

# MSBA Strat-Ex & Career Success

Interview Preparation

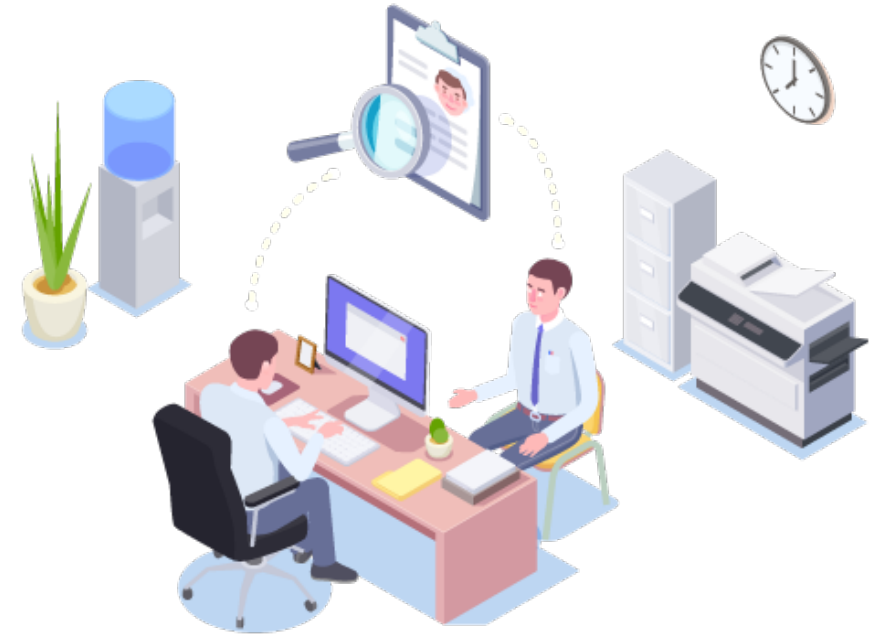
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Terry College of Business  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR EVERY INTERVIEW

- What interests you about *this function* (finance/ops/analytics) *or industry?* (consulting/manufacturing/technology)
- Why are you drawn to *this company?* (vs. the competition – think of values, principles, commonalities in background)
- Why *you?* (what makes you a better hire than others who are interviewing for this role at this company)



# THE BIG THREE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## 1) *Why this function or industry?*

What do you know about the work involved in ...

How or where did you learn about it?

What are the recent trends surrounding it?

What future do you see in it?



# THE BIG THREE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## 2) *Why this company?*

How do they outperform or outshine the competition?

What attracts you in values, principles, or culture?

Do you know anyone working there now?

Is there anything recent in the news you should know?



# THE BIG THREE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## 3) *Why you?*

What strengths, interests, or experiences do you have that tie the story together?

What makes you a clear choice to continue in the process?



