



SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW TIPS

Engineers Job Fair 2015



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SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

Like exams, interviews require a great deal of preparation. In order to do well, you must assess your current knowledge about the position, study the employer, and anticipate difficult questions. In a competitive job market it's especially important to follow these steps to interview success:

1. Analyze the Position
2. Research the Employer
3. Review Your Experiences
4. Practice



1. ANALYZE THE POSITION

Review a copy of the job description and highlight the qualifications and main responsibilities. If you are still unclear about the nature of the position, check out the information available about the general nature of the position.

Keep in mind that employers with lengthy qualifications statements rarely find applicants strong in all areas, so do not get discouraged if you do not meet all of the specified requirements, just be sure to emphasize your strengths.

1. THE PROCESS OF JOB ANALYSIS

- I. Major Steps Involved In Job/Position Analysis
 - A. Organizational Analysis
 - B. Selection of representative positions to be analyzed
 - C. Collection of job analysis data
 - D. Preparation of job description
 - E. Preparation of job specification
 - F. Do a Swot analysis





2. RESEARCH THE EMPLOYER

Learn as much as you can about the employer's mission, services, products, and future prospects. Understand how this organization compares with similar or competing organizations. The best place to start your research is on the employer's website.



3. REVIEW YOUR EXPERIENCE

When reviewing your qualifications, consider all experiences valuable even if they do not directly relate to the position. Review the following:

- A. Work experience
- B. Internships
- C. Volunteer experience
- D. Class projects
- E. Course work
- F. Student group experience
- G. Interests and hobbies

For each experience, identify the skills and knowledge you developed. Many skills are transferable from one setting to another. Be able to say how the experience has prepared you to contribute to an organization.



4. PRACTICE

TRY THE FOLLOWING METHODS TO BOOST YOUR INTERVIEWING CONFIDENCE:

- I. Practice saying your responses out loud. Answering potential questions in front of a mirror can be useful for assessing your facial expressions.
- II. Have a career counselor or friends and family ask you a list of questions and give you feedback on the following: content and organization of your answers (completeness, level of detail, how easy to follow) and your presentation style (pace, voice quality/tone, energy, posture, eye contact, hand gestures, etc.)
- III. Film or tape your responses and review your performance. Ask yourself: did I look/sound confident, what does my body language say, did I look/sound relaxed, and did I sound enthusiastic?





FEELING NERVOUS?

FEELING NERVOUS ABOUT INTERVIEWS IS NORMAL. IN FACT, BEING A LITTLE NERVOUS CAN BE HELPFUL, MOTIVATING YOU TO PREPARE AND DO YOUR BEST. BUT WORRYING ABOUT BEING NERVOUS USUALLY JUST MAKES YOU MORE NERVOUS! FOCUS YOUR ENERGY ON BEING MORE SELF- CONFIDENT INSTEAD. USE THESE TIPS TO HARNESS YOUR NERVOUS ENERGY:

THINK OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS. Try to think of five things you would like the employer to know about you and practice telling these stories out loud so that you will sound more polished and prepared for your interview.

REMEMBER THAT INTERVIEWING IS A TWO-WAY STREET. Keep in mind that you are not the only person being evaluated during the interview. You can also think about what impression the interviewer makes on you and view him or her as a resource to learn more about the company and the position. This will help give you a sense if this employer is one that you would like to work for and whether or not this position fits in with your goals.

BUILD RAPPORT IN THE FIRST 5 SECONDS. First impressions can set the tone for the rest of the interview. When your interviewer comes into the waiting room and calls your name, walk toward that person with confidence, make eye contact, extend your hand for a handshake, and say, "Hello I'm (insert your name here)." This should help set the tone for a successful interview.



ETIQUETTE TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS

- Be on time! Even better, arrive 10 minutes early
- Do not chew gum or wear too much fragrance
- Style your hair neatly and keep it off your face
- Do not put your belongings on the interview desk
- Turn off cell phones
- Be respectful to everyone. Job offers have been denied on how applicants treat administrative staff
- Alert references that they may be contacted. Bring your reference list with you to your interviews.



QUALIFICATION QUESTIONS

- Why are you pursuing this field?
- Describe your ideal job.
- What are your career plans?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years?
- Do you plan to return to university for further education?
- What classes did you enjoy most/least and why?
- What other positions are you interviewing for?
- Why are you interested in our organization?
- Where do you see yourself fitting in?
- What do you know about our services/products?
- How do you feel about traveling as part of your job?
- In what type of setting do you do your best work?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why should I hire you?
- How does your background relate to this position?
- What can you offer us?
- What have you learned from the jobs you have had?
- Tell me about an accomplishment that you are proud of.
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What are your greatest weaknesses?
- Why did you choose your major?
- What have you learned from your failures?
- What motivates you to do good work?



BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

Interpersonal skills

- When working on a team project, have you ever dealt with a strong disagreement among team members or a team member who didn't do their part?
- What did you do?
- Tell me about the most difficult or frustrating individual that you've ever had to work with and how you managed to work with him or her.
- Tell me about a time when you had to be assertive.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Tell me about a time when you had to present complex information. How did you get your point across?
- Describe a time when you used persuasion to convince someone to see things your way.
- Tell me about a time when you used written communication skills to communicate an important point.

