

Interviewing Skills

Top Reasons Interviewees Fail:

- Poor communication skills
- Lack of preparation
- Poor appearance
- Failure to keep eye contact
- Inappropriate background or interests
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Lack of poise or self-confidence
- Too aggressive or overbearing
- Late to the interview
- Unrealistic salary demands
- Lack of extra-curricular activities

Being Prepared

- Take Inventory!
 - Strongest skills
 - Greatest areas of expertise
 - Personality Strengths (AND weaknesses)
 - Key accomplishments
- Do your homework
 - Research the company
 - Know who you're talking to
 - Know what they're looking for
- Practice, Practice, Practice!
 - Talk in front of a mirror
 - Record or videotape yourself
 - Role play with a friend
 - Do some "real" practice interviews

Types of Interviews

- Screening
- Stress
- Situational / Technical
- Behavioral
- Team (or: Firing Squad)

Screening Interview

- Generally with an HR person, who decides where you might fit
- Likely to be "scripted"
- Mention COMMON buzzwords for your technical abilities
- Don't get too technical!
- Be as specific as possible about your abilities and interests

Stress Interview

- "To see what you're made of"
- Interrogation - style questions
- May question credentials, career moves, school choices
- May insult or challenge your abilities, belittle accomplishments
- Intended to provoke fear, hostility, confusion, intimidation

How to Survive a Stress Interview

- Stay calm. Recognize it for what it is - a test.
- Never take your eyes off of the interviewer. Speak directly to him/her in a confident manner.
- Give yourself time to think before responding to questions
- Don't get defensive or angry - answer sarcasm with calmness and sincerity

Situational / Technical Interview

- Designed to see how well you perform under pressure
- Hypothetical questions - "what if..."
- Turn technical questions towards your strengths if possible
- Be honest about your abilities
- Give yourself time to think before answering.

Behavioral Interview

- Digs deep into past experiences
- How did you handle yourself in tight spots?
- What kinds of disasters have you experienced, and what did you do?
- Be careful - don't be disparaging of a previous employer.
- If you made mistakes, admit it, and talk about what you learned.

The Team Interview

- Meet a group of interviewers around a conference table.
- May be an orderly group or a free-for-all interrogation
- May be asked to give a "presentation"
- Broad range of questions
- Stay calm, answer each question thoughtfully
- Make sure to pay attention to all of the interviewers....

How to Ace an Interview

- Respect your interviewer
- Stay positive - keep smiling
- Show enthusiasm
- Be honest
- Make eye contact
- Think before you speak
- NEVER disparage a previous employer
- Know your strengths and weaknesses
- Be prepared!
- Follow up - write a thank-you letter