

## MAKE YOUR CAREER EPIC!

**Explore** career paths and learn about yourself.

**Prepare** to market yourself in your field.

**Implement** your plan through internships, volunteer work, and other field experiences.

**Career Launch!**

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# INTERVIEW SKILLS GUIDEBOOK

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# Introduction

## **You've got the interview – congratulations!**

**Are you the right fit for the organization?** When an employer determines (after reviewing a resume and cover letter) that a candidate has the skills to succeed at a job, he or she will be invited to interview with one or more members of that organization. During the interview, the employer will assess if a candidate will fit well into their organization. Fit is determined by interpersonal skills, enthusiasm and general presentation.

**What employers are looking for:** Employers are looking for tangible and non-tangible criteria. Technical and industry knowledge, work experience, accomplishments, leadership experience and activities are all tangible. Non-tangible criteria are otherwise known as “soft skills” and include communication skills (verbal and non-verbal), self-confidence and enthusiasm.

**Interviewing is a two-way process:** Not only do you have to sell yourself to the employer; the interview is an opportunity for you to find out if you would like to work for that organization. During the interview process, take the time to observe employees and how they act. Does the environment match your personality? Can you see yourself working there? The employer will ask you questions to determine if you are qualified for the position. Be sure to ask the employer questions that will help you to make a decision when it is time to accept or decline a job offer.

**Prepare:** It is essential to do research and learn about the organization as well as the industry for which you will be interviewing. Demonstrating that you have taken the time to do this will indicate to the employer that you are enthusiastic and hard working.

**The guidelines in this book will help prepare you for a successful interview.**

**For additional support, attend an Interview Skills workshop, use mock interview tools and make an individual appointment with a Career Coach in Career and Professional Development.**



# Types of Interviews

There are many types of interviews. When you are invited to interview with an employer it is acceptable to ask for an interview schedule and who you will be interviewing with. You may ask if you will be meeting interviewers individually or in a group setting. This information will help you prepare for the interview.

**Phone Interviews** are widely used as screening interviews and can be difficult if not prepared for. *See phone interview guidelines on page 15.*

**Video Interviews** are becoming more popular for first-round or distance interviews. Video allows for a richer interaction when interviewing applicants, but it also requires that candidates have access to a webcam and video conferencing facilities. Skype and similar services are used to conduct video interviews.

**Structured Interviews** are most common. The interviewer will ask questions based on your resume and other commonly asked questions.

**Behavioral Interviews** have been developed based on the premise that past behavior is a predictor of future behavior. The interviewer will ask questions that examine past experiences. Behavioral questions usually start with: *Tell me about a time... Describe a situation...or Give me an example of...*

**Non-Directive Interviews** are unstructured and seem more like a conversation. The interviewer will ask open-ended questions and expect the candidate to do most of the talking. They may begin with: *Tell me about yourself.*

**Panel Interviews** are conducted by 2 or more interviewers. It is helpful to know who the members of the group are and what departments of the organization they represent when preparing for your interview. While you will be focusing on the person who is asking the question, pay attention to *all* members of the group (through eye contact) when answering questions.

**Group Interviews** are where multiple candidates are assembled to perform an exercise. Often, this is a case study or hypothetical scenario to analyze. However, group interviews have also centered around team presentations, competitive Q&A, and even Lego building. These interviews are designed to evaluate how you work in a team and/or competitive situation. You will be observed and evaluated during the exercise and then interviewed about your experience (either one-on-one or in the group environment). You will usually be asked about the group's overall experience, your role, and your teammates' contributions.

**Case Interviews** are common when interviewing for business consulting positions. They are a unique type of job interview question designed to test a candidate's problem solving and analytical ability. This type of interview is commonly used in the consulting industry and increasingly in banking and sales/marketing industries. Questions are usually hypothetical situations and can be ambiguous in nature. It is up to the candidate to retrieve the pertinent information from the question, to probe the interviewer for more details and to make appropriate assumptions. The purpose of the question is to test the applicant ability to logically, systematically and persuasively address the issues of the case and develop a solution. There is no right or wrong answer; the interviewer is looking for critical thinking skills and your ability to analyze a problem and formulate a solution in a logical way.

