THE IN-PERSON INTERVIEW PROCESS

After you have done your Mock Interviews (Practice Interviews) you will be ready for the real thing. There are three types of interviews that you may sit in. Free Response, (non-standardized) Structured (standardized), and Behavioral (evidentiary). Regardless of the style, the same process applies to all three.

- Prepare for the interview and do your homework on the company you are interviewing for. Research company information so you can look knowledgeable when they ask you what you know about their company. Review your resume so you do not look surprised or confused when they ask you a question about it. Practice the "frequently asked questions" and bring questions to ask the interviewer (at least 1 and no more than 3).
- Bring a Legal Pad and a Pen to the interview, looks professional.
- Do not be late to the interview. Try to arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. Do not arrive more than 15 minutes early as it may cause your interviewer to stop what they are doing and rush. If you are going to be late for any reason, call the company office immediately expressing how sorry you are.
- Before you enter the building, spit out your gum. It is not polite, and it is distracting to chew gum during the interview. The interviewer may not want to see your gum in your mouth while you are speaking.
- It is recommended to go to the interview by yourself. It is not appropriate to bring your spouse, parents, children, or any other individuals. It is not the job of the office personnel to watch your children or entertain your guests.
- Before walking into the building for your interview, sit in your car and take a deep breath. Tell yourself "You Can Do This!" and pump yourself up, do not stress. Get your nervous jitters out now before going in. Walk in tall with your head held high.
- While waiting for the interview to start, be pleasant in the office or waiting room. Do not look at your phone, in fact, turn your phone off before entering the building. Look at the memorabilia or brochures, this shows you look interested in the company and you may learn something. Ask how the secretary is doing and be positive. The employer may ask the office staff if you were pleasant and what their first impressions were of you.
- Dress to impress. Your appearance is the interviewers first impression of you. We will cover dressing for an interview a little later in this packet. If you need to freshen up from the car, ask to use the restroom but be sure to still be in the office or waiting room before the interview is scheduled to start.
- The first handshake is very important. Practice this before your interview. Your handshake needs to be firm, not bone crushing or flimsy. When you shake hands make sure to make eye contact with the other individual, be confident and smile. To avoid clammy hands, do not fold hands together while waiting, keep palms open to the air and discretely wipe them off before you stand from your seat to shake their hand.

THE IN-PERSON INTERVIEW PROCESS CONTINUED

- When your interviewer asks you, “Hi, how are you?” It is good manners to respond with, “I am well, how are you?”. Say “Well” instead of “Good,” it sounds more professional and if you practice this ahead of time, you will be able to tell how your voice changes between the two words. By asking them in return you are showing your interest in them and it is also kind to ask. It keeps the conversation flowing in a light and positive direction.
- Maintain good eye contact and good posture during the interview. Smile and be personable. Your posture should show that you are paying attention, interested in the process and are eager to answer questions. Do not cross your arms or seem closed off as this can look like you are nervous. Refrain from rocking or swiveling the chair during the interview, keep your posture professional but also relaxed, not tense.
- Wait to sit until a chair is offered to you. It is also acceptable to take a coffee or water if offered to you by the interviewer if you can see it already in the room or if all the interviewers already have a cup. You do not want them to make a fresh pot of coffee just for you or travel far to fetch you a water. The interviewer normally gives off cues that you can pick up on during the interview to help you respond.
- Remember, you practiced answering questions, so you got this. Keep your answers clear, concise, honest, confident, and complete. Show your interest and enthusiasm even when you do not know all aspects of the position in detail, your passion and sense of purpose will emerge in the interview and the interviewer will see your potential. Try not to ramble to avoid delays in the interview. There may be more than one of you scheduled so they will want to keep on track.
- Do not overstay your welcome. Once the interview has concluded and you have asked a couple of questions, you should be able to pick up on cues from your interviewer when it is the best time to leave. This is not to say you should rush out of the room. It is good to shake hands with everyone in the room, say “It was very nice to meet you”, and say “I look forward to hearing from you”. Just do not hang out in the lobby for too long after.
- One day after your interview, it is recommended to send a thank you letter/email or follow-up letter/email. See details about this letter from previous packet.
- You may be called for a second interview, same rules apply.

FREQUENTLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- Describe your personality.
- What are your career goals?
- Are you interested in getting an advanced degree or additional licensure?
- Are you interested in doing research?
- Why are you interested in us?
- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you think you would like to work in our company?
- What type of work do you want to do?
- What do you think you can contribute to our company?
- What can you tell me about your strengths and weaknesses?
- What do you do well?
- What don't you do well?
- Tell me about your current and previous employers?
    a. Avoid bashing your past employers when answering this question. The interviewer or employer is gaging how you may talk about them or the company in the future.
- Why did you leave (or want to leave) your employer?
- What do you think of your last or present boss?
- What do you think would be an ideal job?
- What were the best and worst aspects of your last or present job?
- Are you interested in a training program?
- Why did you choose your field of special study?
- Are you willing to travel?
- Are you willing to relocate?
- How do you handle stressful situations?
- Tell me a time when you had to make a difficult decision at school or work?
- What role do you normally land within a group project?
- Do you normally get along with your co-workers or team-members?
- What is your academic average?
- What subjects have you enjoyed the most?
- What subjects have you enjoyed the least?
- What extra-curricular activities did you participate in?
- What can you tell me about your background and experience?
- What type of past work experience you have done did you like best?
- What are your hobbies?
- What kind of pay are you looking for?
- Which of your accomplishments has given you the most satisfaction?
- What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- If you were offered the position today, how would you respond?