# Strengths & Weaknesses

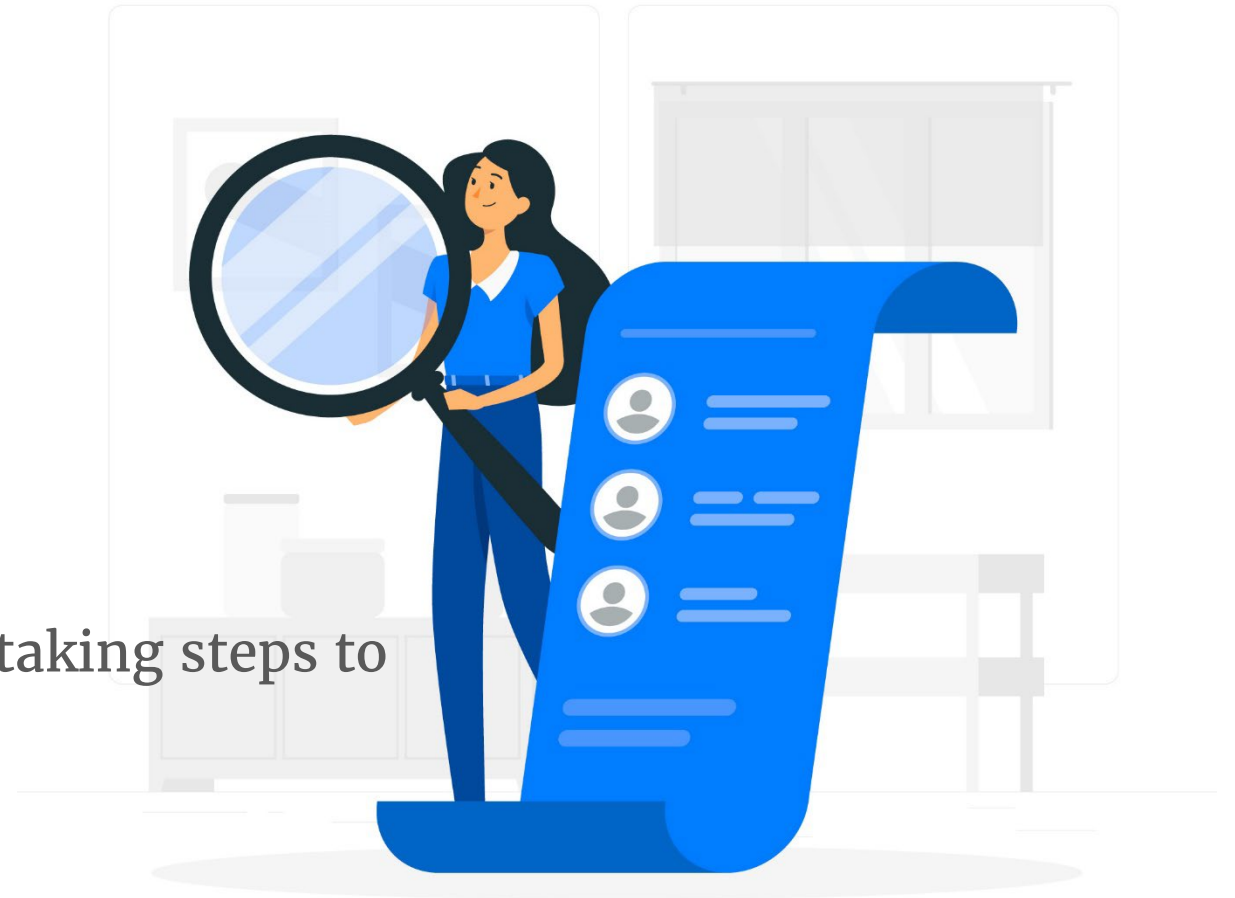
# STRENGTHS / WEAKNESSES

## Strengths:

- List 3-4
- Based on relevant career skills
- Demonstrated in your stories

## Weaknesses:

- A genuine “area for improvement”
- Recognized a weakness and took/are taking steps to improve
- Close on a positive note
- Prepare for 3 weaknesses



# SAMPLE STRENGTHS

- Strong communication skills
  - Communication
  - Harmony
  - Relator
- Strong analytical skills
  - Arranger
  - Deliberative
  - Futuristic
- Attention to detail
  - Discipline
  - Restorative

How can you name the skills you demonstrate in the story?





# SAMPLE WEAKNESSES

## Over Communicator

- Communicator –quick to answer, impatient
- Harmony – Passive with opponents
- Relator – Cliquish, protective of friendships