An **Informational Interview** is a method used to gather information about a career or job area that can help you make an informed and satisfying decision. It involves talking to an experienced professional who can give you practical answers to any questions you may have. Most people enjoy talking about their jobs and experiences. Remember, it is not a job interview.



# Preparing for Your Interview

The areas to focus on when preparing for your interview include: knowing yourself, researching the employer, practicing answering questions, and dressing professionally.



## Know Yourself

In order for you to convince an employer that you are the ideal candidate for a job, you must think about your strengths, weaknesses and past experiences so you can communicate your abilities concisely and effectively. Knowing yourself and your resume will allow you to tell the interviewer how your skills and experiences match an organization’s needs and position requirements.

One of the most commonly asked question is **“Tell me about yourself.”** You will need to prepare a brief introduction (30 seconds to 1 minute) that gives a synopsis related to your career goals. A great answer will address the following:

**What are your primary selling points for this job?** This could be number of years of experience in a particular industry or area of specialization. You might also highlight special training, an internship and technical skills here. Focus on the qualifications in the job description and how you meet and exceed the requirements.

**Why are you interested in this position right now?** You can wrap up your answer by indicating why you are looking for a new challenge and why you feel this role is the best next step.

**Write your introduction:**

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**Think about your strengths, weaknesses, skills and values.** Be prepared to identify each with brief examples of how you have demonstrated those qualities. If you are asked to describe a weakness, always turn the weakness into a positive statement by explaining how you have or are working on improving in that area. Do not describe a weakness that will disqualify you from the position (disorganized or poor time management skills). See page 9 for more details.

**List your top three skills/personal qualities:**

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**Give examples of how you demonstrated each skill or personal quality:**

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**List one weakness and describe how you overcame it or plan to overcome it in the future:**

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**Reflect on your activities and accomplishments.** Identify how your accomplishments connect to the position by articulating the skills you used to be successful in the past. Review your resume in order to think about your accomplishments and activities. Do not include anything on your resume you are not prepared to talk about during your interview.



# Know the Employer and Industry

Researching a potential employer and knowing the industry is a crucial step in the interview process. Interviewers commonly ask: “Why are you interested in working for us?” In order to be a strong candidate for the position, you must have current information about the organization and industry. Researching the employer will also help you to make a better decision when accepting or declining a job offer.

## Start your research using:

- Company Website
- LinkedIn & Social Media Pages
- Google News Alerts
- Glassdoor (company reviews & culture)

## Use the checklist below to help you gather information.

- Size of organization
- Nature of products and/or services offered (Do they consult or manufacture?)
- Target market (Are their clients other businesses or consumers?)
- General company history
- Competition (Who are leaders in their industry?)
- Specific information about various departments
- Company environment and culture
- Recent news about the company: including mergers, re-sizing, global expansion (Check Google.)
- Information from the company prospectus or annual report (Are they private, public, profitable?)
- Nature of the advertised position
- Typical salary ranges and benefit packages

It is important to know the location of your interview and the time it will take you to get there. Google the driving directions, check mass transportation schedules and/or do a test-drive to the location prior to the day of your interview.



# Practice Communication Skills

When preparing for the interview it is important to practice your communication skills. Get comfortable with *you* as the main topic! This may be difficult for some who are shy or uncomfortable talking about themselves. Giving examples of your accomplishments and experience is not boasting.

## **NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

- ✓ Pay attention to your non-verbal communication, posture, facial expressions, eye contact and physical mannerisms.
- ✓ Your body language will convey confidence or lack of it and will contribute to the impression you make on the interviewer.
- ✓ Your handshake should be firm.
- ✓ Sit up straight in your chair and place your hands comfortably on your lap or on the arms of your chair.
- ✓ It is okay to use limited hand gestures to emphasize a point, but do not “talk with your hands.”
- ✓ Practice eye contact. Look your interviewer in the eye, or if that is uncomfortable for you, look at his or her forehead. It is okay to look away if you are contemplating an answer for a very brief moment.
- ✓ Smile. This allows employers to feel at ease and sets the tone for a more comfortable interview.

## **VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

- ✓ Use correct grammar and avoid using filler phrases, such as: um, you know, and like.
- ✓ Practice answering questions with emphasis and enthusiasm.
- ✓ Emphasize the positive; avoid negative statements. This is especially true when asked about previous employers.





