

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW

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BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Research the company and position description by using their company website, CEO resources, and LinkedIn, and networking with contacts and employees. Glassdoor is a great resource, but you should access through the CEO's website to get full access.
- Be prepared to give specific examples from your experience, education, or skills that are relevant to the job and organization. Use the position description as a guide.
- Create a portfolio with samples of your work, reference letters, awards and other materials that demonstrate your abilities.
- Get travel and parking information and an estimated time commitment so that there are no surprises on the interview day.
- Prepare 4-5 relevant questions for the interviewer that focus on the company's mission and goals (see examples on back).
- Practice, practice, practice! Visit the CEO for a mock interview and more information on preparing for an interview.

DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

- Make sure that you look professional. It is appropriate to dress more formally for the interview even if the environment is casual.
- Avoid heavy use of scented body products as others may be sensitive to the scent.
- Arrive at least fifteen minutes early and be sure to bring money for parking.
- Bring a professional looking folder or padfolio with two copies of your resume, list of references, pen, calendar, and notepad.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm and interest by making eye contact, smiling, and a firm handshake.
- Be courteous to everyone you meet; others not directly in the interview process may be asked to express an opinion about you.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Give clear and concise answers with specific examples about your past experiences, skills, and abilities that directly relate to the position or company goals. Mention your accomplishments whenever possible.
- Clearly articulate your career goals and how they relate to the position.
- Avoid talking negativity about past supervisors, co-workers, or companies of employment.
- Avoid asking about salary and benefits during the first interview.
- Ask at least two of your pre-prepared, well thought out questions to determine if this organization and job is right place for you.
- Maintain eye contact and avoid fidgeting during your interview. Calm nerves.
- You need to be fully engaged in this conversation, so turn off your cell phone and do not check it.
- Do not chew gum, eat or drink (unless offered to you).
- Be honest and sincere. Just be yourself!

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send a thank you letter within two days to the people who interviewed you. Reiterate your interest and some key points that were discussed during the interview. You may send a follow up email with any additional questions if you have any.
- Follow up with a phone call within a week if you have not heard back. Be persistent and try to stay optimistic.
- Be sure to send requested material such as transcripts, applications, or references in a timely manner.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

When deciding what to wear, consider your industry's standard. It is always better to dress a bit more formally if you are unsure.

- **Business Attire:** Consists of a two-piece suit in a conservative color (black, gray, navy) with a matching dress/shirt/blouse. Make sure that dresses and blouses have conservative necklines. Ties should be professional and conservative. Dark closed-toed shoes.
- **Business Casual Attire:** Can include dress pants/skirt and a shirt/blouse without a jacket. Can also include khaki pants or slacks and a nice shirt/blouse. Ties are not usually required.
- **Do NOT Wear:** revealing clothes, extensive jewelry/piercings or makeup, have exposed tattoos, too much cologne or perfume, hats indoors, open toed-toes, headphones, sunglasses, outdated or "loud" clothing, or any clothing with holes.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS AND TIPS FOR EACH TYPE

- **Phone/Screening Interview** – Preliminary, brief interview to determine if the candidate should move forward in the process.
 - As with every interview, make sure you are enthusiastic and discuss how your skills match the needs of the employer.

- Make sure to keep a copy of your resume close along with notes on the company and your calendar.
- Determine a location with little distractions and background noise ahead of time. Make sure you have good cell service.
- **In Person Interview** - One or more employer representatives will interview the candidate. May be multiple interviews or all day.
 - Can include either traditional interview questions or behavioral interview questions. See below for examples.
- **Group Interview** - Takes place with other candidates seeking the same job, predicts how well the candidates interact with others.
 - Try to find a good balance between getting your points across and dominating the conversation.
 - Practice a two minute introduction that summarizes your education, skills, experience, and related career goals.
- **Panel Interview** - Two or more people will interview you to get different opinions. Can be a very intimidating interview format.
 - Be careful not to ignore anyone on the panel. Make eye contact with each person while answering a question.
 - When asking questions, make sure they are directed at the group rather than a specific person.
- **Videoconferencing or Internet Interview** - Usually take place over Skype or other videoconferencing services.
 - Dress professionally from head to toe and make sure that your background is not distracting (e.g., white or neutral wall)
- **Pre-recorded Interview** - Usually no direct interaction with a person. Given set of questions and asked to record answers.
 - Don't sound too robotic, rehearsed or rushed. Consider attire and background.
- **Stress Interview** - Designed to see how you react under pressure. Used in fast-paced positions where quick decisions are needed.
 - Focus on the way you solve the problem, not the "right" answer. A typical question is designed to induce stress and can appear very aggressive: "Was the stress of your last job too much for you to handle?"
- **Case Interview** - Includes case questions about hypothetical situations. Used to test your analytical and problem-solving ability.
 - Be sure to explain your thinking process in detail to give them a good idea of the steps you take to solve a problem.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

Do not ask any questions that could be easily answered by looking at their website!

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| ✓ What are the challenges facing this company? | ✓ Who would I report to? |
| ✓ What type of growth do you see for the organization in the next five years? | ✓ What are the biggest challenges of the job? |
| ✓ What do you look for in people that you promote? | ✓ How does the company promote professional growth? |
| | ✓ How would you describe the organization's culture? |

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND COMMON EXAMPLES

Traditional Interview - Very common interview questions. Employers usually use your resume to guide their questions. Always have the job description in mind and consider ways to match your skills.

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| ✓ Tell me about yourself. | ✓ In what ways do you think you'll contribute to our company? |
| ✓ Why did you choose the career for which you're preparing? | ✓ What 2 or 3 accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why? |
| ✓ Where do you see yourself in five years? | ✓ Describe your most rewarding college experience. |
| ✓ What do you consider your strengths and weaknesses? | ✓ Why did you select your college or university? |
| ✓ How would a friend or professor describe you? | ✓ What led you to choose your field or major study? |
| ✓ What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort? | ✓ What do you know about our company? |

Behavioral Interview - Consists of questions about past experiences to determine how you will behave in the future. Give enough details so the interviewer understands the situation, but spend more time on the skills you used, the results, what you learned and what you might do differently next time. Ask for clarification if you do not understand the questions and make sure your answers are clear and complete.

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| ✓ Tell me about a time when you worked on a group project and disagreed with a team member's ideas. | ✓ Give an example of an occasion when you used logic to solve a problem. |
| ✓ Give me an example of a goal you reached and how you achieved it. | ✓ Have you ever made a mistake? How did you handle it? |
| ✓ Tell me how you work effectively under pressure. | ✓ Describe a stressful situation at work and how you handled it. |