

Building Confident Interviewing Skills

Career Connection

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Additional Interviewing Resources Available at our Office:

- Individual Career Counseling appointments
- Schedule a free, videotaped mock-interview
- Resources for effectively handling an “American Style” Job Interview
- Interviewing Skills Workshops & Seminars
- Various print and multimedia resources
- Videos on confident interviewing
- Grab-n-Go self-help materials

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Effective Interviewing Skills - Objectives



- To outline the five steps of a successful interview
- To have an understanding of what employers are looking for
- To learn how to formulate answers to typical interview questions
- To review guidelines to professional interview attire
- To learn how to effectively manage your interview jitters

Memorable Interviews: Poor choices!

- After answering the first few questions, the candidate picked up his cell phone and called his parents to let them know the interview was going well.
- When asked what she liked least in his current job, the applicant replied, "staff management". She was interviewing for a management position.
- The candidate asked for an early morning interview. He showed up with a box of doughnuts and ate them during the meeting, saying this was the only time he'd have to eat breakfast before going to work.
- When asked by the hiring manager if he had any questions for him, the candidate replied by telling a knock-knock joke.

Memorable Interviews: Risky attempts!

- An applicant baked cookies for the interviewer and used icing to write several reasons why she should be hire.
- A candidate rented a billboard that could be seen from the creative director's window and used it to list her qualifications.
- A candidate sent us a T-shirt with the names of everyone in the company on it- including his.

Memorable Interviews: Positive moves!

- A candidate sent us a slick electronic portfolio. It was quick and to the point.
- A person showed me her skills by backing it up with experience and letting me know what she can do for us. I hired her!
- One person I met with, sent me a thank you letter the next day.
- The applicant was so enthusiastic and knowledgeable that we were really impressed.

Five Steps to a Successful Interview



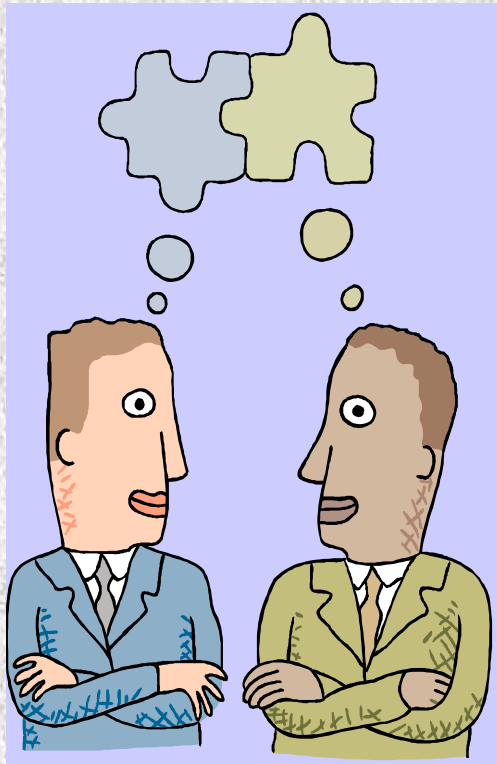
- **Step 1-** Preparing for the Interview
- **Step 2-** Making a positive first impression
- **Step 3-** Demonstrating your potential
- **Step 4-** Closing with finesse
- **Step 5-** Important post-interview tasks

Step 1- Preparing for the Interview



- Research the company and know what you want in the job
- Review frequently asked interview questions
- Connect your answers to the needs of the organization
- Develop questions for the interviewer
- Know the interviewer's name
- Know where you are going and arrive early
- Know what to wear
- Have a typed list of 3-5 professional references

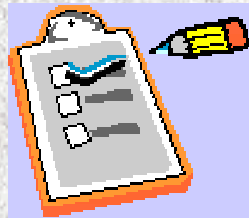
What Interviewers are Looking for



- **Can You do the job?** Do you have the skills, aptitude, and experience the job requires?
- **Will you do the job?** Do you have the motivation and interest?
- **Will you fit in?** Will you accept the organization's way of doing things and get along with co-workers and customers/students/patients, etc.?
- **Will the economics of hiring you work?** Is this person a real investment?

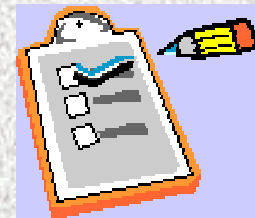
Questions Assessing Skills/Experiences

- What contributions can you make to our company?
 - How does your previous experience relate to the position?
 - What do you feel are your strengths?
 - What do you feel are your weaknesses?
 - What were some of your best classes?
- Tips for effective responses
 - Develop a list of your top 5 skills and support these with examples
 - Review performance evaluations from employers
 - Research the organization
 - Make a list of courses that relate to the position
 - Review your resume and cover letter



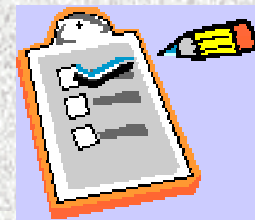
Questions Assessing Motivation

- Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years?
 - Why do you want to work for this organization?
 - What do you know about our organization?
 - If you could change your life, what would you do differently?
 - What motivates you?
 - What do you do besides academics?
- Tips for Effective Responses
 - Make sure you have a career objective and identify how the position you're applying for supports your career path
 - Think about what you will have accomplished in your career 5/10 years from now



