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Interview Formats

There are several ways to conduct an interview. Every employer and hiring department is different. Here is a breakdown of the different formats. Remember, some employers may use a combination of these interview formats, so it is important to be aware of the differences.

Behavioral Interviews

The theory behind behavioral interviews is “past performance predicts future behavior.” Open-ended, situational-based questions can help the employer determine how you would behave in a specific situation. They can also inform the employer about your communication, leadership and problem-solving skills. Your responses will be based on “stories” or “examples” of your past experiences (i.e. community service, previous employment, school projects).

Behavioral interview questions may begin as follows:

- Tell me about a time when...
- Describe a situation in which you...
- Give me an example of a time when you...
- Walk me through how you would handle...

Your answer to a behavioral interview question must explain the **Situation** you were in, the **Task** (problem) for which you were responsible, the specific **Action** you took, and the **Results** of your action. This is known as the **S.T.A.R.** technique.

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews are mostly used to screen candidates before inviting you to an on-site meeting. Telephone interviews are actual interviews, so take them just as seriously as face-to-face interviews. Be prepared to receive a telephone call at any time. The initial contact may be to schedule the telephone interview, so make sure that you are professional at all times when answering your telephone.

- Research and prepare just as you would for a face-to-face interview.
- Have your paperwork, research, questions and résumé all in one place.
- Have a notebook and a pen available. It is suggested not to take notes on a computer. The typing on a keyboard could be distracting to the employer.
- Make sure you get everyone's name and contact information so that you can send a thank-you letter after the interview.
- If the time to conduct a telephone is inconvenient, ask to schedule a more appropriate time.

On-Site Interviews

On-site interviews occur at the company's location. This is a chance to see where you might be working if chosen for the position. You would typically be given a tour of the facility and a chance to meet some of the other employees.

- Be on time (at least 15 minutes early).
- Prepare for any travel contingency (traffic, construction, detours, confusing directions, etc.).



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Team Interviews

Team interviews are the most common interview style. There may be individuals from the same department or selected from across the company to offer different perspectives and insights. Here are a few tips to help you prepare for and be familiar with this type of interview:

- Have fresh copies of your résumé.
- Have business cards with your name, contact information and career focus.
- Have a notebook with prepared questions for the end of the interview.
- Carry all of your materials in a professional-looking portfolio.
- Use active-listening skills.
- Answer the questions posed to you but make sure they are directed to everyone present.
- Thank everyone present for his or her time.
- Send a thank-you letter to each person within 48 hours of the interview.

Virtual Interviews

In today's economy and in a global setting, a virtual interview is the most economic and convenient choice for some employers and candidates. Virtual interviews cut down on travel, fuel costs and are much less time-consuming than traditional interviews. The following tips can help to make this experience much easier and more effective:

- Make sure you have a Skype account, or other compatible streaming video, and the application is working properly long before the interview is to take place.
- Make sure your webcam and microphone are calibrated correctly.
- This is a real interview so dress to impress. Make sure that you are not wearing too light of a color, such as whites or pastels. Do not wear shirts or dresses with a "busy" pattern. It might look fine "live," but on video it could be distracting. Shades of black, navy blue, or gray are best.
- Position the camera directly on you. Make sure that the background is uncluttered and that there will be no distractions or ambient noise (music, outside noise, dogs, people talking).
- Make eye contact with the camera; smile and speak clearly (but do not shout).
- Be prepared for technical glitches. They happen. Ask for a phone number directly to the interview room in case these problems occur. Your video interview might turn into a phone interview, but you can pick up where you left off. It can show your initiative and problem-solving skills on the spot.
- If you do not have access to a webcam or the Skype software, The Career Development Center can be of assistance.