

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Describe the most common types of interviews
- ▶ List the steps required to prepare yourself in an interview
- ▶ Explain how to answer questions during an interview
- ▶ Describe how to handle tricky situations during an interview
- ▶ List the steps to follow after an interview

PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

- ▶ An interview provides the opportunity for an organization and a candidate to trade information and determine if they are a good fit for each other.



TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

- ▶ Screening - Used to ensure candidates meet basic qualification requirements. Typically conducted over the phone.
- ▶ **Behavioral - Designed to understand how a candidate has behaved in the past as an indicator of how the candidate will perform in the future. Questions are based on skills that are considered necessary for the job**
- ▶ Group - Used to understand how candidates behave and stand out among peers. During these type of interviews it is better to be an active participant than a casual observer

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ Research the industry
- ▶ Prepare a set of examples you can use to demonstrate experience
- ▶ Practice answering interview questions with family, friend and professional career development workshops like this!



DURING THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ First impressions count
 - ▶ Be on time
 - ▶ Greet each person with respect and professionalism
 - ▶ Smile
 - ▶ Make eye contact
 - ▶ Shake hands firmly
- ▶ Stay calm and composed.

- ▶ Take your time - it's OK to pause for a thought
- ▶ Project a positive attitude
- ▶ Listen carefully
- ▶ Give honest and concise answers
- ▶ Keep the interview professional
- ▶ Use tone of voice and body language to convey your interest
- ▶ Ask questions of the interviewer

DURING THE INTERVIEW – ANSWERING BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS ASK FOR A SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF YOUR BEHAVIOR FROM PAST EXPERIENCES AND FOCUS ON SKILLS NEEDED FOR THE POSITION. YOU MAY USE WORK EXPERIENCES, HOBBIES, VOLUNTEER WORK, SCHOOL PROJECTS, ETC. AS EXAMPLES OF PAST BEHAVIOR

- ▶ Give me an example of when you've led or been part of a successful team
- ▶ Tell me about a time when you became disheartened with a task
- ▶ Give me an example of when you've gone the extra mile to get a job done
- ▶ Tell me about a time when you overcame a great challenge

STAR TECHNIQUE

- ▶ One strategy for preparing for behavioral interviews is to use the STAR Technique

SITUATION

- Describe the situation you were in
- Describe a specific event of situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past

TASK

- Describe what you were trying to accomplish
- Describe the tasks involved in the situation.

ACTION you took

- Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you
- Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did – not the efforts of the team

RESULTS you achieved

- What happened?
- What did you accomplish?
- What did you learn?
- Be quantitative

SAMPLE STAR STORY

Question - You indicated on your resume that leadership is one of your strengths. Please describe an experience in which you used your leadership abilities

SITUATION

During my senior year of High School, I was elected Vice President for Professional Programs for my student association. The duties of the position included securing speakers for our meetings, advertising the programs to the high school community, introducing speakers, and evaluating each program.

TASK

Previous attendance at meetings had decreased substantially due to a lack of interest. The goal was to implement programs to address the professional development of our association and increase attendance by 25% compared to the prior year's figures.

ACTION you took

I assembled a team to help with the program design and speaker selection. I developed a survey to determine the members' professional interests and ideas for possible speakers and topics. My team and I had each member complete the survey. Then we randomly selected members for a focus group interview. I had learned about this research technique in my marketing class and thought it would help us identify why attendance had dropped.

RESULTS you achieved

Because of the information we gathered from the surveys and interviews, we selected speakers for the entire year, produced a brochure describing each program and the featured speaker. Under my leadership, attendance increased 150% over the previous year.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- ▶ Ask any questions you may have about the position or organization (culture, responsibilities, day-to-day activities, etc.)
- ▶ Ask what the next steps are (additional interviews, etc.)
- ▶ Always follow up with a thank you email
- ▶ If you are not granted another interview, do not give up! Keep refining your story and continue to practice. All interviews are good practice!