INITIATIVE

- Give me an example of when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
- Tell me about projects you have initiated.
- What prompted you to begin them?

LEADERSHIP

- Tell me about a time when you influenced the outcome of a project by taking a leadership role.
- Describe your leadership style and give me an example of a situation where you successfully led a group.
- Give me an example of your ability to build motivation in your coworkers, classmates, or a volunteer committee.

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give me an example.
- Tell me about an important goal of yours. How did you reach it?
- Describe a situation when you had many assignments or projects due at the same time.



- What steps did you take to finish them?
- Give me an example of what you've done when your time schedule or plan was upset by unforeseen circumstances?

FLEXIBILITY

- Describe a situation in which you overcame a "personality conflict" in order to get results.
- Describe a time where you were faced with issues that tested your coping skills.
- Describe a time when you received constructive criticism.

CREATIVITY/INNOVATION

- When and how did you provide a creative solution?
- What is the most creative thing you have done?

DECISION MAKING

- Give an example of when you had to make a difficult decision.
- How did you approach it?
- What kinds of criteria did you use?
- Describe a time when you had to defend your decision.
- Summarize a situation where you had to locate relevant information, define key issues, and determine the steps to get a desired result.

TRY TO ANSWER WITH THE STAR METHOD

- **S** = Situation (the context)
- **T** = Task(s) (the over-arching goals/objectives)
- **A** = Action(s) (how you went about achieving those goals)
- **R** = Result (s): If result wasn't entirely positive, say what you learned



STAR METHOD

SITUATION:

Recently, I was part of a group project in my Project Management class. We were assigned to design an effective project schedule for a construction company.

TASK:

Our group chose to create a schedule for a new construction company constructing a new building in a small community. We developed a scheduling plan and working strategy plan to introduce the company to its new community and to help with the construction work.

ACTION:

Since I was selected as the project team leader, I set up an appointment with the Director of XYZ construction company and got his insight on the project. After the meeting, I shared the director's comments with my team and together we came up with a creative scheduling plan. I then assigned each group member a particular task, based on his or her area of expertise. For example, I assigned one member with excellent writing skills to write a proposal. I monitored the group's progress to make sure we were meeting our deadlines and also coordinated the strong oral presentation we made to the class.

Result:

The project was fun and allowed me to develop the management skills necessary to lead a very diverse group of 6 people. The most rewarding part was that our group received the highest marks in the class and the professor currently uses our project materials as an example in his classes.

TECHNICAL/CASE

In technical/case interviews, you will be presented with a complex problem involving issues or situations that are not likely to be familiar. You will be asked to formulate a solution to the problem under tight time constraints. While primarily an analytical exercise, these questions also



gauge your comfort level with problem solving, your curiosity about the problem at hand, and your ability to articulate your insights.

TIPS FOR TECHNICAL/CASE INTERVIEWS

- Use pictures and diagrams if it will help. When you finish, ask if that was what the interviewer was looking for.
- Often, you won't know the answer, but you need to make an attempt. Remember, the interviewer is evaluating how you approach a problem just as much as your answer. Logical and reasonable thinking is preferred over a one-line response.
- Keep in mind that there is often no RIGHT or WRONG answer; each candidate has their opinion and perspective on a question.
- If it is a difficult question, ask for some time to think about it. If you do not have an answer, let the interviewer know that you really don't have an answer. It is better than making something up. It shows honesty, which is a trait all employers highly value.

WHAT TO WEAR

- Unless otherwise directed, dress conservatively. Men should wear a dark suit and conservative tie. Women should wear a dark suit. Avoid, trendy outfits, or loud colors.
- You may dress in business casual for interviews only if the employer indicates this is appropriate.
- Search the Career Center website for dress casual descriptions. Make sure your clothes are cleaned and pressed.



- Wear dark polished conservative shoes with closed toe and heel. Men should wear long, dark socks.
- Minimize jewelry and makeup. Women should wear no more than one pair of small earrings. Men and women should ensure not to use too much of cologne and perfume.



A THANK YOU EMAIL AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- If you can acquire the email of the employer you must send a thank you email within 48 hours:

STATEMENT OF YOUR EMAIL SHOULD LOOK LIKE

- *Thank you for the opportunity to spend last Thursday at your construction facility in Peshawar. The discussion we had was particularly informative. I found the tour of your site and the informal conversation with your engineering staff to be quite beneficial. I was impressed with the effective manner in which consolidated engineering has adapted the management-by-objective system to their technical operations. This philosophy suits my interests and training. The entire experience has confirmed my interest in consolidated engineering, and i look forward to hearing from you soon.*



FINAL SUGGESTIONS

- *Be on time*
- *Be positive and enthusiastic*
- *Maintain eye contact and a good posture (be aware of body language!)*
- *Do not take notes during interview*
- *Follow up with thank you letters*
- *Smile!*

INTERVIEW SUCCESS FACTORS

- *Verbal and written communication*
- *Analytical, logical thinking and problem solving skills*
- *Interest in job/field/employer*
- *Interpersonal skills*



- *Enthusiasm*
- *Goals*
- *Leadership skills*
- *Confidence and professionalism*
- *Fit!*

THE THREE "P'S"

- *Polite*
- *Patient*
- *Persistent*