

Important Interview Information

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Don't lose your cool!

- Be prepared
- Know how to sell yourself
- Know about the employer
- Know what questions to expect and practice them

Be Prepared *Before* the Interview: What you Need to Know About Yourself

Before you arrive at your interview, you should know how to make yourself look good. Build yourself up by describing the skills you have. You might think about the ways in which you demonstrate the following:

Communication Skills:

Write reports, letters and promotional materials, edit, explain, speak clearly and effectively.

Critical thinking skills:

Identify critical issues, identify general principles, define parameters of a problem, use reason and logic, creatively solve problems, analyze from many angles.

Research and investigation skills:

Identify information sources, formulate questions, design experimental models, use a variety of information, assess needs.

Creative skills: develop models, experiment, apply theory, synthesize, predict, create new ideas, use imagination.

Mechanical skills: design and compose objects and ma-

chines, set up and repair equipment, assemble, build with precision, operate.

Organization skills: keep deadlines, pay attention to details, accept responsibility, reason, use logic, make con-



tacts, arrangements, and decisions, classify, use clerical skills.

Numerical skills: use computational and statistical abilities, inventory.

Instruction skills: coach, facilitate groups, design educational materials, inform, lead.

Persuasion skills: influence others, sell, develop trust and rapport, motivate, arbitrate, negotiate, advance proposals, reconcile conflict.

Human relations and interpersonal skills: understand, listen, question, guide, review, represent, advocate.

Design and planning skills: set priorities, schedule time, identify alternatives, set goals, follow through, predict future trends.

Performing skills: speak publicly, tell humorous stories, develop stage presence.

Leadership skills: organize time, initiate, clarify and solve problems, take risks, be self-directed, motivate others to accomplish goal.

Managing/supervising skills: set goals and standards, assign tasks, organize ideas, design projects, make decisions, share responsibilities, implement policies, build teams.

Know economic skills: prepare and administer budgets, show financial accountability.

Evaluation skills: assess performance, set standards, make decisions, do analysis review.

Information You Should Know About the Employer

- ✓ Organizational goals/mission
- ✓ Recent items in the news and periodicals
- ✓ People you know in the organization
- ✓ Typical career path in your field
- ✓ Community support pro-

- grams
- ✓ Relative size of the organization in the field/industry
- ✓ Percent of annual sales growth in the last five years
- ✓ Potential new markets, products or service line
- ✓ Organization structure by product line, function, etc.

- ✓ Number of plants, stores or sales outlets
- ✓ Average time in non-management assignment
- ✓ Short term profit picture
- ✓ Structure of assets—price of stock
- ✓ Formal vs. on-the-job training

- industry
- ✓ Name of recruiter
- ✓ Percent of annual growth in earnings/share
- ✓ Employee data
- ✓ Consumer data

Behavior-Based Job Interviewing

The BBI concept—that past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior—sparks interviewing techniques that can reveal the job worthiness of candidates with considerable accuracy. It regularly leads to hiring/not-hiring decisions that do what they're supposed to do: bring into the organization new hires who have not only the knowledge and skills required for the job, but more importantly, the

personal and performance attributes needed to succeed in that job as well as within the particular culture of the organization.

The candidates who do best in these interviews are those who have predicted the questions (or at least the topics) and have planned and practiced their answers. Students who understand the process and prepare for it can use



the same techniques to great advantage in non-BBI interviews as well.

The candidates who do best in BBI interviews have predicted the questions/topics and have practiced their answers.

BBI STAR System

You can use the following guidelines to rehearse one- to two-minute descriptions of previous situations you've experienced:

Situation

Briefly describe to the interviewer the situation you were facing. Set the stage so they clearly understand the circumstances.

Task

Describe the task you undertook to deal with the situa-

tion.

Action

Describe the decision-making process you went through and the action undertaken.

Result

Describe the result:

* Be prepared to provide examples of occasions when results were not as expected. The skilled interviewer will probe your skill in handling failure and suc-

cess.

- * Be prepared for questions asking for more detail than you've already given.
- * Identify three to five top selling points—attributes that set you apart from other candidates—and be sure you point them out during the interview.
- * Always choose an example which has a positive outcome.

