

Office of Career Opportunities

Eight Interview Tips

Before the Interview

1. Assess Yourselfell you where

2. Read Employer Literature

You should have some knowledge of company policies, employment opportunities, products, and services. Look for a chance in the interview to communicate what you know about the organization and position.

3. Verify the Particulars

Find out the exact time and place of the interview. Arrive at least five minutes early. There is no excuse for being late, ever! Learn the interviewer's name and its proper pronunciation, as well as his or her title.

During the Interview

4. Sell Yourself

Don't just answer the question. Illustrate your personal qualities and strongest abilities with examples from your past. Try to address any underlying questions you think the employer might have about your suitability for the job.

5. Dwell on the Positive

Should the recruiter ask about past failures or shortcomings, try to explain circumstances rather than give excuses or blame others. You'll create a better impression by being honest and candid.

6. Non-verbal Communication

Watch what you're doing while you're talking. Nervous hands and feet can distract the interviewer's attention. By sitting up straight you will appear poised and confident throughout the interview. The way you dress will communicate a particular message, too. Think conservative.

7. Ask Questions –When Indicated

Ask meaningful questions at the appropriate time in the interview. Find out, for instance, what the job responsibilities are, how training is provided, what advancement opportunities are available, how much travel is involved, what other individuals or departments you would work with most, how job performance is measured, etc.

After the Interview

8. Follow-up

skill definitions

The following skill definitions help define what interviewers may look for in a candidate. Many interviewers use these skill definitions exactly as they are written. To be more accurate, however, skill definitions should be edited based on the exact requirements of the job.

1. Coping
To maintain a mature, problem-solving attitude while dealing with interpersonal conflict, hazardous conditions, personal rejection, hostility, or time demands.
2. Tolerance of Ambiguity
To withhold actions or speech in the absence of important information; deal with unresolved situations, frequent change, delays, or unexpected events.

skill definitions (continued)...

12. Commitment to Task

To start and persist with specific courses of action while exhibiting high motivation and a sense of urgency; willing to commit to long hours of work and make personal sacrifice in order to reach goals.

13. Interaction

To communicate with others in a warm and helpful manner while simultaneously building credibility and rapport.

14. Perceptivity

To interpret verbal and nonverbal behavior; to develop accurate perception as in the interview process.

The interviewing process can be scary if you don't know what to expect. All interviews fit a general pattern. While each interview will differ, all will share three common characteristics: the beginning, middle, and conclusion.

The typical interview will last 30 minutes, although some may be longer. A typical structure is as follows:

(from previous page)

Be honest —Don't claim interest in an employer if you really do not intend to work for that

organization. Don't lie on your resume or during the interview.

While you should never draw attention to your weaknesses, don't attempt to hide a shortcoming by being untruthful. Learn how to

deal with perceived (or real) weaknesses before your interviews

by talking to a campus career services professional and/or

reading books on job interviewing techniques

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positions are likely to be repeated
you will be asked to share
situations in which you may or
may not have exhibited these
behaviors. Your answers will be
tested for accuracy and
consistency.

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questions asked by employers in interviews

Personal

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Describe your ideal job.
4. What can you offer us?
5. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
6. Can you name some weaknesses?
7. Define success. Failure. Which do you prefer?
8. Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
9. Who are your role models? Why?
10. What motivates you most in a job?
11. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor/supervisor/worker and how did you handle it?
12. Have you ever spoken before a group of people? How large?
13. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
14. What do you know about our organization (product or services)?
15. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
16. Do you plan to return to school for further education?
17. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
18. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
19. How would you describe yourself?
20. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
21. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
22. Define cooperation.
23. What major problem have you encountered, and how did you deal with it?
24. What have you done that shows initiative?
25. What qualifications do you have that will make you successful?
26. How do you handle rejection?
27. Have you done the best work you are capable of doing?

Education

28. Why did you choose your major?
29. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
30. In which campus activities did you participate?

31. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?

guide to appropriate pre-employment inquiries

ACCEPTABLE	SUBJECT	UNACCEPTABLE
"Have you worked for this company under a different name?" "Have you ever been convicted of a crime under a different name?" Applicant's place of residence How long applicant has been resident of this state or city	name address or residence birthplace	Former name of applicant whose name has been changed by court order or otherwise. Birthplace of applicant Birthplace of applicant's parents, spouse, or other relatives Requirements that applicant submit a birth certificate, naturalization or baptismal record
"Can you, after employment, submit a work permit if under 18?" "Are you over 18 years of age?" "If hired, can you furnish proof of age?" Or Statement that hire is subject to verification that applicant's age meets legal requirements	age	Questions which tend to identify applicants 40 to 64 years of age
Statement by employer of regular days, hours or shift to be worked	religion	Applicant's religious denomination or affiliation, church, parish, pastor or religious holidays observed "Do you attend religious services or a house of worship?" Applicant may not be told: "This is Catholic/Protestant/Jewish/Atheist organization."

topics for questioning the employer during an interview:

Successful interviews rely upon the active participation of both the interviewer and you, the interviewee. When asked by the interviewer if you have any questions, this is a clear sign that the interview is drawing to a close. You now have one more chance to make a favorable impression by asking well thought questions. You need to ask questions to get as much detailed information on company needs and so that you can determine if you will be comfortable with that organization. Your company research will assist you in preparing questions. You may also create questions from any of the following topics:

1. Opportunities for growth
2. Typical career path and realistic time frames for advancement
3. Performance evaluation process and promotional opportunities
4. Typical first year assignments
5. Initial and future training programs
6. Type and length of training required
7. Company's "personality" and management style
8. Policy on promotion
9. Expectations of new hires
10. Interviewer's own experience with organization
11. Qualities needed in new hires
12. Characteristics of person successful with company
13. Description of work environment
14. Departmental structure
15. Future growth plans
16. Challenging facets of job
17. Organization's stability and fiscal soundness
18. Differences from competition
19. Organization's strengths and weaknesses
20. Industry trends and potential effect on company

Depending on your current fashion statement, whether it be the latest trends for the club scene or merely college senior casual, venturing into the world of work may be cause for a drastic shift in your wardrobe.