## ANSWERING QUESTIONS

Begin to practice answering questions by anticipating what questions an interviewer may ask. Always give concise examples when answering questions. Follow a format, but try not to sound too mechanical. Incorporate your answers into your conversation with the interviewer.

An effective method to use when answering questions is **STAR**.

<b>SITUATION/TASK</b>	Describe a situation or a task you needed to accomplish
<b>ACTION</b>	Describe the action you took and the obstacles you overcame
<b>RESULTS</b>	Tell how the situation or task ended – what you accomplished, what you learned, and/or the goal you achieved – give quantitative answers whenever possible.

### Example of the STAR Method:

<b>Question:</b>	Tell me about a time you took a leadership role.
<b>Situation / Task:</b>	During the spring semester, I was required to complete a group project in my Marketing class. Our group consisted of 5 students and our project was to create a marketing plan for a new product. We scheduled dates and times to meet, but we never seemed to accomplish anything and the deadline for the project was fast approaching.
<b>Action:</b>	I took a leadership role and came up with an outline with all of the tasks we would have to complete for the project. After the tasks were listed, I organized everyone's efforts and each member was assigned a task with a deadline date. At our next meeting all of the tasks were completed and we were able to pull all of the pieces together to complete the project.
<b>Result:</b>	Our project was completed in time and we all received an A.

## COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Tell me about yourself.** Make a brief statement about your education and professional background, why you are interested in the position and how you are qualified for it.

**Why did you choose this major/career?** Tell the interviewer when you first became interested in the field and who or what influenced you.

**What courses/subjects did you like best or least?** Talk about the courses that relate to the position you are interviewing for and/or courses in which you performed best. Be specific.

**What are your short and long term career goals?** Insure that your short and long term goals are related to the position you are interviewing for.

**What are your strengths?** Pick two to three that relate to the position and give examples.

**What do you consider your greatest weakness?** Choose a weakness not related to the position, but indicate what you do to overcome it. Avoid personal weaknesses by focusing more on a technical skill or area of knowledge. You could also discuss a negative which the interviewer already knows or one which you have clearly improved upon and was a former weakness.

**Why should we hire you?** Use this question to stress your strengths or a unique accomplishment. Be specific and give brief examples.

**Why do you want to work for our company?** Demonstrate your knowledge of the organization based on your prior research. Include how you can be an asset to the company.

**What do you do in your free time?** Talk about a hobby, sport or special interest. Highlight activities where you were in a leadership position.

**Why are you leaving your current job?** Be sure not to make any negative statements about your current employer, regardless of your situation. Instead, focus on discussing why you are pursuing the opportunity at hand.

## EXAMPLE BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

(Answer all of these questions using the **STAR** method)

- Give an example of a situation in which you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Give an example of a time when you took on a leadership role
- Give an example of a time when you handled multiple tasks at the same time.
- Describe a situation where you had to coordinate the activities of other people.
- Tell me about a time when you had to persuade someone or a group to implement your idea.
- Give an example of a goal you set and how you achieved it.

## ASKING QUESTIONS

Interviewers will always end the interview by asking you what questions you may have. It is important for you to have prepared at least 3 questions to ask the interviewer. You may choose from the list below, but should also ask at least one question based on the research you did, or topics discussed during the interview. **Never ask salary or benefit questions unless the employer brings up the topic.** Discuss this only after you have been offered a position.

- *What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?*
- *Can you describe the career path of a person in this position?*
- *Will I be working independently or as a part of a team?*
- *How would you describe the work environment?*
- *Could you describe a typical day for someone in this position?*
- *How and when will my performance be evaluated?*
- *What are the next steps in this interview/hiring process? OR When will I hear back from you?*

## ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

Employers may not ask questions about:

- ✓ Age (You may be asked if you are over 18, but do not have to divulge exact age)
- ✓ Marital Status
- ✓ Religious Background or Affiliation
- ✓ Ethnic Origin/Race
- ✓ Sexual Preference
- ✓ Disability/Special Working Conditions
- ✓ Arrest Record (You may be asked if you have been convicted of a crime, but not arrested)

The following questions are illegal:

- *Are you married?*
- *What church or synagogue are you a member of?*
- *What country were you born in?*
- *Do you have any health problems?*
- *What is your sexual orientation?*

Responding to these questions may feel awkward. Answer if you wish, but provide context and be clear that it should not affect your candidacy. If asked, try to re-direct the question in a positive way by re-emphasizing your skills and qualifications, or politely decline to answer.



