Interview Tips

academic & career ADVISING CENTER

Know Yourself
- Your past experiences
- Your skills and abilities
- Your personality and appearance
- Your knowledge of the employer, job, field, and
- Your future plans

Know the Organization
- Who is the employer? What is their mission?
- What is their product or service?
- What has happened recently? Mergers, deregulation?
- What is the company climate/environment like?
- General industry trends?
- What/who is their competition?

Preparing for the Interview
- Know the points you want to make
- Create an outline of the strengths, skills and assets you have to offer and want to communicate in the interview.
- Develop examples or "stories" that demonstrate in some detail how you have applied these assets.
- Describe the situation, action and outcome.
- Prepare intelligent questions you want to ask the Employer.
- Be sure your email address & phone message are professional.
- If you have a Myspace page, make it private or professional incase a prospective employer looks at it.

Dress for Success
- Select apparel, fragrances, jewelry, hairstyle, etc. that do not detract from your professional image. The interviewer's attention should be focused on what you say and your qualifications.
- Make sure your hair is clean, neat and professionally styled.
- Apparel should be clean and neatly pressed.
- Less is more. Keep your look simple and successful until you become accustomed to the environment and learn about the company's dress code.

First Impressions at the Interview
- Arrive early.
- Bring extra copies of your resume.
- Be courteous to everyone you meet
- Greet the interviewer by name, with a smile. Be sure you know the correct pronunciation & spelling of the name.
- Shake hands using a firm, but not too firm, grip.
- Show enthusiasm and confidence in your voice and, posture.

During the Interview
- Send the right body language by relaxing and being yourself. Sit erect, use gestures if they come naturally, and maintain good eye contact.
- Turn off your cell phone ringer/buzzer and DO NOT answer calls.
- Speak clearly and concisely. Keep your responses specific. Ask for clarification if needed.
- Answer questions with honesty and sincerity
- Be aware of the time allocated
- Don't criticize former employers faculty or associates.
- Close positively, end the interview as you started it by emphasizing your main strength.

End of the Interview
- Reaffirm your interest in the job. For example: "After hearing more about your company and the position I am even more interested in the job. I hope to be working with you soon".
- Ask when you can expect to hear back from the employer and the next steps in the process.
- Thank the interviewer and collect a business card or get the person's name, phone and email.

Follow-Up After the Interview
- Take a moment to make some notes after each interview.
- Write and send a thank you letter that same evening.
- Forward any requested material promptly.
- If you don't hear from the company within one week, contact them about the status of the position.

Things to Avoid
- Do not sit until the employer offers a seat.
- Do not take notes during an interview.
- Do not smoke, chew gum or a breath mint during the interview.
- Do not listen in on telephone conversations or read or inspect documents on an interviewer's desk.
- Do not call an interviewer "sir" or "madam". Use the interviewer's name in the interview, but don't overdo it.
- Do not give one or two word answers. Answer questions thoroughly, but do not overpower the interview.
- Do not use profanity, even if the interviewer does.
- Do not ask "Will I get the job?"
- Do not discuss salary until later in the process.

Answering Behavioral Questions (STAR)

A behavioral question is a question that aims at learning about your past behaviors in specific work situations in order to predict how you will behave in the future. Hiring managers ask behavioral questions because they are trying to see if you possess the qualities they are seeking. The 5 most common behaviors that come up are:

1. Teamwork oriented
2. Problem solving
3. Initiative/Leadership
4. Interpersonal Skills
5. Challenge/stress/pressure

Common Behavior Based Questions:

- *Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem.*
- *Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was implemented primarily because of your efforts.*
- *Do you feel you work well under pressure? If so, describe a time when you have done so...*
- *Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.*
- *Tell me about a time where you had to delegate tasks during a project.*
- *Give me an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead.*
- *Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.*
- *Tell me about a situation you had with an upset customer/client/co-worker and how you handled it.*
- *Give me an example of a time you had to make a quick decision.*

Preparing for Behavioral Questions:

1. Read the job description and research the company to discover the most important qualities the organization is looking for. Do they emphasize collaboration, hard-work, problem-solving, etc? Keep these qualities in mind while you prepare your answers.
2. Think about projects you have worked on in class, accomplishments you are proud of, times you dealt with difficult people and situations at work that had a positive ending or that taught you a valuable lesson.
3. Apply the STAR concept. STAR will give you the opportunity to answer behavioral questions in a way that articulates your abilities and strengths.

Situation: Describe the situation.

- The interviewer wants to know about a specific challenge you encountered.
- It is important to think of a situation that is going to be important to the role to which you are applying.

Task: How did you approach the situation?

- This is your chance to go into detail and be descriptive regarding how you overcome the obstacle.
- How did you plan to resolve the situation?

Action: What action did you take?

- The interviewer wants to know what your role was in terms of resolving the situation.
- This is where you explain how you implemented the task.

Result: Close with the result of your efforts. Include figures to quantify the result if possible.

- This is your chance to complete the story and let the employer know what happened as a result of your actions on the project.
- How did your actions benefit the company or client?

