

The Interview

The job interview is a process where an employer determines which candidate is the right person for their organization and where the candidate must convince the employer that they have the skills, background, and ability to do the job. As a candidate, you can increase your chances of being the right person by doing thorough research on the company and by being fully prepared for the interview.

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Be Prepared for the Screening Interview

Many employers have a series of interviews beginning with a screening interview which may either be on campus or on the phone, followed by one or more site visits. Questions during the screening interview are designed to find out more about your qualifications and experience and whether you meet the basic requirements for the position. These interviews usually last 30-60 minutes.

The Second Interview

The second interview may last an entire day and you may meet many different people. In this interview, the interviewers are trying to determine whether you are the right person for the company and whether you will fit in well with their organization.

Answer Honestly

Be honest, positive, and succinct when answering questions. Use examples of past work or college experiences to demonstrate support for your answers. This will create a good impression in the interviewer's mind and help him/her remember your answer.

Be Confident!

Do not be afraid to "blow your own horn" and focus on your strengths in the interview. Remember that it is your job to sell yourself to the interviewer and you must be confident and positive about your skills and abilities.

Be Prepared for Anything

Interviewers will ask a variety of questions depending on who is interviewing you. Human resources or college recruiting staff usually ask questions about your personal characteristics while technical managers ask about your technical expertise. Some interviewers conduct behavioral interviews where they ask questions designed to measure how you react to certain work-related situations. These questions will measure characteristics such as judgment, creativity, and problem-solving. Try to be prepared for all types of questions.

Listen!

Listen carefully to what the interviewer is saying and think carefully about your answers. Make sure to speak clearly and to maintain a professional attitude at all times. Be positive about past experiences, even negative ones. If you are asked about a low grade or a weakness of some kind, do not be defensive and blame others for your problem. Focus instead on what you learned from the situation and how you have made positive changes to deal with similar situations in the future.

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Watch!

Pay attention to nonverbal behavior being careful to control any nervous habits. Sit up straight in your chair with your feet firmly planted on the floor. Try to relax and appear comfortable throughout the interview. Be yourself and let your personality shine through while still remaining professional.

Ask Questions!

Have questions prepared in advance to ask at the end of the interview to show your knowledge and interest in the company. Wait for the interviewer to bring up the question of salary but be prepared with a range and justification. Finally, ask the interviewer when you can expect to be contacted in the future and whether it is appropriate for you to follow up with any questions.



Question To Ask

- How has your career progressed here? Are similar opportunities available today?
- If I work hard where might I be in five years?
- How do you evaluate performance during the training period?
- What is the organization's personality and management style?
- Can you describe what a work week is like as a (fill in position you're seeking) here?
- How many people complete your training program each year?
- When does the training program begin?
- What is the length and structure of the training program?
- Do most trainees advance fairly rapidly through the program?
- What paths have others generally followed after completing the program?
- What characteristics best describe individuals who are successful in this position?
- Does the position offer exposure to other facets of your organization?
- What other positions and/or departments will I interact with most?
- To whom does this position report?
- How much decision-making authority is given to new employees?
- How will my performance be evaluated?
- How often are performance reviews given? By whom?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- Are employees encouraged to pursue additional education?
- What makes your organization different from its competitors?