Some of your individualism, at least from 9 to 5, might have to be shelved, or kept in the closet. In most business and technical settings, when it comes to your appearance, conservative and conformity are the order.

Each company will have its own guidelines, so it is important to know your future or potential employer before you meet them. How liberal or conservative is the dress code? Don't try to set any new standards, especially the interview. When in doubt it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy. For men and women, a suit is the best bet.

Some guidelines:

Men

- x A two-piece suit will suffice in most instances.
- x Solid colors and tightwoven fabrics are safer than bold prints and patterns.
- x Bright ties bring focus to the face, but a simple pattern is best for an interview. (Tip for larger men: use a double Windsor knot to minimize a bulky appearance.)
- x Wear polished shoes with socks high enough so no skin is visible when you sit down and cross your legs.

Women

- x A suit with a knee-length skirt and a tailored blouse is most appropriate.

- x Although even the most conservative organizations allow more feminine looks these days, accessories should be kept simple. Basic pumps, modest jewelry and natural makeup help to present a professional look.
- x Pants are more acceptable now but are not recommended for interviews or unless you're positive that they would be appropriate.

Staying Within a Budget

For recent graduates just entering professional life, additions to wardrobes, or complete overhauls, are likely needed. However, limited funds can be an obstacle. Image consultant Christine Lazzarini suggests "capsule wardrobing." For example, by mixing and matching, she says an eight-piece capsule wardrobe can generate up to 28 ensembles.

Before shopping, Lazzarini advises establishing a budget, 50 percent of which should be targeted for accessories. For women, "even a brightly colored jacket could be considered an accessory when it makes an outfit you already have look entirely different."

The most important piece in any wardrobe is a jacket that is versatile and can work with a number of other pieces, according to one fashion expert. This applies to men and women. "If you focus on a suit, buy one with a jacket which may be used with other skirts or trousers," said a national women's fashion director for a

major retailer. "Then add a black turtleneck or a white shirt. These are the fashion basics that you can build on."

A navy or black blazer for men can work well with a few different gabardine pants. Although this kind of ensemble would be just as expensive as a single suit, it does offer more versatility.

One accessory recommended by company representatives is a briefcase. "When I see one," says one recruiter, "it definitely adds to the candidate's stature. It is a symbol to me which indicates that the individual has done some research and is probably going to be able to give me whatever I ask for. In other words, it shows that he or she is prepared."

casually speaking: the new office wardrobe

Relaxed workplace attire is becoming the norm, not the exception. At many companies across the nation, “Casual Friday” has spread to the rest of the week. This is great news for new graduates.

For Men

1. A two- or three-button linen suit in a neutral color
2. Cotton chinos or nice khaki pants, with or without pleats
3. A black blazer in wool and/or cashmere, or in a lighter-weight fabric such as wool crepe
4. High-quality crew-neck or turtleneck sweaters (cashmere, merino wool or one of the new cotton blends)
5. Long-sleeved sport shirts worn without a tie
6. Corduroy slacks
7. Casual vests
8. Patterned or colored socks in a heavier knit than dress socks
9. Lightweight denim or chambray shirts paired with fun, stylish neckties
10. Loafers or other shoes that bridge the gap between casual and dress

Stay Away From...

1. Shorts and sandals
2. T-shirts with words or pictures
3. Worn-out jeans (and any jeans at more conservative companies)
4. “MTV” – punk, metal or hip-hop-looks
5. Athletic wear, gym shoes, baseball caps, team logo jackets
6. Anything that’s damaged, threadbare or not impeccably clean
7. Dress shirts worn as casual shirts

For Women

1. At least one linen or silk blend suit (either skirted or with slacks) to form a foundation for your wardrobe
2. Chinos or other high-quality, tailored cotton slacks
3. Lightweight cardigan, crew-neck or “twin-set” sweaters
4. Casual skirts in a modest length (consider corduroy, knit or suede)
5. Cotton polo-style shirts
6. Crisp cotton dress shirts
7. Vests in interesting fabrics
8. Appropriate costume jewelry (tasteful folk/ethnic pieces are nice)
9. A belt in exotic leather (or good simulation) can really dress up a casual outfit

OFFICE OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

job search letters

Components of a Thank You Letter

Your Address
City, State, ZIP
Date

Name and title of interviewer
Address
City, State, ZIP

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for the interview on (date) at (location or university). I am very interested in the (position, kind of work) and hope that the interest is mutual.

I am enthusiastic about the prospect of joining your organization. (Describe what about the organization is sparking your interest.) My (name your background, skills, or educational emphasis) would enable me to make the transition to a position in your firm with relative ease.

OPTIONAL PARAGRAPH:
Enclosed is (anything which would strengthen your candidacy for the position).(Tell why you are enclosing this item and how it relates.)

If you have any questions, please call me at (area code/phone number). I look forward to the opportunity to discuss further (name opportunities) at (name of employer).

Sincerely,

Enclosure(s) Include if applicable)

Thank You Letter

3701 Old Mill Road
Decatur, GA 30214
April 6, 20XX

Ms. Yuni Kim
Executive Vice President
Worldwide Automation & Control, Inc.
1127 Nelson Drive
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Kim:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me at Georgia Tech on April 5. I