

Interviewing

Preparation equals success in the interview process. Conducting a thorough self assessment, reviewing your work history, researching your targeted field/position/organization and practicing anticipated questions will go a long way toward insuring interview success.

Interview preparation suggestions:

- Attend an Interview Workshop
- View videotapes on the interview process (Career Services Office)
- Network, speak with people who are employed in your targeted field
- Schedule a videotaped mock interview

In the best case scenario an interview is a conversation where both the employer and the candidate have information to share and information they wish to gather.

Candidates:

- What skills and experiences do you want to make sure you've discussed before the interview comes to an end?
- What information do you need about the position?... company?...Your supervisor?... so that you can make an informed decision on whether or not the position is a good fit for you.

Employers:

- Can this person handle the position, does reality match what the resume presented?
- Will this individual fit into our existing team?
- What questions would you ask a candidate if you were hiring for this position?

It's impossible to predict every question that an employer will ask, however by proactively preparing for the interview you will remove much of the unknown and increase your chances of presenting yourself in a professional manner. Interview styles vary depending on the personality of the interviewer, the industry and the corporate culture of the organization. While the majority of interviews are one-to-one basis, you may encounter a group interview and/or a day long interview.

Be sure to ask, when called to schedule an interview, who you will meet with and how they have structured the interview. Regardless of the approach a candidate who has done their homework will be able to articulately share how they would add value to the company, demonstrating how their particular skills, knowledge and experience will enable them to handle the position.

Increasingly employers are using *behavioral interview* techniques as a method of evaluating a candidate's ability to do the job. The premise for this style of interviewing is that past behavior is a predictor of future work performance. Behavioral interviewing provides the interviewer with a clearer understanding of an individual's behavior in a work setting by putting the focus on problem solving skills and quantitative results. Focus on describing the situation, how you approached it, what you learned from the experience and the results. **Behavioral interviewing focuses on detailed information about your experiences as opposed to generalized information in a traditional interview.**

Here are some helpful pointers to remember about behavior interviewing:

- Be prepared to give detailed examples of related/ non-related experiences.
- Every example must have a beginning, a middle and a positive ending.
- Remember a simple formula to tell your story.
- Such as: *E=example, A=action, R=results*. Remember the word ear.
- Focus on situations that highlight positive behaviors.
- Remember the interviewer will carefully scrutinize your response.

BASIC INTERVIEWING TIPS

The key to successful interviewing is preparation and practice. Appropriate business attire will not only project professionalism but confidence in your presentation. Dressing appropriately is expected for all interviewing situations. ***Be conservative in your dress style.*** Use business magazines as a guide if necessary. Be sure to map out a route to the company prior to the interview.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

- Review your skills, interest and values.
- Think carefully about your short and long term goals.
- Accurately assess your strengths and weaknesses.
- Identify examples that demonstrate your strengths.

EMPLOYER RESEARCH

- Research the employer, industry and field.
- Read company's mission statement, financial reports and other literature.
- Familiarize yourself with the organizational structure.
- Use the Internet to review the homepage on an organization.
- Review newspapers and journals for unbiased information about an organization.

PRACTICE

- Speak with a counselor about interviewing.
- Develop questions for the interview.
- Schedule mock interviews and review interviewing tapes.
- **Practice, Practice, Practice.**

NON-VERBAL/VERBAL TIPS

- Be honest and don't exaggerate.
- Demonstrate enthusiasm and never be negative.
- Use concise and articulate language.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Greet your interviewer with a firm handshake.
- Don't use the interviewer's first name at anytime unless given permission.
- Be aware of illegal questions regarding age, marital status, ethnicity, and religion.
- Establish good body posture. Don't fidget.
- Write a thank you letter within 24 hours.

SAMPLE QUESTION

- 1.) Describe a project where you exhibited leadership skills and the results.
- 2.) Provide an example when a project failed and how you dealt with it.
- 3.) Discuss an experience where motivating others to complete a project was difficult.
- 4.) Give an example of how you work under pressure.
- 5.) What are your short and long term goals? Describe steps toward achieving them.
- 6.) What did you do when a project was unexpectedly altered? Give an example.
- 7.) Tell me when you felt frustrated with a customer. How did you resolve this issue?
- 8.) Give me an example of how you handled criticism from a supervisor or co-worker.
- 9.) Describe an internship or related experience which illustrates your greatest achievement.
- 10.) Talk about a project which used your creativity and ingenuity.
- 11.) Discuss a situation which required you to sell an idea. How successful were you?
- 12.) Tell me about a time where you were a member of a group where one participant was preventing the group from completing the assigned task. How was this approached?
- 13.) What have you done recently which contributed to your college community or neighborhood?

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

- 1.) What support/training do you provide new employees?
- 2.) Could you describe your performance review process?
- 3.) Will this job require extensive travel?
- 4.) What are the most significant challenges which face your organization?
- 5.) Are a majority of your projects team oriented?
- 6.) Are salary requirements adjusted to the cost of living or job performance?
(Salary questions are generally saved until you are sure they are interested in you.)
- 7.) Is this a new position? If not, why did the other person leave your company?
- 8.) How would you describe your corporate culture? What efforts have been made to welcome individuals from diverse backgrounds?
- 9.) What professional development opportunities are available at your company?
- 10.) What products are being developed to remain competitive?
- 11.) What is your time line for hiring, will I hear from you either way?

** For more information on interviewing, visit the Career Services Office and/or check out our website: www.salemst.edu/careersvs for additional resources.*

** To make an appointment, or schedule a mock interview call 978.542.6406*