Interviewing Guide
A Resource for Interview Success

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Types of Interviews

Once selected for an interview, you must be prepared for what to expect according to different interview formats. It is best to get as much information as possible before, such as who will be interviewing you, etc. Expect more than one interview during the hiring process if you are selected.

Traditional Face-to-Face Interview
Usually this is a one-on-one conversation that could be an initial screening or an actual interview. Your focus should be on the person asking questions by building rapport, maintaining eye contact, listening and responding accordingly to each question.

Panel/Committee Interview
This type of interview could consist of 3-10 people. Get a feel for the different personalities in the room and respond to questions accordingly while finding a way to connect with each person on the panel. If you know who will be on the panel ahead of time, see if you can research each person to get a feel for their position and qualities. Take your time responding to questions and be sure to make eye contact with the entire panel.

Behavioral Interview
The behavioral interview could occur in any format and focuses on your past experiences as well as hypothetical scenarios. When answering each question, be sure to listen carefully and respond with what the situation was, background, what you have done or would do, why you would take specific steps or actions and end with a conclusion. If using an example with not favorable outcomes, be sure to make it positive by explaining your understanding of your mistakes and how you plan to improve. (STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result)

Case Interview
During some interviews, you may be asked to demonstrate your problem-solving skills by being presented a case study. If verbal, be prepared to ask the interviewer clarifying questions for informational purposes. Then, when answering, be sure to have your thoughts organized and explain your reasoning and thought process. Employers are mainly looking to see how you apply your knowledge in making decisions. In some cases, you may be asked to write about a case study. For this approach it is best to start with an outline to make sure your thoughts are organized before you write. (Researching the organization ahead of time can only help you with case study questions!)

Telephone Interview
In most cases, telephone interviews are preliminary unless a candidate lives far away from jobsite and technology cannot be utilized. It is important to treat this interview as you would in a one-on-one. Arrange for a quiet space to schedule the conversation and be sure to take notes (if you are not video conferencing). Make sure your voice is articulate and conveys energy while having any helpful materials in front of you.

Group Interview
This interview format is designed to see how candidates interact in a group environment as well as to unveil leadership potential. Be sure to make eye contact with whoever is speaking and be engaged in the conversation at all times. Don’t be afraid to speak up or to create dialogue with other group members or the interviewer, especially concerning the industry you are interviewing for or your knowledge of the organization.

Lunch/Dinner Interview
Be sure to find out if the interview will be casual or formal so you are wearing proper attire. Be knowledgeable about dining etiquette and follow the lead of the interviewer. Avoid alcohol and foods that can be messy and be sure to find a common ground with the interviewer during the meal and leave a positive, lasting impression upon departure.

Stress Interview
This interview is to see how you perform under pressure and is rare outside of the sales and customer service industry. Do not take anything personal, as it is all part of the interview and to see how to react. Be calm when answering all questions and be sure not to rush into a response.
Types of Interview Questions

Credential verification questions
This type of question includes What was your GPA? and How long were you at . . . Its purpose is to place objective measurements on features of your background.

Experience verification questions
This type of question includes What did you learn in that class? and What were your responsibilities in that position? Its purpose is to subjectively evaluate features of your background.

Opinion questions
This type of question includes What would you do in this situation? and What are your strengths and weaknesses? Their purpose is to subjectively analyze how you would respond in a series of scenarios. The reality is that Tape #143 in your brain typically kicks in (I know the answer to that one!) and plays back the pre-programmed answer.

Dumb questions
This type of question includes What kind of animal would you like to be? and What color best describes you? Their purpose is to get past your pre-programmed answers to find out if you are capable of an original thought. There is not necessarily a right or wrong answer, since it is used primarily to test your ability to think on your feet.

Math questions
This type of question includes "What is 1000 divided by 73?" to "How many ping pong balls could fit in a Volkswagen?" Its purpose is to evaluate not only your mental math calculation skills, but also your creative ability in formulating the mathematical formula for providing an answer (or estimate, as can often be the case).

Case questions
This type of question includes problem-solving questions ranging from: "How many gas stations are there in Europe?" to "What is your estimate of the global online retail market for books?" Its purpose is to evaluate your problem-solving abilities and how you would analyze and work through potential case situations.

Behavioral questions
This type of question includes Can you give me a specific example of how you did that? and What were the steps you followed to accomplish that task? Its purpose is to anticipate future behaviors based upon past behaviors.

