

Interview Guide



TIPS

- Do NOT walk into an interview unprepared!!!!
- RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH
- Practice answers to interview questions
- Be yourself
- Bring enough copies of your resume and references for each interviewer
- Arrive no more than 10 minutes early and **DO NOT ARRIVE LATE!**
- Make sure your portfolio is updated and ready to be evaluated
- Stay POSITIVE
- Avoid fillers – um, ah, like, you know, etc.
- American business etiquette requires a firm handshake
- Turn OFF your cell phone

WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

An interview is a meeting (in person, via phone or webcam, or even through email) between a candidate and individual or group representing an organization or department. Basically it's an informational question and answer session where both the candidate and organization's representative (s) learn about each other to determine if there is enough of a match between the parties to extend a job offer. Some interviews are focused on determining qualifications,

but many are intended to determine if the candidate will be a fit for the organization and department.

Not all candidates who apply for a position will be asked to interview and not all interviewees will be considered when the organization extends a job offer. Organizations choose interviewees based off of how well the candidates match the needs of the job. That is why it is important for a candidate's resume to be

tailored to the position. Job offers are given to the individual who not only meets the qualifications of the position but also (and sometimes most importantly) to the individual who best fits. Fit for a position can be determined by many things including interpersonal relations, personality, goals that align with the mission or vision, or other factors. Sometimes very well qualified candidates will not receive a job offer because the fit wasn't there.

HOW TO PREPARE

WHEN YOU GET THE CALL, GET INFORMATION

- What times/days are available? *Do your best to interview at the convenience of the interviewers*
- Who will be conducting the interview/How many interviewers? *This can help you figure out the type of interview*
- How much time should you schedule for the interview? *This will help you adequately plan*
- Where will the interview be?
- Will you be asked to demonstrate your abilities or skills? *This question is for those who may need to show competencies (ex. voice audition)*

RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH!

If you have not already done so, you should learn about the organization, department, and if possible, the interviewers. Research can help you figure out the strengths and potential areas where the organization may want to improve. You will also be able to develop good questions to ask during the interview. And, as a bonus, you will be able to easily answer if in the interview you are asked what you know about the organization.

PRACTICE ANSWERS TO POTENTIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Most interviewees are nervous during interviews, but those who practice interviewing know how to answer interview questions can make the interview process easier for themselves. In most situations you will not know the questions in advance, but there are some common interview questions every candidate should have the answers to (see sidebar).

Many questions are behavior based (behavioral interviews). These types of questions may start with "Tell me about a time when..." or "Give an example of..." or some other request for an example of your experience. The interviewer is not looking for what you would do, but what you have done. To best answer these types of questions use the EAR method:

E – Example: Give a SPECIFIC example

A – Action: Provide information on YOUR role in the example

R – Result: Conclude with the outcome of your action

HOW TO PREPARE CONTINUED

Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself
- What are your strengths?
- What is your weakness?
- What are your short term or long term goals?
- Why are you looking to leave your current position?
- What do you know about our organization?
- What makes you the best candidate for this position (or: Why should we hire you)?
- If your previous boss was here, what would he/she say about you?
- See the following for examples of behavioral questions:
www.quintcareers.com/sample_behavioral.html

COMPILE QUESTIONS

Interviewers use questions to help get more information about the candidate and candidates should do the same to get information about the position and expectations. Questioning can help candidates also determine if the position would be a fit for him/her. Asking questions does not have to wait until the end of the interview and should be done throughout as appropriate. Ask questions that best help you, but avoid certain questions like:

- **Anything related to salary and benefits** (unless this has been brought up by the interviewer, then it is fair game) - *Focusing on salary may look like you are more interested in the money than the job*
- **What does the company do/what is the job?** *You should already know this*
- **Anything negative** - *Negative questions are always inappropriate*

DETERMINE ATTIRE

Standing out in an interview is important in terms of professionalism and fit for the position. Appropriate attire can help you present a complete package to the interviewer. When picking out attire remember that conservative business professional wear is almost always your best bet (depending on type of interview). Conservative business professional typically means

- **Suits in neutral colors** (both skirts, depending on length, and pants are acceptable for women)
- **Minimal accessories and jewelry**
- **Minimal visible skin**
- **Clothing is clean, pressed, and hole/wear free**
- **Closed-toe dress shoes for both men and women**
- **Minimal cologne/perfume and AVOID smoking**
- **Cover visible tattoos and take out visible body piercings** (ex. tongue studs)

DURING AND AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Positive attitude, professionalism and friendliness will go a long way in an interview. Show these qualities in the following ways:

- Make sure to answer questions positively (even if the question is negative, think about what you learned from the situation)
- Answer to the group, not just the person asking
- Show confidence in your abilities— remember, you are the only one in the interview who can talk about you; confidence is always positive
- Show genuine interest in the conversation
- Make appropriate eye contact and utilize assertive body language
- Focus on your fit for the position

FOLLOW UP

You should get a business card (or information) from EACH interviewer and should know the timeline for the hiring process. No more than 24 hours after the interview, send a thank you note or letter to the interviewers. This important step can help to keep you in the minds of the interviewers and is also a great way to show your interest in the position and re-emphasize your qualifications.

By knowing the timeline you can follow up with a well timed call to inquire on the status of the position. The goal with this follow up is to again show your interest and enthusiasm for the position. You can and should complete multiple follow ups, but be careful that you are not inconveniencing the interviewer.