

Interview Tips

Preparation

- **Understand the Company** – A common question asked by interviewers is, “What do you know about our company?” To properly prepare for an interview, research the company and develop an understanding of:
 - What are the current trends in the company’s industry?
 - What are the company’s values?
 - How is the company structured?
 - What are its key products / services?
 - Who are its key competitors?
 - How does the company compete in its industry?
 - Are there recent news headlines involving the company?

If you have issues answering the above questions for your target company, use your resources (friends, alumni network, LinkedIn, etc.) to schedule an informational interview with someone in the organization who can help you answer those questions.

- **Determine the Reason for Your Interest** – You should not interview with a company before you have had a chance to determine the top 3 – 4 reasons for your interest in that company. Take some time and consider the 3 – 4 things that you want from an organization (autonomy, leadership development, diversity of experience, etc.) and evaluate if and how that organization meets your criteria. This will help you explain why you are interviewing and increase your level of enthusiasm during the interview.
- **Refine Your Resume** – After understanding the company, spend some time refining your resume and make it more relevant to the company. Ensure that you are emphasizing attributes or experiences that are valued by your target company.

Bullets are typically easier for the interviewer to skim, than paragraphs. If you decide to use bullet form, then your bullets should be structured as “*Results by Action.*” Instead of listing out what you did in a prior role, list what you achieved and the action that you took to achieve it. The result should be at the beginning of the bullet, followed by the action.

- **Practice with Mock Interviews** – Nothing prepares you better for an experience than a live simulation. You should practice for your interview by performing mock interviews with your career center or someone that can provide you with a solid interview experience and provide you with feedback afterwards. Before your mock interview,

provide the mock interviewer with the name of the company with which you will be interviewing. This will allow him/her to ask specific questions tailored to that company.

Execution

- **Perfect Your Resume-Walk** – The most common opening interview question is either, “Tell me about yourself” or “Walk me through your resume.” Both questions should be answered with your “resume-walk”. This is a 2 min chronological walk through your resume. Here a couple of things to remember:
 - Transitions are key - As you transition from your school experience to your first work experience or between job positions, provide the interviewing with your reason for making the transition. Give the interviewer some insight into your decision making process.
 - Don’t forget your achievements – Interviewees commonly provide the interviewer with their role, responsibilities, and activities. Make sure you include your achievements in your job position explanation. Your results can provide more insight into your abilities than your day-to-day activities.

A good resume-walk can provide you with positive momentum for the rest of the interview.

- **Follow the S-T-A-R** – You can use the STAR Method for most behavioral interview questions. STAR breaks down into the following:
 - (S)ituation
 - (T)ask
 - (A)ction
 - (R)esult

This is a solid method to use when answering questions. Let this be the mini-Agenda of your responses.

- **Come Prepared with a Set of Questions** - Always have a few questions to ask the interviewer. Your questions could fall in one of the following categories:
 - Role-Specific Questions
 - Management–Specific Questions
 - Organization-Specific Questions
 - Interviewer Specific Questions

Even if all of company specific questions are answered during the interview, you can always inquire about the remaining recruiting process and timeline (“When will I hear back?” or “What is the next step in the process?”). You should also ask for the interviewer’s business card. You will need this for your post-interview follow-up.

Afterwards

- **Follow-up with the Interviewer** – You should always send a follow-up “Thank You” email or letter to the interviewer. In this e-mail/letter, thank the interviewer for his or her time, tell them something that you learned (your take-away) during the conversation, and reiterate your interest in the position and the company.