Competency questions
This type of question includes "Can you give me a specific example of your leadership skills?" or "Explain a way in which you sought a creative solution to a problem." Its purpose is to align your past behaviors with specific competencies which are required for the position.
Interview Preparation

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

• Research the organization.
• Practice your interview skills
• Prepare questions to ask the interviewer
• Be prompt—plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early (Make a practice drive ahead of time)
• Lay out and make sure your suit is pressed to impress
• Know the job requirements and research the organization
• Know your rights regarding inappropriate questions

DURING THE INTERVIEW

• Remember you are being interviewed from the moment you step into the building
• Offer a firm handshake and smile
• Be enthusiastic and genuine to everyone you encounter
• Listen carefully to questions and respond appropriately
• Relate yourself to the organization and articulate strengths through example
• Frame all responses in the positive
• Make sure you are listening 50% of the time and talking 50% of the time
• Make good eye contact and be aware of your body language
• Act professionally; be courteous
• Thank the interviewer for his/her time

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

• Ask the interviewer for a business card before you leave and promptly send a thank you (e-mail is best)
• Jot down notes about the interview (your impressions, how you think it went, questions you remember)
• Follow up over time, if you are not the chosen candidate, contact the interviewer and ask how you can improve or if they can given you feedback on your interview
• Evaluate if the job is right for you if an offer is extended
Job Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

- **Do** take a practice run to the location where you are having the interview -- or be sure you know exactly where it is and how long it takes to get there.
- **Do** your research and know the type of job interview you will be encountering and **do** prepare and practice for the interview, but **don't** memorize or over-rehearse your answers.
- **Do** dress the part for the job, the company, the industry. And **do** err on the side of conservatism.
- **Do** plan to arrive about 10 minutes early. Late arrival for a job interview is never excusable. If you are running late, **do** phone the company.
- **Do** greet the receptionist or assistant with courtesy and respect. This is where you make your first impression.
- **Don't** chew gum during the interview.
- If presented with a job application, **do** fill it out neatly, completely, and accurately.
- **Do** bring extra resumes to the interview, even better a portfolio.
- **Don't** rely on your application or resume to do the selling for you. No matter how qualified you are for the position, you will need to sell yourself to the interviewer.
- **Do** greet the interviewer(s) by title (Ms., Mr., Dr.) and last name if you are sure of the pronunciation. (If you're not sure, **do** ask the receptionist about the pronunciation before going into the interview.
- **Do** shake hands firmly. **Don't** have a limp or clammy handshake!
- **Do** wait until you are offered a chair before sitting. And **do** remember body language and posture: sit upright and look alert and interested at all times. **Don't** fidget or slouch.
- **Don't** tell jokes during the interview.
- **Do** make good eye contact with your interviewer(s).
- **Do** show enthusiasm in the position and the company.
- **Don't** smoke, even if the interviewer does and offers you a cigarette. And **don't** smoke beforehand so that you smell like smoke. And **do** brush your teeth, use mouthwash, or have a breath mint before the interview.
- **Do** avoid using poor language, slang, and pause words (such as "like," "uh," and "um").
- **Don't** be soft-spoken. A forceful voice projects confidence.
- **Do** have a high confidence and energy level, but **don't** be overly aggressive.
- **Don't** act as though you would take any job or are desperate for employment.
- **Do** avoid controversial topics.
- **Don't** say anything negative about former colleagues, supervisors, or employers.
- **Do** make sure that your good points come across to the interviewer in a factual, sincere manner.
- **Don't** ever lie. Answer questions truthfully, frankly and succinctly. And **don't** over-answer questions.
- **Do** stress your achievements. And **don't** offer any negative information about yourself.
- **Don't** answer questions with a simple "yes" or "no." Explain whenever possible. Describe those things about yourself that showcase your talents, skills, and determination. Give examples.
- **Do** show off the research you have done on the company and industry when responding to questions.
- **Don't** bring up or discuss personal issues or family problems.
- **Do** remember that the interview is also an important time for you to evaluate the interviewer and the company she represents.
- **Don't** respond to an unexpected question with an extended pause or by saying something like, "boy, that's a good question." And **do** repeat the question out loud or ask for the question to be repeated to give you a little more time to think about an answer. Also, a short pause before responding is okay.
- **Do** always conduct yourself as if you are determined to get the job you are discussing. Never close the door on an opportunity until you are sure about it.
- **Don't** answer cell phone calls during the interview, and **do** turn off (or set to silent ring) your cell phone and/or pager.
- **Do** show what you can do for the company rather than what the company can do for you.
- **Don't** inquire about salary, vacations, bonuses, retirement, or other benefits until after you've received an offer. Be prepared for a question about your salary requirements, but **do** try and delay salary talk until you have an offer.
- **Do** ask intelligent questions about the job, company, or industry. **Don't** ever not ask any questions -- it shows a lack of interest.
- **Do** close the interview by telling the interviewer(s) that you **want** the job and asking about the next step in the process.
- **Do** try and get business cards from each person you interviewed with -- or at least the correct spelling of their first and last names. And **don't** make assumptions about simple names -- was it Jon or John -- get the spelling.
- **Do** immediately take down notes after the interview concludes so you **don't** forget crucial details.
- **Do** write thank you letters within 24 hours to each person who interviewed you.
PRE-INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