## IMAGE TIPS - Polished & Professional

Dress more formally than the company dress code - usually a business suit or as close as you can get.

### **BUSINESS SUIT OR DRESS**

A pantsuit, skirt suit, or dress with blazer is always appropriate. Wear conservative colors – grey, black, navy, or pinstripe only. If you wear a dress or skirt, make sure the hemline is knee-length or lower with no high slit.

### **TOP**

Wear a long-sleeved button down shirt or a business-like blouse that looks neat under your suit. White or pastels are preferred. Make sure that your top is freshly cleaned and pressed, and has a conservative neckline.

### **SHOES**

Dress shoes (laced, buckled, or slip-on), pumps, wedges, or conservative flats are preferred. Your shoes should be a conservative color – black, brown, and navy are safe – and coordinate with the rest of your outfit. Avoid shoes with open toes or very high heels, and be sure that you can walk and stand comfortably in them. Make sure your shoes are clean, polished, and in good repair.

### **SOCKS AND HOSIERY**

If you are wearing a skirt or dress, hose are recommended to complete your look. Neutral colors are always safe, but hose that blends with the hemline is also acceptable. No texture, patterns, or opaque. If you are wearing a pantsuit and men's dress shoes, wear solid-colored socks that match your shoes, and wear them high enough to cover your calf.

### **ACCESSORIES**

Always wear tie, in a conservative stripe or small pattern, with a masculine pantsuit. You might also choose a good leather belt that matches your shoes, or suspenders, but not both. Limit all jewelry for a simple, styled look. You might choose to a conservative watch, one or two rings, a small necklace, and/or simple earrings (no dangling earrings or hoops) based on what you normally wear. Limit or avoid visible body piercings, depending on your field.

Carry a professional looking briefcase, handbag, and/or portfolio that contains extra copies of your resume, a notepad, and pen. If you smoke, do not have cigarettes visible in your briefcase or pocketbook.

### **GROOMING**

Make sure that your hair is neat, clean, and out of your face. Your fingernails should be clean, and manicured if desired. Nail polish is fine as long as it is conservative. If you wear facial hair, keep it close-trimmed or clean-shaven for the interview. If you wear makeup, keep it natural and conservative. Avoid perfume, colognes, and lotions with strong smells. Do not smoke for at least one hour before the interview. Avoid strong-smelling foods, and freshen your breath before the interview. Make sure that your outfit is spotless and wrinkle-free.



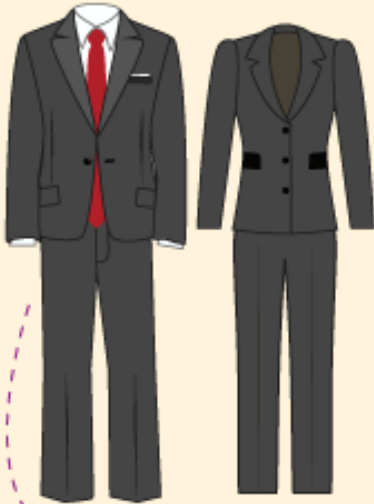
# Assemble Your Outfit

## Dress for Success!

A GUIDE ON HOW TO DRESS FOR YOUR NEXT JOB INTERVIEW

### Business Professional

JOB INTERVIEWING ATTIRE



#### CLOTHES SHOULD BE:

- SOLID, DARK OR NEUTRAL COLORS
- LIGHT COLORS CAN BE WORN UNDERNEATH
- NO STRIPES OR BRIGHT PRINTS/COLORS

#### SHOES SHOULD BE:

- CLOSED-TOE HEEL OR DRESS SHOES

**SUIT JACKET & PANTS/SKIRT** SHOULD BE MATCHING COLORS

#### PERSONAL ITEMS & CELL PHONES

Keep cellphones turned off and out of sight with personal items



Carry a portfolio, professional bag or simple purse

**BRING ESSENTIALS ONLY!**

## Business Casual

DAILY WORK ATTIRE

#### BUSINESS CASUAL COLORS & STYLES

- NICE PANTS/SLACKS
- DRESSES
- NO JEANS, SHORTS, SUNDRESSES OR ATHLETIC WEAR



#### SKIRTS & DRESSES

should be knee length when standing and thighs covered while seated

#### TIES

OPTIONAL



#### JACKETS & SHOES

Blazers & cardigans with flats, boots, closed-toe shoes, or comfortable shoes for walking in