Examples of STAR:

Tell me about a time you had to solve a difficult problem.

Situation	Office supplies were missing pretty regularly
Task	So we had to figure out how to track who was coming and going.
Action	I suggested we create a sign-in sheet of time in, time out and objective of visit which had to be initialed by the front desk staff.
Result	Once people realized we were keeping track of when they were in the office, supplies stopped disappearing, and we were able to save money by ordering less supplies.

Tell me about your proudest professional accomplishment.

Situation	I worked at a restaurant previously and we were getting poor customer reviews. I volunteered for a committee tasked with investigating the reason for the poor reviews.
Task	After analyzing the reviews, we discovered that customer wait times were the largest contributor to negative reviews.
Action	I then led brainstorming situations with my team to find a solution.
Result	This solution was a change in how orders were taken for the kitchen. This change meant that people were served their food more quickly and so they were able to eat, pay and leave in a timely manner. Because of this wait times dropped for those waiting to be seated as well. The restaurant set a record in profit earnings that year and customers are much happier to work with as well.

Remember that experiences you have had could fit as the answer to multiple behavioral questions. For example, an employer might choose to ask either "How do you work under pressure?" or "Tell me about a time you experienced a conflict and how you handled it?", and you could potentially answer with the same experience.

Federal Government Websites

Office of Personnel Management – http://www.usajobs.gov (Federal resume & jobs)

Bureau of Land Management – https://blm.usajobs.gov/

National Park Service – http://www.usajobs.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – http://www.usajobs.gov

U.S. Forest Service – http://www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs

U.S. Geological Survey – http://www.usajobs.gov

State Government Websites

California State Personnel Board – http://jobs.ca.gov
(Requires exam prior to applying)

California Fish & Wildlife – https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Employment
(Requires exam prior to applying)

Other states – http://www.fw.msu.edu/employment/state_natural_resource_agencies

Wildlife-Related Websites

American Association of Consulting Foresters – www.acf-foresters.org (Click on "Find a Forester")

American Zoological Association – www.aza.org/Jobs

Department of Fisheries & Wildlife, Michigan State University (Developed by Jim Schneider) - www.fw.msu.edu/employment

Herp Jobs – http://parcplace.org. (click on "Resources")

Ornithological Jobs – www.osnabirds.org/Jobs.aspx

Primate Jobs – http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/jobs/list/avail.

Society for Conservation Biology – http://careers.conbio.org

Society of Wetland Scientists – http://www.sws.org (click on "Resources". Note: you will need to "log-in" to view positions.)

Texas A & M University – http://wfscjobs.tamu.edu/job-board/

The Wildlife Society – http://careers.wildlife.org/c/search_results.cfm?site_id=8764

Wildlife Job Search (Marci Johnson) – www.pherkad.com/jobs.html (Very comprehensive!)

American Society of Mammologists: http://www.mammalsociety.org/jobs-post-docs-interships-assistantships-seasonal-postings/

Entomological Society of America: www.entsoc.org

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION WEBSITES

California Council for Wildlife Rehabilitators – www.ccwr.org

International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council – www.theiwrc.org

National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association – http://www.nwrawildlife.org/

Wildlife Rehabilitation Information Directory – http://wildliferehabinfo.org (Information directory for wildlife rehabilitation)

Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Services – www.southeasternoutdoors.com/wildlife/rehabilitators/directory-us.html (Lists services and rehab centers in US)

GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL WEBSITES

Cyber-Sierra – www.cyber-sierra.com/nrjobs

EcoEmploy – www.ecoemploy.com

Environmental Career Center – www.environmentalcareer.com

Environmental Career Opportunities – www.ecojobs.com/index.php (Subscription Service)

Environmental Careers Organization – www.eco.org

Ecological Society of America – http://www.esa.org/esa/careers-and-certification/job-board/

The Nature Conservancy – http://www.nature.org/about-us/careers/index.htm

Student Conservation Association – www.thesca.org (Lists positions that can be for the summer or for up to a year)

INTERNATIONAL WEBSITES

Animal Jobs International – www.animal-job.co.uk/animal-jobs-international.html

BirdLife International – http://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/jobs-and-opportunities-birdlife-international

Environment Jobs (previously "Stop Dodo") – www.environmentjobs.com

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds – www.rspb.org.uk

World Wildlife Fund – http://wwf.panda.org/who_we_are/jobs/

GRADUATE SCHOOL WEBSITE

National Association of University Fisheries and Wildlife Programs – http://naufwp.org/html/university_members.html (Provides links to academic programs in Fisheries and Wildlife).

Texas A & M University – http://wfscjobs.tamu.edu/job-board/ (This website also advertises graduate assistantships)

The Wildlife Society – http://careers.wildlife.org/c/search_results.cfm?site_id=8764   (This website also advertises graduate assistantships)

BIOCOMMUNICATIONS

BioCommunications Association: www.bca.org

Society for Technical Communication: www.stc.org

Society for Scholarly Publishing: https://www.sspnet.org/

National Association of Science Writers: www.nasw.org