_____ I have researched the organization and know the following:
  - Primary products or services provided by the organization
  - Organizational structure and likelihood for advancement opportunities
  - Salary range of the position for which I am applying
  - Organization's record of performance, recent news items
  - Organizational vision and strategic plan

_____ I have prepared questions to ask the interviewer.
Remember that interviewing is a two-way street. You are also interviewing the interviewer to determine if your needs would be met and if you would like working for the organization. Questions to consider asking include:
  - Where does the position fit within the organization?
  - Who are the primary people with whom I would be working?
  - How many people have held this job in the last five years? Why did the previous person leave?
  - What are some examples of the best results produced by people in this job?
  - What are the opportunities for growth?

_____ I've determined the minimum salary I'm willing to accept and am prepared to discuss negotiable factors should the interview want to discuss salary.

Salary negotiation usually occurs during a second interview or when an offer is made, but general inquiries are often made during the first interview. When asked about starting salary, it's best to respond with the salary range in which you are interested and then indicate that you can be more specific once you learn about the other benefits that are available. In order to prepare for the actual negotiations, ask questions to get a sense for the following:
  ♦ Has the organization had difficulty filling the position due to a lack of qualified applicants?
  ♦ What's the criticalness of filling the position?
  ♦ What is included in the benefits package?

_____ I know what I will wear.

_____ I know where the interview is and how long it takes to get there.

_____ I know the interviewer's name.

_____ I have a typed list of references to take along with extra copies of my résumé.
Sample Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you choose to attend Rider University?
- How did you go about choosing your major?
- Tell me about your previous work experience at _________. What was your biggest challenge there?
- What would your former supervisor say about you?
- What is your greatest strength? Weakness?
- Describe your ideal company, location, and job.
- Why do you want to work in the _______ industry?
- Give me an example of your leadership skills.
- Tell me about a time when you worked on a team. What was your role, etc.
- Describe a situation in which you had to work under extreme pressure or deadlines.
- Tell me about a time when you made a mistake. What did you do learn?
- What was the most difficult decision you’ve had to make recently and why did you choose the answer that you did?
- What are your career goals over the next five years? Where do you see yourself?
- Why do you want to work for ________?
- What do you know about our company?
- How do you handle stress?
- What sets you apart from our other applicants?
- What questions do you have for me?

Questions you can ask

- What makes this position available?
- How would you describe the work culture and environment here?
- What goals do you have for this position?
- What qualifications are key for this position?
- What will the interview process look like?
Interviewers are required by law to keep questions job-oriented. Charges of discrimination can result from improper questioning during the interview. The following chart outlines the legality of inquiries into certain subjects before an individual is actually hired:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>LAWFUL</th>
<th>UNLAWFUL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Applicants may be asked about their ability to perform specific job functions.</td>
<td>Employers may not ask job applicants about the existence, nature, or severity of a disability before an offer of employment has been made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Have you ever worked for this company under a different name? Is any additional information relative to change of name, use of an assumed name, or nickname necessary to enable a check on your work record? If yes, explain.</td>
<td>Original name of applicant whose name has been changed by court or otherwise. If you ever worked under another name, state name and dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address or Duration of Residence</td>
<td>Applicant’s place of residence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph</td>
<td>May be required after hiring for identification.</td>
<td>Requirement or option that applicant affix a photograph to employment form at any time before hiring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>Are you a citizen of the United States, do you intend to become a citizen of the United States? If you are not a United States citizen, have you the legal right to remain permanently in the US? Do you intend to remain permanently in the United States?</td>
<td>Whether an applicant is naturalized or a native-born citizen; the date when the applicant acquired citizenship. Birthplace of applicant. Birthplace of applicant's parents, spouse, or other close relatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Inquiry into applicant's academic, vocational, or professional education and the public and private schools attended.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Inquiry into work experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>Names of applicant's relatives, other than spouse, already employed by a company.</td>
<td>Names, addresses, ages, number or other information concerning applicant's spouse, children or other relatives not employed by a company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice In Case of Emergency</td>
<td>Names of persons to be notified.</td>
<td>Name and address of person to be notified in case of accident or emergency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Experience</td>
<td>Inquiry into applicant's military experience in the United States or in a State Militia. Inquiry into applicant's service in particular branch of United States Army, Navy, etc.</td>
<td>Inquiry into applicant’s general military experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Inquiry into applicant's membership in an organization which the applicant considers relevant to his or her ability to perform the job.</td>
<td>List all clubs, societies, and lodges to which you belong.</td>
</tr>
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## UNLAWFUL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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<tr>
<td>Religion or Creed</td>
<td>Inquiries into applicant’s religious denomination, religious affiliations, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed. Applicant may not to be told, “This is a (Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish) organization.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race, National Origin, or Languages</td>
<td>What languages do you read, speak, or write fluently? (only if pertinent to or required for the job in question).</td>
<td>Inquiry into applicant’s lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, parentage, nationality, race, or color. What is your native language? Inquiry into how applicant acquired ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language. Nationality of applicant’s parents or spouse. What is your mother's tongue?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Inquiry as to sex. Do you wish to be addressed as Mr.?, Mrs.? or Ms.?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Can you meet specified work schedules, or do you have activities, commitments, or responsibilities that may hinder the meeting of work requirements?</td>
<td>Are you married? Are you single? Divorced? Separated? Engaged? Name or other information about spouse. Where does your spouse work? What are the ages of your children, if any? Who will care for your children when you work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Control</td>
<td>Inquiry as to capacity to reproduce, advocacy of any form of birth control or family planning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age or Date of Birth</td>
<td>Are you between 18 and 65 years of age? If not, state your age.</td>
<td>How old are you? What is your date of birth? Requirement that applicant submit birth certificate, naturalization or baptismal record. Requirement that applicant produce proof of age in the form baptismal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrest Records</td>
<td>Have you ever been convicted of a crime? (Give details*)</td>
<td>Have you ever been arrested?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* An applicant may not be denied employment because of a conviction record unless there is a direct relationship between the offense and the job or unless hiring would be an unreasonable risk. An ex-offender denied employment is entitled to a statement of the reasons for such denial. Correction Law, Article 23-A, 6754
Thank You Letter Samples

