

# Interviewing Essentials

## Know Yourself

1. Be prepared to answer “Tell me about yourself” by developing a one-minute personal statement that describes your educational and work background, your skills and accomplishments, and your work goals. Practice this information until it becomes automatic and “unrehearsed”.
2. Be able to communicate concisely what your job-related and transferable skills are. A transferable skill is one that can be used in a variety of work settings: a team player, oral and written communication skills, excellent problem-solver.

## Know the Company and What They Want

1. From the job description, learn what qualifications are required for the position. This will help you to relate your answers to those qualifications.
2. Learn as much as you can about the company from studying the website, talking to current or past employees, going to the library or Career Center, or talking to someone in the company’s public relations office. Areas to research include: culture, organizational structure, services or products, number of employees and positions available, reputation and competitors.

## Practice

It is imperative that you practice interviewing - either alone, with a friend or with a career advisor. Fine-tune your interview style and become more comfortable answering questions about yourself. However, do not memorize answers or practice excessively, as this can adversely affect your ability to appear spontaneous with your answers. A guideline to follow when it comes to talking during an interview is the 50/50, 2 minute Max Rule: Listen 50% of the time, talk 50% of the time, and never spend longer than 2 minutes answering a question.

## Dress for Success

Make sure you are well groomed, and wearing a conservative and attractive suit or outfit that is consistent with the type of employment. Polish your shoes and wear simple or conservative jewelry or accessories.

## After the Interview

Make sure you understand what is expected of you and what is going to happen next. Always ask for a hiring timeline if the information is not offered first. Thank the interviewer for his/her time, ask for his or her business card, and express interest in the job if you feel there is a match.

**Always write a thank you letter or note immediately afterwards. Express interest in the job and highlight one or two of your best qualifications.**

## Interview Do's:

- **Do** arrive 5-10 minutes early.
- **Do** a quick check of your appearance.
- **Do** bring an updated resume and list of references.
- **Do** make eye contact and greet the interviewer with a firm handshake.
- **Do** answer questions honestly and directly.
- **Do** relax, be confident and optimistic.
- **Do** stress your qualifications for the job.
- **Do** share experiences that relate to the job.
- **Do** demonstrate your knowledge of the job and the company.
- **Do** indicate flexibility and willingness to learn.
- **Do** ask relevant questions.
- **Do** ask for a hiring timeline and the interviewer’s business card.
- **Do** write a thank you note or letter shortly after the interview.
- **Do** review your performance and write down questions asked once you leave.

## Interviewing Don'ts:

- **Don't** lie. Big or small. Ever.
- **Don't** ramble.
- **Don't** criticize previous employers or jobs.
- **Don't** discuss salary or benefits until the interviewer does.
- **Don't** overuse personal pronouns such as I or my at the beginning of sentences.

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# Sample Interview Questions

## Frequently Asked Questions

Be prepared to answer the questions asked by your interviewer. Be honest, focused, enthusiastic and positive. Think of experiences in previous positions that support your answer.

The following are frequently asked interview questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why should I hire you?
3. What is your biggest weakness?
4. What are your greatest strengths or assets?
5. What is your greatest success or accomplishment?
6. What decisions have you most regretted and why?
7. Why do you want to work here?
8. Where would you like to be in 5-10 years?
9. How would your friends/past co-workers/supervisors describe you?
10. How are you at working under pressure and deadlines?
11. What are some things that are important to you in your job?
12. What do you think this job requires and how do you meet those requirements?
13. Why did you leave your last job?
14. What have you been doing since your last job?
15. How do you set and achieve your goals?
16. How do you set priorities and manage your time?
17. How have you influenced others in your previous jobs?
18. Tell me about your most challenging and least challenging job.
19. What type of supervision do you prefer?
20. Why are you the best candidate for this job?

## Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavioral based interviewing assumes that past behavior predicts future performance. Interviewers determine the job competencies that are needed, and then conduct the interview by asking for examples that demonstrate these skills or characteristics. It is helpful to have a few prepared examples when answering these types of questions.

Some behavioral questions include:

1. Tell me about a time when you...displayed leadership, solved a problem, dealt with a difficult customer, went "above and beyond", or displayed teamwork skills?
2. Tell me about a time when you failed. How did you deal with it?
3. Describe a time when your workload was heavy. How did you respond?
4. Tell me about a time that your work was criticized by your supervisor. How did you respond?

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