Interview Techniques

10 Rules of Interviewing

1. **MAKE A STRONG FIRST IMPRESSION:**
   Get the interview off to a good start by being on time and greeting the interviewer with a smile and a confident handshake.

2. **RESEARCH THE ORGANIZATION:**
   Demonstrate knowledge of the company by including information from your research in your answers. The organization’s website and LinkedIn are great places to start.

3. **KEEP YOUR RESPONSES FOCUSED:**
   Your answers should be between 30 seconds and 2 minutes long.

4. **USE STRONG EXAMPLES AND QUANTIFY WHEN POSSIBLE:**
   Show the interviewer that you have certain qualities and skills, rather than telling them, by providing specific examples. Including measurable information gives you greater credibility.

5. **REPEAT YOUR STRENGTHS:**
   Know your top three strengths as they relate to the position, and reiterate them throughout the interview. Remember to include strong examples of your strengths.

6. **PREPARE SUCCESS STORIES:**
   Fully developed examples from previous experiences can help you respond to any behavioral interview question an employer may ask.

7. **PUT YOURSELF ON THEIR TEAM:**
   Show that you are a good fit by positioning yourself as a member of the team. Use organization-specific language and refer to products and services.

8. **ASK QUESTIONS:**
   By asking questions, you convey interest and enthusiasm to the interviewer. Avoid questions regarding salary and benefits.

9. **FOLLOW UP:**
   Send a thank you note within 24 hours to the interviewer restating your interest and thanking them for their time.

10. **EVALUATE THE INTERVIEW:**
    Reflect on your experience and review your performance. What did you do well and what can you improve upon for next time?

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What to Bring

- Padfolio, notebook and pen
- Copies of your resume
- Transcripts / portfolio (if requested)
- Questions for the employer
- Calendar
- List of references
- Directions
- Examples of your work

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Before the Interview

- Explore your strengths, weaknesses, interests, and career goals
- Research the employer
- Review the job description
- Prepare for commonly asked interview questions and potential questions to ask the interviewer
- Practice aloud
- Review your resume

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During the Interview

- Arrive early – approximately 10 – 15 minutes before the interview
- Greet the employer and/or associates with a smile, firm handshake and confidence
- When responding to questions, organize your thoughts and then answer
  - Give examples using BART (Background, Action, Result, Tie it back to the position)
  - Answers should be positive and concise
  - Do not identify a weakness essential to the job
- Be aware of non-verbal behaviors – posture, voice, eye contact, and smile
- Relax and enjoy the conversation

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After the Interview

- Ask questions – have 3 – 5 prepared
- Thank the interviewer and determine next steps
- Reaffirm your interest in the position
- Ask for a business card and send a thank you letter or email within 24 hours
- Re-evaluate interview questions and your responses – reflect on your performance and take notes for future reference
 APPLYING FOR THE JOB

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Typical Interview Questions

PERSONAL:
• Tell me about yourself
• What are your major strengths and weaknesses?
• What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
• What achievements from your past work experience are you most proud of?

SCHOOL BACKGROUND:
• How does your college education experience relate to this job?
• What extracurricular activities did you participate in and what did you learn from those experiences?
• What was the most difficult course you took? How did you handle it?

WORK EXPERIENCE:
• What prior work experience have you had and how does it relate to this job?
• How would your past supervisors describe you?
• What were your most significant accomplishments in your prior work experience?
• What did you enjoy most about your previous work experience? Least?

EMPLOYER KNOWLEDGE:
• Why are you interested in this position?
• Why are you interested in this particular company?
• What attracts you to this particular industry?

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:
• Please describe your ideal work setting
• What major accomplishment would you like to achieve in your life and why?
• What are your career interests?

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS – USE BART (BACKGROUND, ACTION, RESULT, TIE IT BACK):
• Tell me about a conflict situation and how you resolved it
• Describe a situation when you had multiple tasks to complete under very tight time constraints
• Describe a time when you sold your colleague / supervisor on an idea
• Tell me about a time when you worked on a project as part of a team. What role did you play?
• Describe a time when you failed at something. What would you have done differently?
• Give me an example of a situation when you took a leadership role

Sample Questions to Ask

• How is job performance measured?
• What are the biggest challenges associated with this position?
• What would a typical project / assignment be like?
• How would you describe an ideal employee?
• What additional qualities does the job require that we haven’t discussed?
• How does the current or former occupant’s background and experience differ from mine?

Research

WHAT TO RESEARCH:
• History of the organization
• Products and services
• Culture
• Management style
• Organizational structure
• Financial conditions
• Major competitors
• Plans for growth
• Job responsibilities
• Opportunities for advancement
• Locations

WHERE TO RESEARCH:
• Company website
• career.uci.edu
• Onetonline.org
• Google
• Online newspapers
• Orange County Business Journal
• LinkedIn
• glassdoor.com
• Current and former employees, interns, alumni

For additional help, try:

CAREER SPOTS (CAREER.UCI.EDU/CAREERSPOTS)
Quick, informative videos on a variety of topics, including career readiness, internships, and career advice.

VMOCK (VMOCK.COM/UCI)
Upload a PDF copy of your resume and receive instant feedback based on presentation, impact, and competencies.

CAREER LABS
Drop in any time during our labs for hands-on help with resume, cover letter, LinkedIn, part-time jobs, and your Handshake profile.