## General Recommendations

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FIRST IMPRESSION

#### CLOTHES SHOULD BE:

- TAILORED
- IN GOOD CONDITION
- WRINKLE & LINT FREE



#### HAIR

Well groomed hairstyle



#### NAILS & MAKEUP

Natural in style



#### JEWELRY & FRAGRANCE

Wear moderate jewelry with mild fragrance



#### PIERCINGS & TATTOOS

Align to company culture or standards



**NEAT & CLEAN**  
DRESS SHOES



Belts should match the color of your shoes and attire.

Infographic courtesy of Stetson University.



# During the Interview



## On-Site Interviews

### ARRIVAL

Be on time for every interview by arriving at least 10-15 minutes early. Be considerate and polite to everyone you meet along the way. You never know who will provide input for a hiring decision. The person you meet in the elevator may be your interviewer! Remember the following tips:

- ✓ Turn off your cell phone
- ✓ Remember to discard chewing gum
- ✓ Do not smoke right before your interview
- ✓ Bring along a professional briefcase or portfolio with several copies of your resume, a reference sheet with three to five professional and/or academic references with their contact information and a list of your prepared questions to ask the employer

### INTRODUCTIONS / SMALL TALK

First impressions count! Be aware of your body language as you are introduced to your interviewer. Your interviewer may start the conversation with talk about the weather or other small talk. Always respond in a positive way:

- ✓ Greet the receptionist/administrative assistant and your interviewer(s) with direct eye contact, an enthusiastic smile and firm handshake
- ✓ Wait until your interviewer sits or invites you to sit before you do so
- ✓ Be sure to pay attention to names as you are introduced to your interviewer and others

### INFORMATION EXCHANGE

This is the part of the interview you have prepared for! Prove you are the best candidate for the job by highlighting your skills, accomplishments and objectives that relate to the position. Provide specific, concise examples whenever possible.

### ENDING THE INTERVIEW

As you wrap up your interview, always ask what the next step in the hiring process will be. You can also ask when you should expect to hear back from the interviewer. Be sure to thank the interviewer, express your interest in the position and get a business card for each person with whom you interviewed.



# Case Interviews

## TYPES OF CASE QUESTIONS

Case interviews take a lot of time and preparation to master - practice makes all of the difference when it comes to answering these questions. Below are the different types of questions that may be asked as well as tips on how to answer questions.

- **Brainteaser** – Tests your creativity and ability to think out of the box.  
*Sample question:* How many streetlights are in NYC?
- **Market Sizing** – Tests your quantitative skills and ingenuity.  
*Sample Question:* What is the market for laptops likely to be in 10 years?
- **Business Operations** – Tests your basic business knowledge and ability to identify main issues.  
*Sample Question:* A bank discovers that its customer turnover is 25% higher than its competitors. Why?
- **Business Strategy** – Tests your analytical ability and strategic thinking.  
*Sample Question:* A sock manufacturer wants to start exporting to Germany; should it?

## A GUIDE TO ANSWERING ANY CASE QUESTION

Even if you are stumped by a question, this guide will give you a great starting point from which to frame your answer.

**Summarize the Question** – This is a simple first step, but one that shows the interviewer you listened to the question. It allows you to hear the information again, and prevents you from answering the wrong question.

**Verify the Objectives** – Even if they seem obvious, there may be underlying objectives. Ask, “Are there any other objectives besides \_\_\_\_\_ that I should know about?”

**Ask clarifying questions** – This shows the interviewer you feel comfortable asking questions, while turning the case into a conversation. Depending on the case, you might ask questions about:

- The company (public/private?)
- The industry/life cycle
- Competition (major players/market share)
- Entry/exit barriers
- Financial statements
- Management team

**Lay out Your Structure** – Take a moment to think about the structure and organization of your answer. Write it down! Consultants love visuals – whether you use decision trees, charts, or simple lists.

