

INTERVIEWING SUCCESS



This packet is specifically designed to help guide you through the interviewing process from preparing yourself beforehand, to conducting appropriate follow-up. The Gerri Ripp Center for Career Development is dedicated to helping you break into your ideal career field by making the interview as efficient and marketable as possible!

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10 Tips for Your Next Interview

1) Do Your Research

Prior to going to the interview, it is best to know as much as you can about the company you are interviewing with. Research the mission, culture, future trends, clients and current company news. Keep abreast of current news in the industry.

2) Mock Interview

Participate in a Mock Interview with a Career Development Advisor to practice discussing your strengths, weaknesses, goals, accomplishments, relevant experiences and questions as well as verbal and non-verbal language.

3) Be on Time

Consider a trial run to the company if you are unfamiliar with the location. Plan on arriving 15 minutes prior to the interview.

4) Dress Professionally

Wear a business suit and be sure you are neat, clean and professional in appearance. Be conservative with make-up, jewelry, and cologne.

5) Connect to the Employers

Listen carefully to the questions being asked of you. Sell and match your skills and strengths with the needs of the employers.

6) Organize your thoughts

Practice ahead of time, your answers should be like a pitch, concise, and complete.

7) Be Specific

Tell the interviewer how you can contribute to the company and give examples.

8) Ask Questions

Prove that you have done your research and reflect your knowledge of the field and interest in the position.

9) Send a Thank You Note

Make sure to send either a typed or e-mailed thank you note to all individuals you interviewed with. It is helpful to get business cards before you leave for correct name spellings and position titles.

10) Evaluate your Experience

Think about what happened during the interview and ask yourself: Is this a place you think you would enjoy working? Are the job responsibilities a good match with your strengths? Is there opportunity to learn and grow? More questions are available in the "Questions to Ask Yourself After the Interview" section.

DRESS TO ACHIEVE

The way you dress can make the difference in getting the job, being offered additional opportunities, and in getting ahead once you land your first job.

Remember, an interview is a formal situation, so it's important to be aware of the details of your appearance. Keep the color of your clothing muted and understated. The focus should be on YOU—not your clothes.

The idea here is to avoid anything that could distract the interviewer. A clean and neat, professional appearance is an important step in making a good first impression.

Adapted from SYMS 'Dress to Achieve'

APPROPRIATE MEN'S ATTIRE

- Neat Solid Suit (*Navy, Black, Dark Grey, Dark Brown*)
- Tie & Belt
- Conservative Shoes
- Little or No Jewelry
- Limit the Aftershave/Cologne
- Portfolio or Briefcase

APPROPRIATE WOMEN'S ATTIRE

- Neat Solid Suit (*Skirt or Pant*)
- Appropriate Skirt Level
- Limited Jewelry (*nothing distracting*)
- Neat Professional Hairstyle
- Neutral Pantyhose
- Light Makeup and Perfume
- Conservative Nail Color and Length
- Portfolio or Briefcase



WHAT TO AVOID

- Bright, distracting colors or patterns
- Overkill of fragrance
- Backpacks, sunglasses
- Chewing gum, smoking cigarettes
- Noisy, clanking, or overpowering jewelry
- Dirty, scuffed shoes

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Be prepared to talk about yourself. Identify your skills, interests, goals, and values. Assess your strengths and be able to back them up with examples.
- Research the organization; you should know size, locations, services, and products.
- Prepare a few good questions for the interviewer. avoid asking about salary and benefits in the first interview.
- Review your resume and a list of your positive qualities just before the interview. Bring extra copies of your resume.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Arriving a few minutes early will give you a chance to gain composure during the interview.
- Remember that enthusiasm is a very desirable trait to convey – both verbally and non-verbally.
- Take time to listen to the interviewer’s questions, in order to give an appropriate response.
- Maintain good eye contact with the interviewer; try to be relaxed and confident.
- As the interview ends, reiterate your interest in the position; ask what the next step would be, and when you can expect to hear. Make sure to get the interviewer’s business card.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Write a thank you note to the interviewer and e-mail or send a typed note by mail. If you have interviewed with several people, you can send a note to the person leading the search and mention other colleagues involved.
- Be sure to provide any requested information (transcripts, references) as soon as possible.
- Follow up with the interviewer by phone if you have not been notified of a decision within a reasonable time (i.e. two weeks).



