

# INTERVIEW PREPARATION

An interview is your opportunity to share your skills and personality. Just like the employer is interviewing you, you want to ask questions to get to know the employer. Ultimately, the employer is looking for the right "fit" for the position and organization.

## **Before the Interview**

### Gather Information About the Interview

Look at the interview time, location, interviewer's name & title, directions, parking suggestions, interview format, etc.

### Research the Employer and Position

Look at their website, LinkedIn page, learn their mission, goals, products, services, culture, etc.

### Determine Your Attire

Dress your best! While every company and field are different, you want to dress professionally. This might be business professional (a suit) or a sweater or button up top with nice pants or dress with a cardigan or blazer. Limit fragrances, make-up, jewelry & any distracting clothing. Hair & nails should be well groomed.

### Determine Your Salary Expectations

While you should not be the one to bring up salary, be ready to talk about it. Research salary ranges for the position in your geographic area. Glassdoor.com and Onet.com are great resources to review salary ranges.

## **Practice Questions**

During an interview, you might be asked standard/screening questions, such as:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What makes you the best candidate?
- What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
- Why do you want to work for us?

Be prepared to answer behavior-based questions require you to provide stories in the basic areas of leadership, communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, and problem solving, such as:

- Tell me about a time when you experienced conflict at work. How did you overcome it?
- Tell me about your proudest professional accomplishment and why this achievement is significant to you.
- Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.

# INTERVIEW PREPARATION

## During the Interview

### Arrival

Arrive 30 minutes early but don't check in until 10 minutes before; use the extra time to review the job description, review interview stories and relax. If offered water it is recommend you take it because it gives you a break between answering questions and your mouth may become dry.

### Answering Questions

Be confident! You have researched the company and practiced answering questions. Now is the time for you to show off your strengths and personality.

In the United States there are certain questions employers cannot ask during the interview process.

Sample illegal questions include:

- What is your religious affiliation?
- Are you pregnant?
- What is your race, color, or ethnicity?
- Do you have a family?

### Ending the Interview

At the end of an interview, it is common to be asked if you have any questions. Review the job description to see if any questions come to mind. A few questions you might consider asking include:

- How is success measured?
- What skills does it take to be successful in this position?
- What is the company culture?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?

Don't forget to get the names of the interviewer(s), thank them for their time, shake hand(s) if appropriate & be on your way

## After the Interview

### Reflect On The Interview

Write down notes on what you talked about so you can freshen your memory. These notes may also help you prepare for future interviews.

### Send a Thank-You Note!

Make a positive impression by sending a thank-you note. It is recommended to send this via email so it gets to the employer in a timely manner, and note that it is a best practice to send a thank-you note to everyone who interviewed you.

- Thank the employer for the opportunity
- Restate skills/experiences that make you the best candidate
- If you feel connected with an interviewer on a topic, restate it
- Finally, send anything the interviewer might have requested (credentials, references, etc)

# SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



## Interview Questions

### Behavioral Interview Questions

Many organizations use behavior based interviewing in their hiring process. This technique is used on the premise that it is the most accurate predictor of future performance based on past performance of a similar situation. One of the best ways to answer these types of questions is to use the STAR technique.

### STAR Technique

Utilize the STAR technique to clearly communicate an answer to interview question. This format allows you to touch on the important pieces of a situation you previously experienced, what action you took and what the result was. It also helps the employer follow the story you are trying to explain, while also connecting your answer with how it relates to the position.

**S– Situation**

**T – Task**

**A – Action**

**R – Result**

Example: Tell me about a time you set a goal and were successful in achieving it.

- Situation: As a student programmer in our student life office, I was responsible for creating a student training timeline and my goal was to execute the event under budget.
- Task: We had over 30 student organization leaders attending the three day training. I was tasked with scheduling sessions, collaborating with other team members to create and fill training sessions, order food, and more.
- Action: After creating the training schedule, I began calculating costs of food, travel, materials and additional fees, and realized I would be a bit over budget. I spoke with my supervisors and sought advice for how to cut expenses.
- Result: After consulting with my supervisors, I was able to utilize their suggestions and additional resources to find more affordable options for food and materials, cutting my budget by \$200, resulting in the training coming in under budget. The support of my staff was invaluable and taught me that open communication with my team helps elevate a project, as well as meet specific goals.

# SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## Commonly Asked Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- What are your short/long-term goals?
- Why are you interested in our company? What do you know about the company? How does this fit into your overall career goals?
- How would your peers/subordinates/supervisor describe you?
- Why should we hire you? What makes you unique in comparison to other candidates?

## Problem Solving

- How do you manage/resolve conflict?
- Tell me about your most difficult decision.

## Management/Leadership

- How do you motivate team members? How do you cope with change?
- Tell me about a situation or position where you took extra initiative and assumed responsibilities that were beyond your written or understood job description.

## Difficult to Answer "Negative" Questions

- What did you like least about your last position?
- Tell me about a time you failed and the impact it had on you.
- Describe the most challenging customer service experience you've had & how you handled it.

## Interpersonal / Communication / Teamwork

- What role do you typically play on a team?
- What kinds of people do you like to work with?
- Describe a project you accomplished as part of a team or work group. What was your role and what were your specific contributions to the project's success?

## Customer Service

- Tell me about a situation in which you were proud of the way you handled a customer problem. Tell me specifically what you did to achieve a positive result.

## Questions for the Interviewer

- What opportunities exist for professional growth and development?
- Describe the typical first year assignments for this position.
- What personal qualities, skills, or experience would help someone do well in this position?
- What do you see as the greatest challenge in this position?
- What are your 60/90/120 day goals for this position?
- What is your vision for this department/division?
- How does this position interact with other departments?
- What is the next step in the hiring process?