

Getting Ready - Know Yourself

Interviews won't be effective until you have some idea of what you're after.



KNOW YOUR DIRECTION

1. Figure out what you want to do - be specific.
2. Make a list of exactly what you want *and* what you *don't* want in your job.



IF YOU'RE UNSURE

1. Look at your past for clues i.e. major, clubs, activities, summer jobs, internships...
2. Ask yourself some questions:
 - ◆ What do you like to do?
 - ◆ What are your strengths and weaknesses?
 - ◆ What motivates you?
 - ◆ How important is money? Location? Travel?
 - ◆ Where will you be happy, energetic, and productive?
3. Get help from a Career Services counselor.

STRENGTHS EXERCISE

✓ the qualities that best describe you. These might be important to a potential employer.

Enthusiastic
Work well with children
Creative/inventive
Keep accurate records
Manually Dexterous
Plan & organize events
Physical Strength
Leadership ability
Handle details
Learn easily
Decision maker
Mathematical skill
Calm
Work well with physically or
Emotionally challenged people

Work well with others
Outdoors person
Nurturing
Operate equipment
Outgoing showmanship
Industrious
Help others
Persuasive
Problem solver
Sales ability
Write well
Verbalize well
Scientific
Mechanical

Serve society
Academic (read & study)
Deal with people well
Artistic
Craftsman-woman
Efficient/Orderly
Teach well
Work fast
Precision
Dependable
Work with the aged
In control of a situation
Research minded

Getting Ready - Know the Employer

Why

- ✔ Time won't be wasted on issues that could have been answered by reading the organization's literature.
- ✔ Shows the employer that you are serious about the opportunity and that you have initiative.
- ✔ Makes you stand out from your competitors who did not do their research.
- ✔ The better you will be able to anticipate questions and fine tune your answers.
- ✔ Helps to reduce your anxiety by knowing you're prepared.

What

- ✔ Structure of the organization
- ✔ Division or departments that interest you
- ✔ Products and services
- ✔ Size of organization (including number of stores, plants, divisions, employees, etc.)
- ✔ History (how long has the organization been around)
- ✔ Philosophy and objectives
- ✔ Growth and earnings
- ✔ New products, research, or services planned
- ✔ Personnel policies and benefits
- ✔ Geographic locations of home office and divisions
 - ✔ Career paths and training programs

How

- ✔ Request corporate literature and annual reports
- ✔ Check with reference librarians for resources
- ✔ Talk to others in the organization
- ✔ Visit the organization
- ✔ Attend job fairs
- ✔ Carefully read job descriptions and Help Wanted ads
- ✔ If relocating, research the community; check out cost of living comparisons
- ✔ Research the employer utilizing the World Wide Web
- ✔ Call the organization to see if there is a website and ask for the address



Getting Ready - Know the Interview Routine

Types of Interviews



One-on-one

Group Interview

Search Committee

Human Resources

Hiring Manager

Phone Interview

Lunch Interview



Skills Desired by Employers

Oral Communications
Interpersonal Skills
Analytical Skills
Teamwork
Flexibility
Computer Skills
Proficiency in Field of Study
Written Communication
Leadership
Work Experience
Internship Experience

From Job Outlook '97, National Association of Colleges and
Employers Annual Report

Additional Attributes of Successful Candidates

Teamwork in extracurricular activities
Maintains good grades
Well rounded education
Displays professionalism
Is prepared to interview
Enthusiasm for work
Dependability
Emotional maturity
Self-Motivation
Adaptable

Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication

The First & Last Impression

THE HANDSHAKE



Positive

Firm grip but not too strong
About one arm's length away
Hold for about 5 seconds
Greet employer while shaking his/her hand

Negative

Weak
Sweaty palms
Iron grip
Challenging
Pump arm excessively
Too close
Hold for too long

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION



Positive

Maintain good eye contact
Smile when appropriate
Good posture

Negative

Staring or looking at ground
Nervous giggling
Slouching
Hand twisting, overuse of hand gestures

VERBAL COMMUNICATION



Positive

Speak clearly and articulately
Not too fast and not too slow
Be professional
Proper grammar and pronunciation

Negative

Mumble
Too fast or too slow
Too casual
Incorrect grammar and pronunciation
Over emotional