## HOW TO PREPARE

There are certain statistics that you should be familiar with that can help you solve cases:

- Population of the World: 7.37 billion
- Population of the U.S.: 325 million
- Number of Households in the U.S.: 126 million
- Number of Cars per Household: 2.1
- Average Household Size: 2.6

*(Statistics found at: U.S. Census Bureau & Bureau of Labor & Statistics & United States Department of Transportation)*

## GENERAL TIPS

**Understand the Question** – Demonstrate strong listening skills by actively listening to the question and taking notes. Verbally summarize the questions and verify the objective.

**Think Logically** – Determine what additional information you need and what key issues or high-impact areas need addressing. Show good business and common sense.

**Ask Questions** – Ask thoughtful/clarifying questions to probe for additional information needed to analyze the problem, develop assumptions and determine a solution(s). The questions asked should show “Big-picture” thinking. Start with basic questions to gain information about the company, industry, competition, external market, etc. As you progress switch from open-ended questions to close-ended questions. Asking too many open-ended questions may appear as though you are soliciting the answer from the interviewer. When asking questions, imagine the interviewer is your client.

**Analyze the Information & Establish a Hypothesis** – Demonstrate your business intuition and problem solving skills by showing in-depth analysis of the case when presenting your solution(s). Substantiate your response and provide logical back up for answers. Be sure to explain what case facts led to a conclusion. If your final answer seems flawed (ex: number too high) do not be afraid to go back and reevaluate it.

**Organize & Structure Your Response** – Organize a response and let the interviewer in on your plan. Use frameworks when necessary and keep in mind that the focus is as much on your approach as your solution. Don’t rush through your answer and use your time wisely.

**Have a Conversation** – Talk through your answer and explain your thought process. Ask questions and lure the interviewer into a conversation with you. Ask the interviewer if you are on track with your assumptions. The interviewer may offer additional information and/or guide you.

**Be Concise** – if asked for the top 2 issues, confine your response to 2 items. Stay focused on your response and don’t digress or go off on tangents.

**Be Innovative** – Brainstorm solutions that are innovative and creative. Don’t be afraid to offer alternatives.

**Be Adaptable** – Show your ability to tailor your response to changing situations. Also, try and rebound from mistakes. Don’t let them shut you down.

**Be Enthusiastic** – If you are excited about the job and industry you should be excited about tackling a case questions. Approach the question with gusto and enthusiasm.

**Summarize** – Make a summary or conclusion at the end.



## HELPFUL WEBSITES

There are a number of helpful websites you can visit to practice answering case interview questions.

We recommend the following:

1. **Glassdoor**– [https://www.glassdoor.com/Interview/business-case-interview-questions-SRCH\\_KT0,13.htm](https://www.glassdoor.com/Interview/business-case-interview-questions-SRCH_KT0,13.htm)
2. **The Boston Consulting Group**- <https://www.bcg.com/Interactives/ICL/>
3. **McKinsey & Company**– <https://www.mckinsey.com/careers/interviewing>



## Phone Interviews

It is common for employers to conduct telephone interviews for screening purposes and for internships and jobs located outside a local area. During a phone interview, employers will gather information to determine if a candidate is eligible for an in-person interview.

### BEFORE THE PHONE INTERVIEW

#### **Get your voicemail message prepared.**

- If you think you might get phone calls, be sure the message on your voice mail is professional! You want to give a good impression right from the start.

#### **Use the telephone interview opportunity to your advantage.**

- Have your resume readily available.
- Keep your job research materials well organized and accessible.

#### **Do your prep work, as you would with any interview.**

- Research the organizations to which you are applying.
- Practice answering questions as you would for an in-person interview.
- Schedule a practice interview with a career coach at Career and Professional Development.

## DURING THE PHONE INTERVIEW

- If you are not expecting the call, you may ask for a minute to take the call in a quiet place, offer to call back in five minutes or at a better time that is mutually convenient.
- Turn off your computer, music and TV. Close your door.
- Stand up and smile while you talk to project your voice.
- Keep your answers concise. Because you don't have visual cues to guide conversation, it can be difficult to know if you are saying too much or too little.
- Be careful of “ums” and “ahs.” Without visual cues, flaws in your speech patterns are magnified (and this is all the interviewer has to evaluate).
- Speak slowly and articulate well. Give the interviewer time to think and respond.
- Keep a notepad handy to write notes during the interview. Be sure to get the interviewer's name, title, address, phone number and e-mail.
- As with any interview, be sure to write or e-mail a thank you note immediately after the conversation.