If you do not know the answer to a question asked of you, try to answer it to the best of your ability. If it looks like you don't know the answer, don't ramble, instead say "I don't know the answer, but I can get back to you after the interview and let you know my answer."

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

- How would you describe a typical day and week in this position?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the department I would join?
- Are there any examples of a career path beginning with this role?
- Is this a new role? If not, what did the previous employee go on to do?
- How much travel is expected within this role?
- If I am offered the job, how soon would you like me to start?
- What are the prospects for growth and advancement?
- Where does the role sit within the team structure?
- What training is available for this position?
- What is the most important thing I should accomplish in the first thirty days?
- What do you like best about working for this company?
- What are the biggest rewards of the job and working for this company?
- What type of person does well here?
- What are the company's future growth plans?
- What can I clarify for you about my qualifications?
- When can I expect to hear from you?

INTERVIEW ATTIRE

This is the first image your potential employer will have of you so dress to impress.

Below are some recommendations about interview attire.

- Avoid crazy colors. Instead invest in dark colored suits. Darker clothes can help make you look older and professional.
- Combine your suits with simple blouses, pants, shirts, skirts, shoes that can be worn for business casual or under your suit jackets.
- Avoid tight or low-cut blouses, high-rise skirts, baggy or wrinkled shirts, and low-rise pants. Try to keep your image professional and pick clothes that fit well prior to your interview.
- Avoid clashing colors or accessories with your outfit.
- It is a nice touch to wear a colored shirt that matches the company's colors or a color from their logo.
- Hang your professional clothes and neatly put away your shoes to avoid damage and excessive cleaning.
- Do not overdue your make up or add excessive jewelry and avoid perfume/cologne.
- Make sure your undergarments cannot be seen through, between, or outside of your clothing.
- Style your hair neat and professional.

When you are picking out your interview clothes, imagine what your potential employer sees and think if this is the image you want to portray.

If you do not have appropriate clothes for an interview, see if you can borrow from a friend till you are able to purchase your own.

Job Fairs are just like an Interview so same rules apply.

PHONE INTERVIEW TIPS

A phone interview should be treated just like any in person interview. Sometimes companies use a phone interview as a preliminary measure before accepting in person interviews. Phone interviews tend to run shorter than an in-person interview, usually between 5 to 30 minutes.

Below are some key points to remember to have a successful phone interview.

- Find the perfect spot for the interview, free from distractions and noise. Put your pets away or find a pet sitter and give everyone in your house a heads up. Ask them to please be quiet or away during your phone interview time.
- If you need to pace while on the phone, set up in a room with that kind of space.
- Do a test call from the room or mock interview at least 30 min before the interview, this will help you gets ride of interview day jitters.
- Check phone service and your battery life so the call can go through or so you do not lose the call in the middle of your interview.
- Keep your resume in front of you so you can refer to it during your interview
- Do your research before your interview. Keep notes handy in front of you so you can easily look at bullet points.
- Also keep the job description in front of you and make notes next to their requirements with how you qualify and how you relate to the job.
- Prepare a set of questions to ask the interview, 2 to 3 questions are recommended. This helps to keep it a two-sided conversation.
- Dress up for the interview, just like you would for an in-person interview. Do not wear sweatpants or a sweatshirt. Dressing up mentally prepares you for the interview and helps to keep you professional. You want to feel that you dressed for the part.
- Smile when on the phone. Your voice changes when you smile on the phone and you sound friendlier. It is very noticeable on the phone if you are smiling. It’s True!
- Do not ramble, when we get nervous, we tend to ramble on the phone. Keep an eye on your notes and stay confident in yourself because you prepared for this.

VIDEO INTERVIEW TIPS

A video interview should be treated just like any in-person interview. Sometimes companies use a video interviews when you are applying for a position far away, when an in-person interview is not available at that time, or in pandemic situations. Video interviews tend to run the same as an in-person interview.

Below are some key points to remember to have a successful video interview.