SAMPLE 1: GENERAL

Dear [Recipient Name]:

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss your opening for a [job title]. It was a pleasure meeting you on [date] and learning more about the position and [Company Name]. I was impressed with the projects that [Company Name] is developing and with your plans for the company’s growth.

I am enthusiastic about the possibility of working for you at [Company Name]. The position sounds like a perfect match for my skills and experience. Please contact me at [phone number] if you have any questions. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

SAMPLE 2: REJECTION

Dear [Recipient Name]:

Thank you for coming to speak with us regarding the available position. We enjoyed having the opportunity to meet you and discuss your credentials.

While we were most impressed, we have identified another candidate whose background and experience better meet the requirements for this job.

Thank you again for your interest in Adventure Works. We wish you success in your job search.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

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**Sample Record-Keeping Form**

Date of Interview: Location of Interview:

Name(s) and Job Title(s) of Interviewer(s):

Impressions About the Interviewer(s) and Organization:

How would the position be a good fit in terms of my interests, skills, and career objective?

What are some potential problems associated with the position or organization?

Information Gathered About the Selection Process:
- Are they doing second interviews?
- When do they expect to make a decision?
- How many positions are they wanting to fill?

Information Shared About Salary and Benefits:

Review of My Performance:
- Was I as informed about the organization as I should have been?
- Was I relaxed?
- Did I answer the questions in a way that stressed the three key factors: my skills, my motivation, my effective work style?
- Did I steer questions toward the points I wanted to stress?
- Did the interviewer get interested and involved in what I was saying?
- Did I present an accurate and favorable picture of myself?
- Did I practice good listening skills?
- Did I thank the interviewer?

If I'm not selected, how could I improve my candidacy for future openings?
Negotiating Salary Tips

1. Avoid giving salary requirements until you have the job offer and make sure to get the offer in writing.

2. Don’t be the first to name salary expectations.

3. Most jobs have a range for salary. Research salary beforehand, which can be done online at Payscale.com, Salaryscout.com or Glassdoor.com. Once a range is presented and you know your worth, you can negotiate within that range using your research to justify.

4. If you are applying for an entry-level position, there may not be room to negotiate based on a high number of qualified candidates.

5. Don’t be afraid to ask the company if that is the best offer they can extend if the offer is much lower than expected.

6. Show flexibility, counter offer instead of rejecting (especially in a tight market).

7. If you desire a higher salary than is offered, you may suggest additional responsibilities based on your skills.

8. Be sure to evaluate all the benefits of the offer, not just the salary such as bonuses, healthcare, pension plans, stock options, raise schedules, time-off, tuition reimbursement and other benefits. For example you may get an offer for $50,000 with no benefits and another for $40,000 with benefits that make your total $65,000.