## 2 Second Interviews

Full time positions may require second interviews. At this point the employer is seriously considering you as a candidate, but it does not mean you have secured the position.

During the second interviews, you will usually meet with several individuals. Typically, you meet individually with interviewers in back-to-back appointments. You may meet with a group. It is okay to ask the format of your interviews when making arrangements with the employer.

Questions will be more specific and you will have to further demonstrate your understanding of the organization and industry. Prepare by doing further employer/industry research and practice answering questions.

Second interviews may take the form of social gatherings, receptions and dinners – you must maintain your professional behavior in these settings. If you are offered alcohol and are over the age of 21, it is acceptable to have a drink, however, be sure not to let it affect your behavior. Your actions in these situations will be a part of the hiring decision.



## Helpful Tips for Interviewing

- ✓ Listen carefully to the questions. Ask for clarification if you are unsure about the question.
- ✓ Avoid yes / no answers. Offer a brief explanation or example to your answers.
- ✓ Take your time. Don't be afraid to stop and think about an answer to a question. You can paraphrase a question before answering.
- ✓ Always remain positive and never volunteer negative information.
- ✓ Don't lapse into casual conversation or let your guard down. Remain professional even if your interviewer takes a casual demeanor.
- ✓ Don't initiate a conversation about salary or benefits unless you have been offered a position.
- ✓ Project enthusiasm, self-awareness and honesty.
- ✓ Include specific, quantifiable details in your examples and stories, repeating your strengths, skills and assets.
- ✓ Keep your answers concise and to the point.



## After the Interview



### Send a Thank-You Note

Always write a letter of appreciation within 24 hours after your interview. Email is acceptable. Write an email to each person you interviewed with. If you had an interview with a large group, you can send one email to all and address it: Dear Search Committee. Your thank you is an opportunity for you to reiterate your interest in the position. Many employers will presume you are not interested in the position if they do not receive a thank you message. It is also an opportunity for you to highlight your skills as they relate to the position and restate the points you feel you may not have communicated effectively. Be sure to include a couple of specific topics of conversation from your interview to show that you were engaged and internalized what they said. Your thank you note should be brief and grammatically correct. This written correspondence is just as important as a cover letter. Ask someone to proof read it for you!

## EXAMPLE THANK-YOU NOTE

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_,

It was a pleasure to meet you yesterday regarding the financial advisor role (position title), and I wanted to thank you for your time.

I loved hearing more about the financial advisor position and the services that you provide for your clients. Also, it was great to learn more about your extensive career, in addition to your passion for mint chocolate chip ice cream. Ben and Jerry's really is the best!

I believe my strong interpersonal and analytical abilities can add value to your team. I am very passionate and excited about the opportunities at your company and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,  
(Your name)

## Follow up with Employers

Before leaving the interview, find out about the next steps in the interview process, including timeline, if possible. **Get a business card or contact information for your interviewer(s).**

If the interviewer gave you a specific timeline, respect that timeline.

If you do not hear back from an employer in the specified time, it is appropriate to follow up with an email or phone call.

If a follow up time was not specified, 1-2 weeks is a reasonable amount of time to wait before following up.

If you get another offer but want to prioritize this position, you may follow up sooner to ask for an update.

## Receiving a Job Offer

If you receive a job offer immediately after your interview, you are not obligated to accept on the spot. It is appropriate to let the interviewer know that you are enthusiastic about the offer, but you would like to think about it and give yourself a chance to formulate any other questions you may have. Ask the employer the date they will need your decision.

If you are interviewing for positions at several companies, you may ask the interviewer if they can wait until you complete your interview process. An employer may say they need an immediate answer, at which time you will be faced with the decision to accept the offer or decline and continue your search. You will need to assess if the position matches your personal and professional goals. Contact a career coach at Career and Professional Development to assist you with your decision.



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Handshake

<https://mercy.joinhandshake.com>