the Interview:**
  - Be confident and enthusiastic.
  - Relax – an interview is a conversation.
  - Listen – follow the lead of the interviewer.
  - Ask intelligent questions.
  - Clarify follow-up procedures.
- **After the Interview:**
  - Send a thank you letter (within 24 hours is best).
  - Keep records.





# The Importance of Non-Verbal Behavior

- **Nonverbal cues are 50% of the interview:**
- **Non-verbal behavior observed by the employer often reflects level of confidence, interest, and ability of the person.**
- **Non-verbal behavior can be viewed as being both positive and negative.**
  - **Examples of positive non-verbal behavior include:** Leaning forward, sitting with hands, feet, and arms unfolded, smiling appropriately, firm handshake, good eye contact.
  - **Examples of negative non-verbal behavior include:** Inappropriate facial expression or lack of expression, a weak and ineffectual handshake, lack of eye contact, squirming in the seat or sitting on the edge of the chair, frowning.



# A Sampling of Interview Questions... ...And How to Respond

- **Tell me about yourself.**
  - Reveals what is important to you and how you view yourself.
  - Try to include qualifications for the position.
  - Don't ramble...know how to end your response (1-2 minutes).
- **What is your weakness?**
  - Everybody has a weakness.
  - Pick a weakness not directly related to any key responsibilities.
  - Turn response into a positive...working to improve weakness.
  - Answer is short and to the point.





# A Sampling of Interview Questions... ...And How to Respond

- **What are your strengths?**
- **How do you work under pressure?**
- **What 2 or 3 things are most important to you in your job?**
  - Back up your responses with examples.
  - Tailor your responses as much as possible to the position.
- **Why should I hire you?**
  - Summarize response effectively...pull together major strengths – **SELL YOURSELF!**
  - Tailor response to position and company – why should this particular company be interested in you?
  - Know how to end response...don't ramble.



# Employer Survey

## We asked employers...

### What is your favorite challenging question to ask candidates?

- What is the toughest personal challenge you have had to overcome?
- What makes you different from everybody else?
- What's the most valuable lesson you've learned so far?
- What's the biggest mistake you ever made and what did it cost?
- Who is your personal hero?
- What else would you like for me to know about you?
- Write a poem.



# Behavior Based Questions

**“Tell me a situation when you had to...”**

- **Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.**
- **Develop and rehearse your responses.**
- **“Tell a story” explaining the problem, your approach and the results.**
  - **Use the STAR approach:**
    - **S: Situation, T: Task, A: Action, R: Result.**
  - **Incorporate skills and personal attributes into responses.**



# Behavior Based Questions Examples

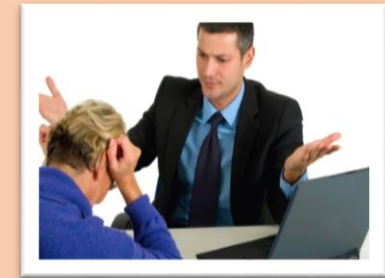
- **“Give me an example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.”**
- **“Tell me about a time when you failed and what happened.”**
- **“By examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations, and environments.”**
- **“Tell me about a time when you had to work with a client that you didn’t like and what happened.”**
  - **Be prepared for questions asking for more detail than you’ve already given.**
  - **Evaluate your background to identify your skills/experience related to the job.**
  - **Identify 3-5 top selling points – attributes that set you apart – and be sure you point them out during the interview.**



# INAPPROPRIATE Questions

- Pre-employment questions should focus on functions of the position
- Pre-employment inquiries about the following are generally not acceptable:

- Age
- Arrest record (an arrest is not a conviction of guilt)
- Children/Pregnancy (or future child-bearing plans)
- Citizenship/Home Country
- Religion
- Medical history, illnesses, diseases, physical, mental impairment
  - Americans with Disability Act
- Marital status and spouse's job
- Race, Color, National Origin



## Questions To Ask The Interviewer

- **You are interviewing the organization just as much as they are interviewing you! *Always* have questions to ask the employer.**