PERSONALITY



Positive

Enthusiastic and motivated
Genuine and sincere
Decisive
Responsible
Self-reliant



Negative

Unresponsive
Artificial
Non-committal
Over-bearing
Excessively nervous

Commonly Asked Interview Questions

1. What goals have you set for yourself? How are you planning to achieve them?
2. Who or what has had the greatest influence on the development of your career interests?
3. What factors did you consider in choosing your major?
4. Why are you interested in our organization?
5. Tell me about yourself.
6. What two or three things are most important to you in a position?
7. What kind of work do you want to do?
8. Tell me about a project you initiated.
9. What are your expectations of your future employer?
10. What is your GPA? How do you feel about it? Does it reflect your ability?
11. How do you solve conflicts?
12. Tell me about how you perceive your strengths. Your weaknesses. How do you evaluate yourself?
13. What work experience has been the most valuable to you and why?
14. What was the most useful criticism you ever received, and who was it from?
15. Give an example of a problem you have solved and the process you used.
16. Describe the project or situation that best demonstrated your analytical skills.
17. What has been your greatest challenge?
18. Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual and how you dealt with it.
19. What were the biggest problems you have encountered in college? How have you handled them? What did you learn from them?
20. What are your team-player qualities? Give examples.
21. Describe your leadership style.
22. What interests or concerns you about the position or the company?
23. In a particular leadership role you had, what was the greatest challenge?
24. What idea have you developed and implemented that was particularly creative or innovative?
25. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?

26. How have your educational and work experiences prepared you for this position?
27. Take me through a project where you demonstrated leadership skills.
28. How do you think you have changed personally since you started college?
29. Tell me about a team project of which you are particularly proud of and your contribution.
30. How do you motivate people?
31. Why did you choose the extracurricular activities you did? What did you gain? What did you contribute?
32. What types of situations put you under pressure and how do you deal with the pressure?
33. Tell me about a difficult decision you have made.
34. Give an example of a situation in which you failed and how you handled it.
35. Tell me about a situation when you had to persuade another person to your point of view.
36. What frustrates you the most?
37. Knowing what you know now about your college experience, would you make the same decisions?
38. What can you contribute to this company?
39. How would you react to having your credibility questioned?
40. What characteristics are most important in a good manager? How have you shown one of these characteristics?
41. What challenges are you looking for in a position?
42. Are you willing to relocate or travel as part of your career?
43. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
44. Describe a leadership role of yours and tell why you committed your time to it.
45. How are you conducting your job search and how will you make your decision?
46. What is the most important lesson you have learned in or out of school?
47. Describe a situation where you had to work with someone who was difficult. How was the person difficult and how did you handle it?
48. We are looking at a lot of great candidates; why are you the best person for this position?
49. How would your friends describe you? Your professors?
50. What else should I know about you?

Handling Illegal Questions

Various federal, state, and local laws regulate the questions a prospective employer can ask you, the job candidate. An employer's questions—whether on the job application, in the interview, or during the testing process—must be related to the job you're seeking. For the employer, the focus must be: "What do I need to know to decide whether this person can perform the functions of this job?"

If asked an illegal question, you have three options:

- You can answer the question—you're free to do so, if you wish. However, if you choose to answer an illegal question, remember that you are giving information that isn't related to the job; in fact, you might be giving the "wrong" answer, which could harm your chances of getting the job.
- You can refuse to answer the question, which is well within your rights. Unfortunately, depending on how you phrase your refusal, you run the risk of appearing uncooperative or confrontational—hardly words an employer would use to describe the "ideal" candidate.
- You can examine the question for its intent and respond with an answer as it might apply to the job. For example, the interviewer asks, "Are you a U.S. citizen?" or "What country are you from?" You've been asked an illegal question. You could respond, however, with "I am authorized to work in the United States." Similarly, let's say the interviewer asks, "Who is going to take care of your children when you have to travel for the job?" You might answer, "I can meet the travel and work schedule that this job requires."

On the following page are examples of some illegal questions and their legal counterparts.

