



Interview Tips

You have submitted a well-crafted resume and cover letter, but that only gets you to the next stage which is the interview. This is what gets you the job, and we want to make you feel prepared to enter into an interview and sell yourself, your gifts, and abilities, and to determine if the position and organization is right for you. As well during the interview, the potential employer is trying to figure out the same thing, are you a good fit for their company? What do you have to offer?

There are three stages to the interview process, Before, During, and After. Each is vitally important and we will go over each in detail.

Before the Interview

Before you enter into the interview make sure you have done all the necessary preparation work well ahead of time. Just like studying for a test or quiz, it is important to study for the interview to make sure you are armed with knowledge before sitting down. Here are some helpful tips for preparing yourself for the interview.

- Know who you are, your gifts, abilities, and hidden talents. These should all come out during the interview.
- Know your strengths and weaknesses. Never focus on one over the other, but be prepared with 3 or 4 of each. We will talk about this in more detail in the During the Interview section.
- Be prepared with goals, interests, and prior work experience that will all align with this position you are interviewing for.
- Get enthusiastic for the position and organization.
- Thoroughly research the position and organization you are interviewing at. Look up their company history, names of important people within the organization, know their mission statement, goods or services they offer. Also get an idea of the health of the company, how has it performed over the last couple of years?
- Select your interview outfit. If they ask for a particular dress code, meet that, but otherwise assume it is business attire. Make sure you have showered, and are well groomed prior to the interview.
- Try to find out who is interviewing you, and make sure you memorize their names and positions in the company.
- Bring an extra copy of your resume, a portfolio (if it is required), letters of recommendation, and a reference list.
- Get a good night's sleep!
- Arrive 15 minutes early.

During the Interview

Congratulations you are now in the interview! Your palms may be sweaty, and your voice might crack, but do not worry we have some helpful tips for getting you through the interview.

Take a deep breath and relax.

Stages of an interview

The interview will have multiple stages, and each stage is important to the employer. This is your opportunity, to take advantage to sell yourself in each moment.

Welcome and Introduction

- Always begin by shaking the hands of all those present in the interview. Say your name clearly, and some sort of greeting.
- Make eye contact with the person asking you questions, without prolonged staring. Find a balance of looking at the interviewer, and others that might in the room.
- It is important to consider your verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Sit when and where you are asked to sit, but stand to shake hands with anyone, especially if someone enters the room after you.

Questions from the Employer

- Listen carefully as they ask you questions, do not hesitate to repeat the question to make sure you heard it clearly, and so that you can answer it appropriately. Also, if a questions seems vague, feel free to ask a clarifying question.
- Try to anticipate the questions. Below we will provide a sample list of questions for you to go over.
- Incorporate your previous work and educational experience when possible to answer a question. This is a chance to bring your resume to life, and paint a picture of your background and history to the information you have provided.
- Inevitably you will be asked about strengths and weaknesses, this is always important for employers, not necessarily because of the specific answers, but it shows how you view yourself
 - Strengths – have 3 to 4 prepared, be confident without being boastful.
 - Weaknesses – have 2 to 3 prepared, use this as opportunity to sound introspective, and willing to do the hard work to better yourself. Use your past to show how you have overcome or manage a weakness. Employers want people who will continue to get better. Never say, “I don’t know” when asked about weaknesses, and on the flip side, never spend more time on weaknesses than on strengths.
- Never insult, or say negative things about a previous work experience. Use reasons for leaving like, “hit a growth ceiling”, “it was time to move on to new opportunities”, “it didn’t align with my long-term career goals.”

Questions to the Employer

At some point during the interview, most employers will give you the opportunity to ask questions. Never pass this opportunity up. Prior to your interview you should prepare 3 – 5 questions you will want to ask. It shows you care, are intelligent, and have a keen interest in the organization. Do not ask about salary and/or benefits at this time. Some sample questions are:

- What do you hope the person taking on this role will accomplish in the next six months/year?
- What can you tell me about your new products or plans for growth?
- Why is this position open?
- What are the next steps in the interview process?
- When do you hope to have someone start in the role?
- What are the success factors associated with this position?
- How does this position fit into the big picture of the organization?
- How long have been employed here? What do you like about working here?
- What, if any, are some of the challenges you see for this position?

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the interview shake the hand of the interviewer again, and anyone else present. Thank them for their time and don't forget to request a business card. Finish by asking when you can expect to hear from them.

After the Interview

After the interview is over take some time to evaluate the interview. Do not stress about what you did or did not say, but always use any interview as a growth opportunity

Within 24 hours send a follow up note of thanks again for the interview.

Sample Interview Questions

Take some time to go over these sample questions with a spouse, friend, or family member.

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you leave your last job?
3. Can you work under pressure?
4. What are some of your strengths? weaknesses?
5. How long would you stay with us if this job were offered to you?
6. What other positions are you considering?
7. What can you offer us that someone else cannot?
8. What did you learn on your last job?
9. What did you like least about your last job?
10. What position and salary do you expect to hold in two years? five years?
11. What do you know about our company? organization?
12. Why are you interested in working for us?
13. How long do you think it would take you to make a positive contribution to our organization?

14. What is your opinion of the organization you currently or previously worked for?
15. Describe a typical day in your current or most recent job.
16. What about the position under discussion interests you the least? the most?
17. What preparation have you had for this position/program?
18. Are you willing to be flexible in your work hours?
19. Why do you like this kind of work or program?
20. Do you prefer working with people? data? things? ideas?
21. What kind of supervisor or boss do you prefer?
22. What do you find satisfying about this kind of work?
23. Would you choose this same line of work or major again? Why?
24. Are you willing to relocate?
25. Which is more important to you, money or job satisfaction?
26. How many days of work or school did you miss last year?
27. How did you find out about this position/program?
28. Why did you choose Tyndale University College and Seminary?
29. What is the best course you had in University/Seminary?
30. Why did you select your major? this career area?
31. Describe an accomplishment that made you particularly proud of yourself.
32. What are your hobbies and interests?
33. Are you satisfied with your education?
34. What personal attributes do you feel are necessary to succeed in this field?
35. Describe your ideal job after graduation.
36. Do you plan to pursue graduate work?
37. What does success mean to you?
38. Do you prefer to work for a small or large organization?
39. When can you begin work?
40. What special project work have you done, which relates to this position?
41. Describe what you learned as an intern or co-op student.
42. Do you have references? May we contact your former or present employer?
43. In what areas do you perceive a need for additional training?
44. What is your GPA? Do you think it is a good indicator of your academic ability?
45. In what community and/or school activities have you been involved?
46. If you are not offered this position, what do you plan to do?
47. Identify a major problem you've encountered and how you dealt with it.
48. Why should we offer you this position?
49. Would you prefer to work with an organization that emphasizes high volume, productivity or product quality? Why?
50. What questions do you have for me?
51. What is the single most important idea you contributed or your single most noteworthy accomplishment in your present job?
52. What specific things did you do in your last job to improve your effectiveness? (Employers appreciate linkages to increased revenues and decreased expenses.)
53. How do you make important decisions?
54. Walk me through your progression with your present company leading me up to what you do now on a day-to-day basis.
55. In retrospect, why is ABC Corp. a better company for you having worked there?
56. What would your past employer say on a reference if we asked what your greatest contribution to the organization was?