

Interview Strategies

Be seen. Be heard. Be chosen!

Be prepared to tell your story and make it relevant to the job!

Know yourself!

- Utilize the *Resume and Defining Your Professional Identity one sheets* to determine, assess and describe your qualifications and competencies.

Research the company first

- Review the company website, business directory, annual report, newspaper articles, periodicals, etc...
- Seek input from your network about the company.
- Develop 2-3 talking points that interest you about the company's products, services, and customers.

Review the job description

- Categorize the job competencies and skills required and assess how your qualifications match the job. Use the *Job Description Worksheet* to highlight similarities and add them to your resume, cover letter and interview.

Prepare your personal talking points

- Answer the question "Tell me about yourself" with why you want the job and why you're a good fit.
- Briefly describe your current work, your accomplishments related to the position, and why you are interested in the job and company.
- Use the STAR method to provide examples of your achievements relevant to the job. Be prepared with a conflict resolution example that relates to the job.
- Prepare a few questions about the job position to demonstrate you understand the job and company.

Prepare a few strengths and a weakness

- Be able to describe three strengths with specific examples/experiences that fit the job description.
- Your weakness allows you to express your desire to improve. Choose a skill that doesn't come naturally and talk about how you have overcome this tendency.

Prepare a few value and work ethic themes

Communicate a few essential values that you want them to know about your character and your work ethic.

Suggested themes include: Resilience, autonomy, efficiency, multi-culturalism, teamwork, enthusiasm, self-awareness, etc...

S.T.A.R. Approach to Behavioral Interviewing

Situation

BRIEFLY describe a specific one-time experience and the context in which you demonstrated an important skill. Don't pick an example that detracts from the interview or is hard to explain. Use previous work or volunteer experience.

Task

Talk about YOUR role/job/responsibility in that situation.

Approach or Action

Describe the actions you took to move toward a solution. Focus your description on YOU and what YOU did, even if it was a group effort.

Results

Discuss how you made an impact. Focus on the positive result or outcome. Describe how you successfully overcame a difficulty or positively improved the situation.

At the root of STAR is that you're the "star" of the story - not the experience, place or actions of others.

Additional Resources

Biginterview.com
Candid Career
Glassdoor
Public library for public resources on companies

Practice, Practice, Practice

- Know what the common questions will be (see back for a list of some sample interview questions).
- Practice with friends and family or in front of a mirror.
- Contact Career Development for a mock interview.

After the Interview

- Write and carefully proofread a thank you letter.
- If there are multiple interviewers, customize each letter.
- Briefly reaffirm what you liked about the company and job and how you'll meet their needs if given the opportunity.

Interview Questions

Be prepared to tell them what you want them to know about you. Tailor your answers to their questions.

Sample Traditional Questions

- Tell me about yourself (you know how to answer this!)
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What would a former/current supervisor say about your job performance?
- What qualifications make you suited for this job?
- Do you prefer working alone or in teams?
- What motivates you to go the extra mile on a job?
- How do you work under pressure?
- Describe the workload in your current job.
- What 2-3 things are most important to you in a job?
- How well do you adapt to new situations?
- Why should I hire you over other candidates?
- Why did you choose this career?
- What are your long range career objectives?
- What do you value most in a career?
- If you were hiring a job-seeker for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- How well do you manage your time and delegating tasks?
- What interests you about our company?

Sample Behavioral Questions

- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.
- Give me an example of a time when you used good judgement and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- Tell me about a time you took a risk.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish a task/project and failed?
- Tell me about a recent situation in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
- Describe a time when you set your sights too high or low.

Types of Interviews

Screening

A preliminary interview in which a company representative determines whether you have the qualifications for a subsequent interview.

Structured Interview

Interviewer has a written description of the experience, skills and personality traits of the "ideal" candidate. Your experience and skills are compared.

Unstructured Interview

Interviewer asks broad questions such as "Tell me about yourself," and "Why do you want to work here?" This interview will feel more like a conversation.

Behavioral

Based on the theory that past performance is the best indicator of future behavior. Questions such as "Tell me about a time where you confronted an unexpected problem" or "Give me a specific example when you had to manage several projects at once." Use S.T.A.R.

Situational

Interviewer asks you to respond to a specific situation. This is designed to assess your problem solving skills and how you handle problems on short notice.

Multiple

This approach is a series of interviews. The first will be more traditional and the subsequent interviewers will seek more details about your experiences and skills and how they match up to the job description.

Group or Panel

This type of interview can either be an interviewee with one or more interviewers or several interviewees with one of more interviewers.

Case

The case interview introduces you to a dilemma or situation and you are asked to identify the issues of concern, and discuss how you would address and solve the issue. This interview is more in depth than a situational one.

Stress

This type of interview is typically used for jobs that are high-stress. The interviewer wants to see what you can handle under pressure. The interviewer may be rude and sarcastic, disagree with you or ask you rapid fire questions. Try to stick to your agenda and be calm!!