Illegal & Legal Questions

Inquiry Area	Illegal Questions	Legal Questions
National Origin/ Citizenship	Are you a U.S. citizen? Where were you/your parents born? What is your "native tongue"?	Are you authorized to work in the United States? What language do you read/speak/write fluently? (This question is okay only if this ability is relevant to the performance of the job.)
Age	How old are you? When did you graduate? What's your birth date?	Are you over the age of 18?
Marital/ Family Status	What's your marital status? With whom do you live? Do you plan to have a family? When? How many kids do you have? What are your child-care arrangements?	Would you be willing to relocate if necessary? Would you be able and willing to travel as needed for the job? (This question is okay if it is asked of all applicants for the job.) Would you be able and willing to work overtime as necessary? (This question is okay assuming it is asked of all applicants for the job.)
Affiliations	What clubs or social organizations do you belong to?	List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.
Personal	How tall are you? How much do you weigh? (Questions about height and weight are not acceptable unless minimum standards are essential for the safe performance of the job.)	Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?
Disabilities	Do you have any disabilities? Please complete the following medical history. Have you had any recent or past illnesses or operations? If yes, list them and give dates when these occurred. What was the date of your last physical exam? How's your family's health? When did you lose your eyesight? How? Do you need an accommodation to perform the job? (This question can be asked only after a job offer has been made.)	Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job? (This question is okay if the interviewer has thoroughly described the job.) Can you demonstrate how you would perform the following job-related functions? As part of the hiring process, after a job offer has been made, you will be required to undergo a medical exam. (Exam results must be kept strictly confidential, except medical/safety personnel may be informed if emergency medical treatment is required, and supervisors may be informed about necessary job accommodations, based on exam results.)
Arrest Record	Have you ever been arrested?	Have you ever been convicted of _____? (The crime named should be reasonably related to the performance of the job in question.)
Military	If you've been in the military, were you honorably discharged?	In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve? What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

Sample Questions for Candidates to Ask

1. What is your method of training new employees?
2. What type of orientation would I receive?
3. How closely will I be supervised?
4. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
5. How often are performance reviews done?
6. How soon will I be given responsibility?
7. How much travel is normally expected?
8. What are some of the major short and long range goals that the company/organization has?
9. What outside influences affect the company's/organization's growth?
10. In what area does the company/organization excel or in what area does it have limitations?
11. What are some of the common denominators among the organization's successful employees?
12. Based on what you have seen of me so far, where do you think I could contribute most effectively?
13. Is there anything you perceive as a weakness in my background?
14. What are some of the characteristics that the company/organization considers to be unique?
15. What would add or subtract from the incumbent's performance to increase his/her effectiveness?
16. Can you give me some idea of the projects that I may be working on?
17. Could you describe any opportunities for advancement within the organization/company?
18. What is the typical time frame for these advancements?
19. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
20. Has the company had to lay off employees in the past couple years?
21. How has the company/organization changed over the past 5 or 10 years?
22. What would you consider to be your major competitors?

Other Questions You Have Developed:

Interview Follow-up

What It Is and Why It's Needed

The practice of following up a personal interview cannot be stressed too strongly. Follow-up basically means that within one to two days of your interview, you prepare and send (normally typed) a personal note of thanks to the person (s) who interviewed you. The basic points to be made are:

1. Thanks for the opportunity to interview for the position.
2. Here are some of the things I feel make me a suitable/qualified candidate.
3. Look forward to hearing from him/her.

Writing a follow-up indicates that you are courteous, knowledgeable about the job search process, are still interested in the position, and have thought further about the match-up between the employer's needs and your background.

Even though you may not be offered the position for which you interviewed, the impression made on the interviewer is usually very positive and can lead to employment with the same firm/organization at a later date or with another by referral. It is worth the time and effort involved.

THANK YOU LETTER STRUCTURE

Street
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Name of person, position
Company Name
Street or P.O. Box
City, State, Zip Code

Dear _____:

First Paragraph. In this paragraph, thank the person for the opportunity to interview and explore the position further.

Second Paragraph. Review some of your personal attributes/background that you feel make you qualified for the position. You may also want to indicate further interest in the position. If you feel that you are no longer interested in being considered, mention this here and formally withdraw yourself as a candidate.

Third Paragraph. Generally express an interest in hearing from the interviewer (s) regarding your candidacy. You may want to indicate that you'll call on a certain date to check on things or some other message.

Closing,

Signature

Name (Typed)