Common Skills Targeted for BBI Probing

- ✓ Alertness
- ✓ Assertiveness
- ✓ Commitment to Task
- ✓ Coping
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Decision Making
- ✓ Goal Setting
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Management



- ✓ Oral Communication
- ✓ Organization/Planning
- ✓ Perception
- ✓ Problem Solving
- ✓ Team Building

Behavior-Based Interview Questions

The following are examples of questions you may be asked in a Behavior-Based Interview:

1. Give me an example of a time when you demonstrated initiative.
2. Thinking over your college experience, describe a situation in which you were challenged in using your communication skills. Tell me about it in detail.
3. Tell me about a time when you were able to successfully resolve a conflict with a co-worker.
4. Tell me about your experience in dealing with routine work. What problems did you overcome in order to focus on the

details the job required?

5. Give me an example of a time when you set long range goals. Tell me what your goal was, how you decided on the goal, and the outcome.
6. What is the most difficult decision you made that

involved other people who did not agree with the decision? Tell me about the process of making that decision and the results.

7. What was one of the most difficult problems that you have solved?
8. Accuracy is often critical in producing quality results. Select a job that required you to complete paperwork and tell me what specific things you did to ensure accuracy in your results.



More Questions for Practice

Continue practicing with these questions:

Self:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your major strengths and weaknesses?
3. Describe your most satisfying accomplishments.

Work History/Education:

1. What was your most/least satisfying job?
2. Give some examples of your initiative, willingness to work, leadership skills, and ability to follow directions.
3. Tell me your reasons for leaving your job/resuming your work.
4. How did you get along with your last boss/coworkers?

5. How well do you work under pressure?
6. Why did you major in _____?
7. What college course(s) did you like the most? Least?
8. Tell me about your extra-curricular activities and interests.
9. What percent of your college expenses did you earn?
10. What plans do you have for further study?
11. What job in our organization do you want to work toward?
12. How long do you plan to stay with our company?
13. Tell me your personal preferences regarding: routine work, regular hours, overtime,

travel, large vs. small company/city.

14. What do you know about our company?
15. Why do you think you might like to work for our company?
16. Why do you think you are qualified for this job?
17. What are your salary expectations?
18. Are you willing to spend time as a trainee?
19. What interests you about our product or service?

Think about your previous jobs, internships, extracurricular activities, class assignments/projects and the important and positive skills you used to perform them.

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Books, 2000.

Just for Fun: Favorite Interview Questions

(from Employer Recruiting Practices Survey; St. Louis University and MWACE)

- If I were the Dean of your school, what feedback would you give me?
- Describe a difficult co-worker and how you work with that person.
- Describe your idea of a perfect job.
- Describe yourself in five words or phrases.
- Give me an example of a time when you failed, what you learned from it, and how you applied it in a future situation.
- How did you find your career passion?
- If you could be anywhere, doing anything right now, where and what would that be? Why aren't you doing it?
- If you were an employer and could only make one job offer, which one of your classmates would you hire and why?
- Tell me about a time you had to persuade a group of people to agree with your point of view.
- What's your favorite movie?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

EVALUATE THE INTERVIEW —

MAKE NOTES TO YOURSELF.

SEND A THANK YOU LETTER TO

THE INTERVIEWER (IDEALLY

WITHIN 24 HOURS).

Ask the Employer

The interview is not only about responding to questions, but asking them as well. By asking questions of your potential employer, you can learn important information about the company/firm/whatever it is as well as demonstrate your own initiative and knowledge. Your ques-



tions should be well thought-out, and you can preface

them with a bit of research you've done. For example: "I read recently in the New York Times that your company _____. Can you tell me about any developments in that area?" This shows that you're serious and interested in the employer and have spent time thinking about it.

Other questions you may ask:

1. Would you please show me an organizational chart and where this position fits within the structure?
2. What are the areas in the job that you'd like to see improved?
3. What is this organization's plan for the next five years, and how does this department or division fit in?
4. What major problems or

Questions You May

challenges have you recently faced? How were they addressed?

5. What opportunities exist for staff development/upward mobility/travel, etc.
6. What is the typical career path for a person in this position?
7. What will my days be like?
8. Could you tell me about the people with whom I'll be working most closely?
9. How is promotion determined?
10. What is the one thing I can do right at this job to assure my success?
11. When do you plan to make your decision? May I call you on _____ to find out the results?