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

COMMON QUESTIONS INTERVIEWERS ASK

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?
- What made you choose _____ as a major?
- What are you looking for in an internship/job?
- What makes you an ideal candidate for this position?
- What do you know about our company?
- Do your grades reflect your abilities?
- In what ways do you expect to make a contribution to this organization?
- What do you want to learn in this position?
- What are some of your strengths?
- Can you tell me about an area you may need to improve on?
- What do you consider your greatest achievement thus far (academic or personal)?
- Where do you hope to see yourself in five years?
- What are your long-term goals and how would working for our organization help you to achieve those goals?
- What adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
- How would a former supervisor describe your work ethic?
- What do you expect from a supervisor?
- How do you take initiative? Set priorities and goals?
Manage your time?
- What have you learned from your involvement in extracurricular activities?
- What experience have you had with public speaking? Statistics? Writing professional reports?
- What steps do you take to stay knowledgeable in your field?

COMMON BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

Can you tell me about a time when you...

- Demonstrated strong teamwork?
- Exercised leadership skills?
- Handled a difficult customer or client?
- Made an important decision?
- Worked under pressure and completed the assignments?
- Had to juggle several things at once? How did you manage the multiple demands and what was the result?
- Overcame a major obstacle?
- Managed a project, from beginning to end?
- Took initiative to improve a challenging situation?
- Went above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done?
- Were in a situation in which you thought you could handle alone, and soon realized you took on more than you could handle. What did you do?
- Had to handle a problem that arose and your manager was unavailable. What was the nature of the problem? (What was the outcome?)

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

- How many tennis balls would it take to fill up this room?
- Estimate how many windows are in New York City.
- Two U.S. coins add up to thirty cents and one is not a nickel. What are the two coins?
- How many times a day does a clock's hands overlap?

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

- What are you looking for in an ideal candidate for this position?
- What are your expectations for this position?
- How would you describe the culture of the organization?
- What type of training would I receive if hired?
- What do you like best about the company?
- What has been your most rewarding experience while working for the company?
- What is the next step in the interview process?
- What do you consider the major challenges facing the industry today?
- What are the prospects for growth and advancement?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Describe the employees you met. Did they seem energetic, efficient, and organized? Or did they appear unenthusiastic?
- Did your interviewer(s) answer your questions in a direct and positive manner?
- Do you see yourself working for the company five years from now?
- Is the salary scale competitive?
- Do the job and the company fit in with your lifestyle?



THANK YOU LETTERS

- By sending a thank you letter, you show your interviewer common courtesy and respect.
 - Gives you a chance to stand out to employers.
 - A thank you letter:
 - Gives you an opportunity to reiterate your strengths for the position.
 - Lets you make points you might have missed in your interview.
 - Demonstrates your written communication skills.
 - At the very least, it puts your name in front of an interviewer one more time.
 - Send note within 24-48 hours of the interview.
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-Sample Thank You Letter-

Andy Anderson
555 Mamaroneck Avenue
Mamaroneck, NY 10543
aanderson@gmail.com

October 23, 20xx

Ms. Erin Smith
Director, Helping Hands Community Center
700 Moore Avenue
New Rochelle, NY 10801

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me this afternoon. It was great to learn more about Helping Hands Community Center's commitment to personal development and diversity initiatives. The many services provided by the center are so critical to personal growth. I am very excited about the possibility of obtaining the Community Relations position. I am confident that my leadership and volunteer experience would be an asset to the center.

After meeting with you, I walked away enthusiastic about the possibility of working with Helping Hands. I hope you will not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information. I may be reached at 914-555-5555. I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Andy Anderson

CLOSING & FOLLOW-UP

The closing of the interview is just as important as the initial greeting. You want to express your interest in the company, and find out what the next steps of the hiring process may be. Following up by way of a *'Thank you note'* is necessary. Before contacting the organization, consider these points:



- ALERT YOUR REFERENCES**
If you have not done so already, let your references know that they may be contacted soon by a potential employer.
- DON'T STOP YOUR SEARCH**
Although you feel confident you may receive an offer for the position, do continue to apply and interview to find additional opportunities.
- FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALL**
Follow-up with a phone call if you have not heard back from employer(s) within a reasonable time (seven to ten days). Make sure to continue to reiterate your enthusiasm and market your strengths for the position during the call.
- BE PATIENT**
Relax, the hiring process often times takes longer than the employer anticipates.
- NEVER BURN BRIDGES**
Even if you find out you did not get the position, try and turn the situation into a positive one. Consider bringing the interviewer into your network, and ask for feedback, as well as possibly asking for referrals for other contacts.
- COMMITTING TO A JOB OFFER**
Carefully consider an offer before you accept. Once an offer has been accepted, you are expected to fulfill the commitment and properly decline other offers. For more information about accepting, denying, delaying, or negotiating an offer, please contact the Gerri Ripp Center for Career Development.