

INTERVIEWS

Successful Interviews

A successful interview starts before a candidate even arrives. The best candidates who go to their interview prepared and ready can quickly identify their skills, knowledge and abilities to the employer. There are several ways candidates can prepare for a successful interview.

Before the Interview

Research the Company:

- Find out their history, mission, values, culture, reputation, and successes.
- Understand the size, structure and organization.
- Note statistics, publicity, and company profile.
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer regarding the position and the company.

Know Yourself:

Know the job description of the position and what contributions you have to offer.

- Prepare a 30 - 45 second presentation about yourself; your professional background and qualifications (i.e., Me in 30 Seconds).
- Be prepared to answer both strengths and weaknesses and how you are overcoming weaknesses.
- Be prepared to provide a statement about why you are the best candidate for the job or why they should hire you.
- Be ready to highlight accomplishments, skills, abilities and potential.

Mock Interviews

Make the most out of your next interview by scheduling a mock interview with a career counselor at the Career Development Center. 801-863-6364 or uvu.edu/cdc/about/#counselors



Learn to Communicate Effectively:

Practice interviewing through a mock interview and receive feedback on the following:

- Body language, eye contact, and facial expressions.
- Establish an interesting tone and inflection, speed of voice, and proper volume.
- Demonstrate clarity and conciseness.
- Be confident but not egotistical.

Practice avoiding your nervous habits before your interview (i.e., fidgeting, mumbling, or rambling). Understand and answer each question you are being asked. If you are unclear of what interviewers are looking for, it is better to ask for clarification than to give an irrelevant answer.

Do You Have a Problem with Fillers or Rambling?

Pausing before you answer an interview question can actually help you appear more insightful and professional. Practice pausing for 3 - 5 seconds before answering and you'll notice the following results in your performance:

- Fewer filler-words like "um," "uh," and "let's see."
- More concise, clear answers with less rambling.
- Improved confidence as you have more direction and time to think.

During the Interview

Arrive on time or early: Plan for traffic, parking and delays. Call ahead if you MUST be late. Many employers will not hire someone who arrives even one minute late for an interview. Arriving ten minutes early for an in-person interview is ideal.

The interview starts once you walk in the door: Remember to be professional and friendly from the moment you arrive. Often the receptionist and other staff can influence the hiring committee's decision.

Dress appropriately: Your appearance forms the hiring committee's decision. A suit is often the best option, as it convinces the interviewer of your professionalism and serious interest in the position.

Smile & be friendly: Channel your most positive, outgoing, assertive, friendly, and genuine self.

TIP:

Bring several copies of your resume to the interview, printed on nice white or cream paper to hand out in case there are multiple interviewers. If appropriate, bring your portfolio.

Interview Etiquette:

- Do not arrive with another person.
- Turn off and put away your cell phone.
- Throw away chewing gum.
- Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake (but not bone-crushing).
- Avoid distracting mannerisms.
- Address the interviewer only by the name given during the introduction (i.e., do not address Michael as Mike).
- Direct eye contact to all members of the interviewing team and not just the individual asking the question.
- Thank the interviewers and shake hands at the conclusion.

Do not underestimate the power of the handshake!

It is a physical symbol of your competency, assertiveness, and confidence

Interview Attire



Women

- Suit or skirt/slacks with appropriate blouse.
- Avoid revealing clothing, including short skirts and low-cut tops.
- Professional, neat and conservative hair style.
- Moderate make-up
- Avoid wearing perfume.
- Avoid flashy jewelry.



Men

- Suit and tie.
- Neat, trimmed hair; avoid sideburns, long hair and facial hair.
- Avoid wearing cologne

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- Be sure to include skills: don't get carried away by the story and forget to highlight your skills and abilities.
- Do not say what you "would do" in a particular situation. Rather, state what you "have done."
- If you do not have an example that fits a work setting, use an example from a school or volunteer setting to demonstrate your ability to perform under similar circumstances.
- Briefly relate the problem and then focus on the positive aspects of your solutions and improvements.

Add Impact with STAR:

Answer all questions as thoroughly, yet concisely as possible. Try to give specific examples for each question to SHOW why you are qualified. Highlight accomplishments (actions) to make it easy for employers to see your potential within their company. The STAR formula can help add impact and cover all information concisely.

Situation
Task
Action
Result

Performance Interviewing:

Often used for specialized skills and occurs when interviewer asks you to perform a specific task to test skills such as:

- PR asked to write press release.
- Musician asked to perform.
- Teacher asked to teach a class.
- Developer asked to write code
- Mechanic asked to diagnose machinery

Let's Talk Salary:

Be prepared to talk about salary, but do not bring it up first. Salary discussions can be sensitive. Asking for too much can show greed and unreasonable expectations, while asking for too little can indicate lack of ambition, and you risk getting stuck with a lower salary than you deserve. Follow these tips:

- Research realistic pay for professionals in your same level of experience.
- Consider offering a salary range or minimum, rather than a specific amount.
- Be aware that salary can be affected by geographical location.



Do Not Forget to Ask Questions:

- Always ask the interviewer at least two questions.
- Ask questions that help you decide if the position and organization are a good fit.

Be Sure To:

- Reiterate how you are the best fit for the position
- Restate interest in the position.
- Ask about follow-up time.
- Thank interviewer(s) for their time and ask for a business card.

After the Interview

Follow up the interview with a thank-you note. While traditional hand-written notes are appropriate, emails are appropriate as well. Remember that the thank-you note is a gracious way to remind an employer of your strengths and potential. Consider these suggestions:

- Be sure to send immediately, especially if using standard mail.
- Make sure to use proper structure and grammar.
- Include specific information from the interview to make the note personal.
- Briefly restate the qualifications and interest in the position and company.
- Send a thank-you to everyone you interviewed with, including all members of the interview committee.

Sample Interview Questions the Employer May Ask You

- Give an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person/group even though that person/group may not have liked what you were saying.
- Tell me about yourself.
- Give an example of what you have done to keep up-to-date in your area of expertise.
- Give an example of a project you have worked on, including reports, and controls you utilized.
- Give an example of a time when you had to deal with an unexpected situation. How did you handle it, and what was the outcome?
- Describe a major project in which you needed help. What did you do? Why did you ask particular people to help you?
- What are your greatest strengths/weaknesses?
- Give an example of how you organize and prioritize your work.
- Give an example of tasks or projects that you have done outside of your job description.
- Identify some constraints you have had when performing a job. How did you manage these constraints?
- Give some examples of projects you have started on your own.
- What are your goals?
- Describe an experience in which you turned a failing project into a success.
- Describe a situation where you were able to positively influence the actions of others.

Sample Questions You May Ask the Employer

- How would you describe your company culture and environment?
- How does this position support company objectives?
- What is your vision for your department over the next two to three years?
- What major challenges are you currently facing as a manager?
- What would you consider to be exceptional performance?
- What has been your career path within the organization? What will be the measurements of my success in this position?
- What are the organization's goals?
- Are there any plans to expand the company or bring out any new products or services?
- What is the company's policy on providing seminars, workshops and training so employees can develop new skills?
- Is there career progression for this job?

Learn from Every Interview

Even if an interview does not result in a job offer, the experience is invaluable. Any opportunity to practice interview skills can lead to greater success and confidence in the future. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. Analyze areas for improvement and develop a plan to change. Do not dwell on the past; instead, learn from the experience and move on.