Interview Guidelines

This is the nuts & bolts version of how to prepare and conduct an effective interview.

Your first step involves reading. We have a very comprehensive Effective Interviewing Guide on the Career Development website. This section includes: Preparation, Parts of the Interview, Phone Interviewing Tips, After the Interview, Call Back Interviews, and Interview Questions.

Also, check out the Interviewing Guide on your Career Leader Assessment’s Website; it is also very comprehensive.

You need to be thoroughly prepared before ANY interview that you go on, and this involves writing which takes a lot of time, ideally well before you have an interview.

- Develop accomplishment stories from your background to show how you fit. You do this with the STAR format describing a Situation you were in, the Tasks at hand, Actions you took to solve the problem & the Results you achieved. Develop as many of these accomplishment stories as you can
- Read through lists of Interview Questions and write out as many answers as possible – even if you don’t have an interview coming up, if you write out a few answers a night, you will have the perfect preparation piece to read over prior to your interview when you land one
- Make sure you Write out your Elevator Pitch that consists of your Educational Background, Professional Background, Job Objective, and Relevant Accomplishments. This is what you will want to have ready when they say “Tell me about yourself...”

Your research phase of the Interviewing Process happens once you have formally applied to the job in case you get a call back very quickly for an interview – you should conduct cursory research.

- You will want to find out about the Company Objective, Organizational Structure, Product or Service, Stability, Philosophy
- You can most likely find all of this on the company’s Web Site, that may also include an Annual Report, Letters from the Chairman, Balance Sheet
- If you do get called for an interview you will want to continue more in depth research. You can use Vault to accomplish this.
- Use Linked In and the Alumni Database to obtain more information on who will be interviewing you.

Analyze what you have to contribute to the company. Compare the job description to your accomplishments on your resume.

- Analyze the job qualifications in the posting and highlight the ones that correspond with your experience.
- Revisit your STAR Accomplishment stories and choose the appropriate ones that you will want to use in your interview.
- Revisit your Elevator Pitch and re-work it to fit to this job opening
- Relate YOUR ABILITIES to the EMPLOYER’S NEEDS, to convince them to hire you

It is critical that you rehearse your answers once they are written out.

- Practice your answers out loud until you have each one polished.
- Then practice out loud in front of a mirror.
- Then ask a family member or a friend to let you practice your answers on them
- Use Interview Stream, our on-line tool where you can record your interviews using your webcam.
- Make an appointment with Career Development if you feel you need further help delivering your answers.
Decide what you are going to bring with you to the interview
Purchase a folder that you can leave behind in the interview and fill with:
- extra copies of your resume and cover letter
- any items that show examples of your past work (a short presentation, excel summary sheet with graphs, charts of a project, etc.).
- Letters of Recommendations if you have relevant ones.
- A brief (or detailed) Business Plan you have created for how you will tackle this job if hired
Purchase thank you cards, and have one pre-addressed, stamped and in your car to write out immediately after the interview and put into the mail.
Decide what you are going to wear and map out exactly where you will be going and how long it will take to get there and aim to be early just in case

First Impressions are Very Powerful, so make sure you make a great 1st impression!
- Build Rapport: Use eye contact and a firm hand shake upon meeting
- Mirror the demeanor of the interviewer, but in an authentic way for your personality
- Have a positive, can-do, problem solving attitude
- You need to believe you are the best person for the job and be able to articulate why
- Beware if your non-verbal communications: Tone & Speed of Voice, Facial Expressions, Body Language, Posture, Habits
- You can briefly after being asked a question to quickly think how you want to answer the question
- And Use can humor if you sense it would be totally appropriate to the situation

At the end of the Interview, they will usually ask if you have any questions for them or anything else for them. This is where you will take control:
- If you haven’t already during the interview process, you can break out the folder to show them your portfolio of work, letters of rec, business plan, or whatever else you have prepared.
- Ask any questions from your list that haven’t been addressed or new questions that have come to mind
- Close the deal by reiterating Interest, letting them know you think you would be great for this job
- Establish follow-up procedure and timeframes
- And Thank them sincerely letting them know it was very nice meeting them and that you look forward to seeing them again!

After the interview
- Write out the thank you note in your car and drop it in the mail. Keep it neat, legible and short
- As soon after the interview as possible, jot down your notes on how you feel you did and what you would like to improve upon (specific answers to questions, your non-verbal communication, your close, etc.)
- Follow up with a Thank You email if you haven’t heard from them in a week, to thank them again and that you are still very interested in the job.

Next Steps:
- Fully utilize and read through all the resources that accompany this webinar, the entire Effective Interviewing Guide on the Career Development Website and the Interviewing Guide on your Career Leader Assessment’s Website.
- Write out as many STAR Accomplishment Stories as you can, since you will be delivering these many times during your workshops in Orientation.
- Write out answers to the Behavioral and Traditional interview questions as possible