- Find the perfect spot for the interview, free from distractions and noise. Put your pets away or find a pet sitter and give everyone in your house a heads up. Ask them to please be quiet or away during your phone interview time.
- When setting up your interview spot, avoid sitting on a swivel chair. Swiveling on a chair makes you look nervous and is very distracting to the interviewer.
- When it comes to the interview room, an empty room creates an echo when you speak. The echo makes it hard for the interviewer to hear what you are saying. Same goes for a cluttered room as you will look messy. As you dress up for the interview, dress up your background. Keep it clean, neat, and simple.
- When dressing up your surroundings, light placement is important. Do not set up with a window behind you or to the side as it creates a shadowy effect. Keep the window in front of you or add a lamp in front if needed. Try to keep any light above eye level.
- You want to keep the camera at eye level, so set up your laptop on a box or something sturdy to adjust the height of the camera. You want the camera to be at least two-thirds up your face and at an arm's length away. Stay sitting up straight, try to avoid slouching as it shows through the camera to the interviewer.
- Check your computer's battery life, plug it in the whole time to stay safe.
- Do a test call from the room or mock interview at least 30 min before the interview, this will help you gets ride of interview day jitters. This will also allow you to test the picture quality and audio to make sure you look and sound your best.
- If you know what application your video interview will be using, Zoom, Google Meet, WebEx, etc. try to practice on that with a friend so you can get a feel for it before the interview.
- Do not use Wi-Fi to connect to the internet if possible, it is recommended to use an Ethernet cord. You do not want to accidently glitch or freeze during your interview or have low internet connection.
- Do your research before your interview. Keep notes handy in front of you so you can easily look back bullet points. A great way to do this is to use Sticky Notes. Write your bullet points on sticky notes and pace them around the screen/monitor. This way you are not looking down all the time, you can easily glance over so your face and eyes are always looking forward.
- Keep your resume and the job description in front of you so you can refer to it during your interview.
- Prepare a set of questions to ask the interview, 2 to 3 questions are recommended. This helps to keep it a two-sided conversation.

VIDEO INTERVIEW TIPS CONTINUED

- Dress up for the interview, just like you would for an in-person interview. Do not wear sweatpants or only dress up your upper body. Dressing up mentally prepares you for the interview and helps to keep you professional. You want to feel that you dressed for the part. You would hate to have to get up for some reason and the interviewer sees pajama bottoms under your suit.
- Do not forget to smile. Your voice changes when you smile on the phone and you look friendlier. It's True!
- Try to maintain eye contact with the camera during the interview. We generally like to look at everyone's faces; however, we are interviewing virtually so to make eye contact you must look right at the camera.
- Do not ramble, when we get nervous, we tend to ramble. Keep an eye on your notes and stay confident in yourself because you prepared for this.

DEALING WITH REJECTION AFTER AN INTERVIEW

Do not let a rejection stop you from pursing your interest in an industry. Try to learn from it, not dwell on it.

Once you are told, you could call and ask the interviewer what you could have done differently during the interview process and ask for feedback.

Even if you are upset, stay calm, polite, and professional because you may want to apply with the same company later.

ACCEPTING, NEGOTIATING OR REJECTING AN OFFER

By applying for a position, you have already decided that you are interested in a job, but what if you are offered positions at multiple companies or you found out more information about the job and are no longer interested?

Review these questions to help you decide which route to take.

- What does the position come with?
    - Besides the pay, some positions come with a benefits package. This is an important item to review. Some jobs with a benefits package including medical insurance, retirement plans, paid tuition and much more. It is up to you to decide which is important.
- Create a pros and cons list.
    - This is a great way to decide which job is the best fit for you. Think about the fit, growth, salary, benefits package, general interest and if the job excites you.
- Decision time – Yes, No, Negotiate?
    - Not everything can be negotiable, such as insurance or retirement plans as those are preset or standard for the company sometimes.
    - Before you negotiate pay, make sure you did your homework about the pay range for your type of industry. Be ready to explain why and show what you can do for the company instead of what the company can do for you.

EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS PACKAGE

Saving for retirement becomes more and more important as you get older. So, start planning for your retirement now. Some benefit packages include a retirement savings plan with an employer match, which is basically free money put towards your retirement. These plans could be called 401(k), 403(b), IRA, Roth, HSA, ESOP, Profit Sharing, Pension plans and much more.

Insurance packages also play a big part in your adult life. Types of insurances could include medical, vision, dental, life, short-term disability, long-term disability, critical illness, etc.

Paid Vacation Time, Sick Days, Cafeteria plans, wellness programs, company stocks, childcare, tuition assistance and even a company car are additional benefits that a job could come with. Not every job includes these benefits so review the plans if offered.

JOB TRAINING, TESTING OR BACKGROUND CHECKS

Some jobs require new applicants to take a background checks and perform an array of tests to make sure they are qualified for the job after an interview. This is generally towards the end of the interview process.

Recruiters may look you up online and view your social media sites. Review your sites to make sure you put your best foot forward and presenting yourself professionally on all your social media platforms.

Employers may conduct a background check on you to verify claims made by you during the hiring process or to see if there are legal implications that may prevent hiring at certain employment opportunities.

Types of trainings an employer may ask of you could include on-the-job, technical, performance, apprentice, orientation, among others. These depend on the type of industry and position to make sure you can do the job you applied for.