

Interviewing Skills :

- Putting Your Best Foot Forward



Types of Interviews

- Phone (typically used for initial screening)
 - Look good to feel good; dress well and smile
 - Have notes/resume in front of you
- Panel
 - Address all panelists when responding to questions
- Group (mostly done for retail positions)
- Meal (mostly done by businesses/corporations)
 - Practice dining etiquette
 - AVOID alcohol!
- Demonstration (child care, teaching, etc.)

Structured vs. Unstructured Interviews

- **Structured Interviews**

Structured interviews are utilized by many larger organizations. This interview is especially popular when there is more than one of the same position available within the organization. In a structured interview all applicants for the position are asked the same set of questions. A structured interview may contain standard interview questions, behavioral interview questions, or a combination of the two.

- **Non-structured**

This style uses broad, open-ended questions designed to have you "open up" and talk about yourself. It is more conversational in tone than the directed interview.

Preparing for the Interview

- Research, research, research!
 - Learn as much about the employer as possible through the internet and people you know
- Know your qualifications for the position
 - Review job announcements and match qualifications with your abilities and past successes
- Participate in a Mock Interview at Career Services
- Schedule the interview during the time of the day when you are most energetic (if possible)

CSO's Guide to Dressing for Success

- Unless you are interviewing at night club, leave the super-high heels and tight, sequenced shirt at home
- General rule: Dress for the position you would like to have in the future (i.e. teaching candidates need to dress like administrators)
- Know your audience and region
 - Whereas the bay area tends to be more casual, expect to wear a suit and panty hose for interviews on the East Coast
- Avoid using fragrances, drinking coffee or smoking before the interview

The Interview

- Arrive early, but not too early (5-10 minutes)
- You may pop a mint before the interview, but avoid chewing gum
- Introduce yourself with a firm handshake and eye contact
- Sit comfortable, but fairly erect.
- Lean slightly forward toward the interviewer to convey interest
- Use appropriate facial expressions and gestures

Non-Verbal Communications

WORDS	10%
TONE OF VOICE	35%
BODY LANGUAGE	55%

90% of what we communicate is non-verbal (gestures, posture, appearance, facial expressions)

The C-A-R Approach to Answering Interview Questions

- **Context** of the situation
- **Action** you took to resolve situation
- **Result** or outcome you brought about or feel proud of

Use this as a guide to help you answer even the most difficult interview questions. Answering with relevant examples will help you stand out.

Tell Me About Yourself...

Interviewers just love to include this in their bag of interview questions. Remember, interviewers do not want to know about your personal background, rather the following:

- Future career goals
- Education
- Experience
- Enthusiasm for the field

Example:

I will be graduating this May with my Bachelor's in Sociology. My education and background has been centered on preparing myself to become a _____. Let me tell you specifically how I've prepared myself....(give overview of background). Mention highlights of job qualifications, personal qualities and education level.

Illegal Questions

Employers may only ask questions that are specifically related to the job. Personal questions regarding your age, marital or family status and plans, race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation are illegal. If you are asked illegal questions, remain calm and don't make an issue of the question. One response might be, "I have given my career plans much thought and preparation and I am confident that my personal plans will not interfere with my career."

Do you have any questions?

- Always answer “Yes”
- Do not inundate the interviewer(s) with questions
- Do not ask about salary
- What would you really like to know about the position or organization?
- See handout on “Interview Question Tips” for sample questions to ask.

After the Interview

- Close the interview with a thank you and express your continued interest in the positions
- Write a Thank You letter to the employer within 24 hours of the interview.
 - Typed, written or in e-mail
- If given an offer either....
 1. Review offer and ACCEPT
 2. Respectfully DECLINE