Questions Assessing your Personality- Work Style

- Do you work better alone or as part of a team?
- How do you work under pressure?
- Describe a problem you have with a supervisor and how you dealt with it?
- How would you describe yourself?
- Give me an example of a good decision you have made.
- Tips for Effective Responses
- Consider taking the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory to help you understand some of your work-related preferences
- Identify ways in which your weaknesses can be turned into positives



Step 2- Making a Positive First Impression



- Make direct eye contact with the interviewer and show a warm smile
- Use a firm handshake and say something like “it’s great to meet you”
- Mental connections lead to physical connections, you will radiate a positive attitude if you believe so
- Remember that small talk is big talk, stick to topics people are not divided about

Step 2- Making a Positive First Impression



- At the beginning, follow “the 2 minute rule” to break the ice
- Stick with positives, complaining about others is the “kiss of death” in an interview
- Be aware of your nonverbal communications: facial expressions, posture, body space

Step 3- Demonstrating your Potential



- **Demonstrate a “Can do” Attitude**
Find out what the employer needs and then frame your answers around them
- **Speak in Specifics** You will need to support your statements with concrete samples (e.g. I value learning new skills, this year I have taken a seminar in HTML)
- **Use STAR technique to show how you were successful**
 - S= situation A= Action
 - T= task R= Results

Step 3- Demonstrating your Potential (cont.)

Consider using these techniques



- The **SHOW and TELL** Focuses on past materials to show the interviewer that you have work-related skills (e.g. if applying for a technical writing position, show a position paper or a technical report)
- The **SNEAK Preview** Focuses on the future by providing the interviewer with a demonstration of what you can do for their organization (e.g. if applying for a training position, develop a slide presentation)

Building Confident Interviewing

Preparation by researching the organization and its needs

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Formulation and practice of your answers

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Know yourself and know what you want

= CONFIDENT INTERVIEWING

Consider using these techniques

- **The Parrot Technique**, useful when you know you have a good answer, but cannot think of it immediately/ Repeat back the question using your own words
- **The Delay Technique**, useful when you are really stuck. Use the parrot technique, comment on the importance or relevance of the question, reflect the question back (e.g How would you handle hostility? You may say "Has this organization had problems with workplace violence?

Step 4- Closing with Finesse



- Ask the interviewer appropriate questions, show you have researched the organization
- Re-state why you feel you are the best candidate and your interest in the position
- Summarize two or three strongest qualifications that you shared throughout the interview
- Thank the interviewer for his/her time- maintain eye contact- give a firm handshake

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

Possible questions to ask



- Where does the position fit within the organization?
- Who are the primary people with whom I would be working?
- How many people have had this job in the last five years? Why did the previous one left?
- What are the opportunities for growth?

Step 4 - Closing with Finesse (cont.)



- Don't ask the interviewer how you did
- Close by asking to move forward to the next steps in the process (e.g. what are the next steps in the process? How would you prefer me to contact you should I think of more questions?)
- If offered the job without meeting the person you would report to, request that opportunity
- If you're offered the job, don't accept or reject the offer until you've had time to think about it

Step 5- Important Post-Interview Tasks



- **Keep a record of the interview**, detailed information, people seen, your insights, so that you can follow-up with them
- **Send a Thank-You letter** to confirm your interest in the job, show appreciation, and highlight your skills
- **Anticipate a Second Interview** plan ahead to demonstrate your fitness within the organization
- **Prepare to respond to an offer** review carefully the job, company, and geographic location
- **Call if you have not heard anything and the deadline has passed**

Building Confident Interviewing



- **Fear of the unknown**, you need to recognize that an interview is centered on the subject you know the best: YOURSELF
- **Fear of losing**, take a chance. If you recognize that not getting what you hope for is no disaster you will be much more relaxed
- **Rejection shock**, you've got to keep your head high and find ways to compensate for the beating your ego will take
- **Negative self-talk**, replace those thoughts with positive statements to build yourself up (e.g. " A little nervousness is to be expected, I have worked hard and will do my best")

Guidelines for Interview Dress - Men and Women



- Conservative two-piece business suit (dark blue, gray, tan)
- Long-sleeved shirt/blouse - white preferred
- Well groomed hairstyle
- Clean, trimmed fingernails
- Minimal cologne or perfume
- Empty pockets- no tinkling coins, keys
- No gum, candy or cigarettes
- No visible body piercing
- No more than one ring on each hand
- No cell phones or beepers
- An attaché or briefcase conveys professionalism

Guidelines for Interview Dress

Men

- Necktie should be silk or an acrylic blend with conservative patterns
- Dark, clean, polished shoes (black lace-up are best)
- Over-the-calf socks that either match your suit or are black
- Mustaches and beards neatly trimmed

Women

- Always wear a suit with a jacket
- No high heels
- Hosiery near skin color
- If you wear nail polish (not required), use clear or a conservative color
- Minimal use of make-up
- One set of earrings
- Follow the 13 golden rule!