# Questions to Ask the interviewer that demonstrate engagement

- **How will I receive feedback about my performance, and how often?**
- **How did this position become available?**
- **How is the orientation and training structured/How much training?**
- **What are some of the biggest challenges the organization faces?**
- **What are you looking for in a candidate?**
- **What do you like about working here?**
- **What would be expected of me in the first 90 days on the job?**
- **What is the next step in the selection process?**





# Questions to ask the interviewer that buy time

- **Need to catch your breathe or need a second to think? Before you get flustered, ask a question that gives you some time to explore your next answer.**
- **“To be sure that I understand you, would you mind telling me more about that?” or “I want to make sure that we are on the same page, could you elaborate further?”**
- **Or you can take a drink of your water.**



# Questions to ask the Interviewer To determine next step

- **“Will there be follow-up interviews?” “I am very interested in this position, can we schedule the next interview now?”**
- **Always express your interest and ask for the job!**
- **Your questions throughout the interview should communicate competency, commitment, and enthusiasm.**

**A good interview should feel like a conversation between colleagues with similar interests.**



# Common Reasons For Applicant Rejection



- **Poor appearance**
- **Poor voice, diction, grammar**
- **Little enthusiasm, passive, indifferent**
- **Evades, hedges unfavorable factors**
- **Late for interview, disrespectful**
- **Talks too much, rambles**
- **Unable to handle silence**
- **Negative attitude**
- **Lack of extracurricular involvement**
- **Couldn't sell him/herself to the employer**



# Common Reasons For Applicant Rejection



- **Overbearing, aggressive**
- **Lack of purpose, career goals**
- **Unwilling to start at the bottom**
- **Lack of courtesy, proper etiquette**
- **Poor eye contact, extreme nervousness**
- **Lack of poise, lack of confidence**
- **Condemnation of previous employer**
- **Lack of leadership skills**
- **Didn't ask for the job**
- **Talked about salary**



# Interview Apparel

- **Dark suits, properly fitted**
- **Dark dress shoes, polished**
- **Long, dark dress socks**
- **Conservative neck tie**
- **Dress watch**
- **Well-groomed facial hair**
- **No long hair or side burns**
- **Nails – trim and clean**
- **Skirt length no more than one inch above the knee**
- **Polished matching dress shoes w/ moderate heel (no open toe)**
- **Neutral colored hosiery**
- **Hair past shoulder length pulled away from face**
- **Minimal, conservative jewelry**
- **Natural looking make-up**



# Interview Apparel

- **No visible tattoos**
- **No heavy cologne/perfume**
- **No visible body piercing**
- **No purple, green, orange, etc. colored hair**
- **Fresh breath**
- **Freshly bathed/showered (use deodorant)**
- **Freshly pressed clothing**



# Attire Example





# Practice Interviewing

- 1. Interview Stream

Using a webcam, practice your interviewing skills online.

- 2. Mock Interview

Schedule an in-person, mock interview with a career advisor and receive constructive feedback. A polished resume and interview attire are required.

- 3. Um Counter

Actively listen for and eliminate filler words like “um”, “like”, “so” and “you know” from your sentences by using the Um Counter app.

Practice makes you feel more confident!

INTERVIEW **STREAM**



# And if all else fails... strike a Pose

## Nervous about that upcoming job interview? Try a Two-Minute Power Pose

Seriously, the Superman pose.

You know, feet apart, standing tall, hands on your hips, gazing upward.

A study by Harvard psychologist and researcher Amy Cuddy, found that power posing decreased cortisol (the stress hormone) by about 25 percent. It also increased testosterone (the hormone linked to power and dominance) by 19 percent.



The report noted that power posing works equally well for both men and women, and it could be especially helpful for those who are introverts, shy, or a bit nervous.

So before you head into the hiring manager's office, visit the restroom and lock yourself into a stall. Then, strike your pose. Hold it for two full minutes. You could walk out feeling like you can save the world.

Read more at <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/6461.html>

Harry Dahlstrom, *The Job Hunting Handbook*



**When in doubt...go conservative**



**Stand out for the right reasons!**





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**Hours: 8-5 M-F**

**Drop-ins**

**11:00am-12:30pm &  
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