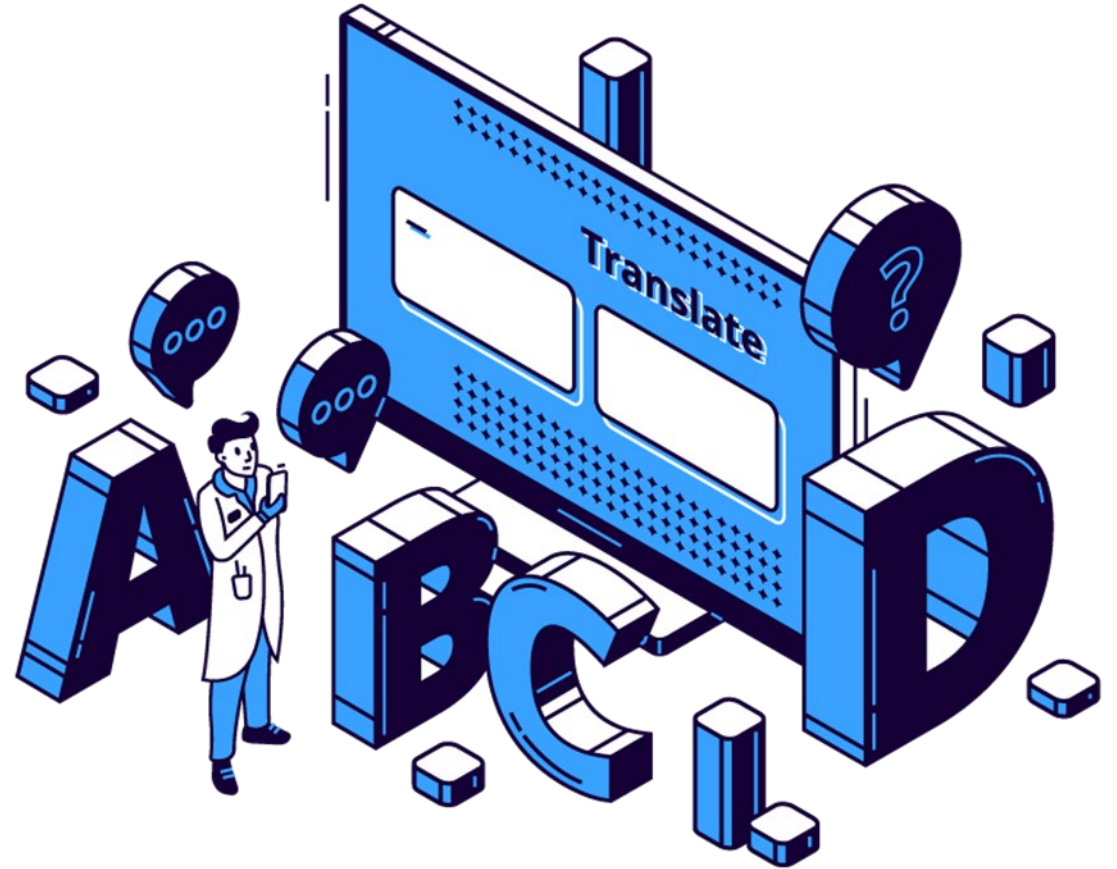
## Intensely Analytical

- Arranger - Controlling
- Deliberative – Slow to respond
- Futuristic – Impractical

## Detail-obsessed

- Discipline – Rigid, resistant
- Restorative – Negative, critical

How can you name the skills you demonstrate  
in the story?



# PAIR UP AND PRACTICE

- Break into 2 person teams
- Person A is the Interviewer
- Person B is the Candidate

“What is one of your greatest strengths? Tell me about a time you had to lean into it at work.”



# BEHAVIORAL PRACTICE



*Now the flip-side*

*“What would a co-worker or teammate say are your biggest areas for improvement?”*

# VARIANTS ON “THE WEAKNESS” QUESTION

- Tell me about a time you failed
- What would your boss/co-worker say is your greatest weakness?
- What would your current manager say are your biggest areas for improvement?
- What would you like to learn in this role?



# Short & Long-Term Goals

# SHORT & LONG-TERM (CAREER) GOALS

- Keep focus on “career” (limit personal details) and keep time horizon tight
- Short: 30/60/90 days, six months
  - a) Apply my top (x, y, and Z skills), and
  - b) Learn as much as I can; company procedures, culture, work processes
  - c) One year, build my value & continue my development
- Longer: Next 2–5 years (*don't say out loud*)
  - Continue to apply my top (X, Y and Z) skills
  - Take on more responsibility and compete for promotions
  - Have a long-term career with your firm (because of your firm's size, reputation, values, etc.)



# Closing the Interview

# CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

- Ask questions (have them prepared – and – **you can NEVER run out of questions!**)
- Ask what experience or qualification they feel is most critical to success in the role
- Summarize your skills, reaffirm why you like to think you have what they need
- **Harder close** – Express your genuine interest in the role, the company, or the team and ask if they have any concerns or questions about your qualifications and ask for the next interview or for a shot at the job!
- **Softer close** – Show your enthusiasm and interest in the role, company, team – Ask about the timeline for a decision

*Always request business card or email address*

*E-mail or mail a targeted or customized thank you right away (within 24 hours).*



# GREATEST WEAKNESS TIPS

Don't try and present a strength as a weakness:

- “I have always been a perfectionist” or “I work too hard”
- (You might say: “I am too driven, I push teammates & staff too hard”)
- Don't disclose a “killer” weakness – “I don't really work well in teams”
- Do demonstrate self-awareness and desire to improve – tell them the actions you have/are taking to overcome this weakness
- Don't “oversell” your Improvement – might prompt the recruiters to say: “good – now please tell me about a current weakness”



# EXAMPLE: NERVOUS SPEAKING IN FRONT OF LARGE GROUPS

- Fear of large groups, make you sweat, tongue tied, forgetful, etc.
- Attended public speaking coaching
- Project your voice to back of room, or pick out one person in audience to “speak to”
- Develop good notes and good PPT slides
- Practice, practice, practice – in and out of class

