

PREPARING FOR YOUR INTERVIEW

Congratulations! You have just received word from a company. You have been selected to interview with them for a position of interest to you. This means your resume and cover letter were effective. Those documents have gotten you to the door. Here are the steps that you need to get yourself through the door and hired. Let's review the **three P's** of getting yourself hired: Prepare, Practice and Perform.

The **Prepare** step involves you getting yourself and your credentials in order. It means getting a plan in place. Be sure you do the following.

1. Get in the mindset to achieve. This means ensuring that you are eating and sleeping well, that you are getting good exercise, and have created a can-do attitude.
2. Pull up the job description. Highlight the key words in the description. Think of stories or examples from your experience (academic, work, activities) that demonstrate that you have the skills they are seeking.
3. Pull out the resume and cover letter that you submitted. Familiarize yourself with what you said in the documents and pull together examples of how you developed those skills.
4. Pull together your references. Professional references can be previous supervisors, current faculty or advisors from clubs and organizations who can attest to your ability to do the job. Reach out to them and confirm how they wish to be contacted. Create a Reference List. Place the list and extra copies of your resume and cover letter in a padfolio.
5. Research the company. Go to their website. Study their mission and vision. Google them and do a search on the Wall Street Journal. Be current with what they do and where they stand in the marketplace.
6. Pull together what you will wear. Remember, most companies expect you to display professional dress during the interview process. (See professional dress sheet)
7. Get a haircut. Be sure your suit and shirt or blouse is pressed. Give your shoes a shine.
8. Clarify details on how and where the interview will be conducted. Is it virtual? Be sure to watch the Eight Tips on Successful Video Interviewing on our web page. If in person, do a test drive to the location. Make sure you know how long it will take you to get there, where you should park, etc.

Practice

1. Know that most interview questions fall into two broad categories: why they should hire you, and why you want to work for them.
2. Likewise, there are two types of questions: traditional and behavioral questions.
3. Review the sample questions listed in this interview guide.
4. Learn the STAR method of answering behavioral interview questions. These questions usually begin with the phrases, "Tell me about a time or give me an example of _____ or explain _____."
5. Arrange to do a mock (practice) interview with the Career Advisor in the College of Business. She will ask you typical interview questions and provide you feedback on what you do well, and how you can make your answers more concise and focused.
6. Create two or three questions that you can ask the interviewer about the position.

STAR Method Used to Answer Behavioral Questions

Situation or Task – Describe a situation or task that addresses the question.

Action – Talk about the action you took to address the situation.

Result – Describe the results of your actions.

Produce

1. Arrive early (no more than 10 minutes) for your interview, professionally dressed in your padfolio in hand.
2. Greet the interviewer. Make good eye contact. Work to establish a connection or rapport with this person.
3. Answer all questions in a concise direct format. Don't ramble.
4. Provide examples of your key strengths and skills that match the job.
5. Be sure you know the next steps in the process.
6. Thank the interviewer for his or her time and re-state why you want and are qualified for this position.
7. Leave with business cards of all the interviewers.
8. Go home and write thank you notes to all your interviewers. These emails should be sent before the end of the interview day.