



Interviewing Tip Sheet

While the resume gets you the interview, it is the interview that will get you the job! It is your opportunity to present your qualifications and experiences to the employer.

Before the Interview

Research the Company to find information such as: *

- Key people in the organization
- Major products or services
- Size in terms of sales and employees
- Locations other than your community
- Organization of the company including the corporate mission or vision statement
- Major competitors
- Latest news reports on the company or on local or national news that affects the company

**Use the Web to locate the company's website and other information. Go to your public library and ask the librarian to assist you in using trade directories. For smaller companies, contact the local chamber of commerce.*

- Find out as much as you can about the position – You probably know the basics about the position but try to find out more by calling the Human Resources Department and getting a job description (if possible). You can then plan on how to communicate the relationship between the job and your strengths, abilities and experience – how you can contribute to the company.
- Be familiar with typical questions an interviewer may ask of you. See list below.
- Drive by the organization at least one working day before to get a sense of potential traffic and parking issues.
- Practice nice, firm handshakes.
- Prepare questions to ask *the interviewer, have them written down. Bring two pens with you in case one does not write. Bring a pad of paper with you.*
- Practice, Practice, Practice

The Interview

- Arrive on time – 15 minutes early is best so you can get settled
- Make sure you have money for parking and tolls
- **Bring two copies** of your **resume, cover letter, reference list** and any samples of your work. These should be in a neat folder or portfolio with a **pad of paper** and two **nice pens** (Murphy's Law – if you only bring one pen, it will run out of ink!)
- Introduce yourself in a courteous manner.
- Read company materials while you wait.
- Have a firm handshake.
- Use body language to show interest. Smile, nod and give non-verbal feedback to the interviewer.
- Listen.
- Think about the questions being asked before you answer. See list below.

- Handle liabilities graciously - (Each of us has liabilities, and how we handle them can be important) A liability is any personal factor or experience that hinders the chances of getting an offer for a particular job.)
 1. Don't get defensive. Always remember to think with a positive attitude.
 2. Recognize the liability as a legitimate issue of concern.
 3. Identify the strength that is perceived as missing. (i.e., lack of motivation)
 4. Prove that you have that strength.
- Ask winning questions - Always have a question prepared when the interviewer asks, "Do you have any questions?" (See list below)
- Ask about the next step in the process.
- Request business card(s) to ensure proper spelling of names.
- Thank the interviewer(s).

After the Interview

- Reflect on what you did well and how you can improve on the next interview.
- Follow-up with a thank-you letter to anyone who interviewed you. Handwritten, typed or email is acceptable.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS INTERVIEWERS LIKE TO ASK

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you know about our company?
3. What are your strongest (weakest) personal qualities?
4. Why did you choose your major?
5. What are some of your activities and interests outside work and school?
6. Why did you elect to interview with us?
7. What are your long-term goals?

TOUGH QUESTIONS INTERVIEWERS LIKE TO ASK

Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision, but did not have all the information you needed.

Use a real anecdote from your experience to answer this question. The answer does not have to be great and grand. It could be a simple situation that was handled well. It could demonstrate ability in your field. For example: You may want to tell the interviewer how you selected your college from among all the colleges you applied to. Were you satisfied with the choice? Why or why not?

What suggestions do you have for our stores?

Do not answer this one with the expected answer, that is, anything to do with upkeep on the store. Instead, talk about merchandise that you might want to add to the store...or would you rearrange the store and why? Your answer should reflect your creativity.

What is the most significant contribution you made to the company during your internship/co-op?

Tell a story about an accomplishment that benefited the company, demonstrating skills that show initiative or resilience. Tell this interviewer about the options and the outcome of your work.

What is the biggest mistake you have made?

Be honest. You will show credibility and integrity. While mistakes are not rewarded, those mistakes are not shot either. Sometimes making a mistake can show that you have pushed yourself to the limit. Tell what you have learned from the mistake.

Was there anything today that you were afraid I was going to ask you? Why did it make you feel uncomfortable?

The trick here is to keep your cool. Many people blurt out the question that they did not want asked-and perhaps raise new questions in the interviewers mind. Some mention an illegal question.

Questions that you might be asked that probe your past behavior in a job, in the classroom, in a group project, in extracurricular activities, or even with a roommate.

1. Give me a specific example of something you did that helped build enthusiasm in others. **(Leadership Skills)**
2. Tell me about a difficult situation when it was desirable for you to keep a positive attitude. What did you do? **(Stress Management Skills)**
3. Give me an example of a time when you had to make an important decision. How did you make the decision? How does it affect you today? **(Decision-Making Skills)**
4. Give me an example of a time you had to persuade other people to take action. Were you successful? **(Leadership Skills)**
5. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. How did you handle the situation? **(People Skills)**
6. Tell me about a time you had to handle multiple responsibilities. How did you organize the work you needed to do? **(Time Management Skills)**

QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES TO ASK DURING INTERVIEWS

From the list below there may be some questions that would be appropriate for you, the candidate, to ask at an interview.

1. Do you usually fill this position from outside the company?
2. Was the person who held the job before this promoted?
3. Do you have much turnover in this position?
4. Is training provided to improve job skills?
5. What specific qualifications are you looking for in filling this position?
6. What are some of the more demanding aspects of doing this job well?
7. What are some examples of good results accomplished by a person in this job?
8. Will good job performance in this position qualify the person for advancement?
9. How soon will a decision be made for filling this position?
10. What kind of training might I expect if hired for this position?
11. Is there anything I can do or study to get a head start of learning this job?
12. How much supervision would I receive as new employee?
13. Will there be a chance to work overtime in this position?
14. Would you describe your own concept of the ideal employee?
15. Are there any additional educational programs to prepare me to assume additional responsibilities?