INTERVIEWING SKILLS
INCLUDING PHONE & SKYPE INTERVIEWS

For more information:
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Career Counseling Drop in Hours:
   MONDAY: 1-3PM
   WEDNESDAY: 11AM-1PM
   THURSDAY: 2-4PM
I. Interviewing

A. Purpose
1. This is a time during which you relate to the employer experiences, skills, and accomplishments. That will make him or her want to hire you. In return, you find out information that will allow you to determine whether you want the position.

B. Guidelines
1. There are no set rules for interviewing, just principles. Interviewers are human. Everyone will react to situations differently and are impressed by different styles and types of people. No set of rules is guaranteed to get you a job.

II. Preparing for the Interview

A. Self-assessment. Identify what you want to communicate.
1. What strengths, skills and accomplishments do you want to emphasize? What images do you want to convey?

B. Research the organization
1. Find out as much pertinent and useful information as you can about the company, product or service, structure, size, outlook, etc.
2. Find out as much about the position opening as possible, in example how the position fits into the whole structure of the company, desired qualifications, responsibilities, etc.
3. Research salary range for this position in case a related question should arise.

C. Dress
1. Guidelines to dress – dress as others do in the same occupation for which you are interviewing.
   (a) Women- wear a simply tailored suit or dress, be moderate in use of makeup and perfume, have a neat hairdo, and limit jewelry.
   (b) Men- wear a clean pressed, conservative suit with a subdued shirt and tie, wear plain socks and shined shoes, keep hair neat and trimmed, and limit jewelry.

D. Time
1. Arrive approximately 15 minutes early. Allot time to arrive 30 minutes early if the interview is a long distance away.

III. The Interview

A. Answering questions
1. Before answering, determine what information the interviewer is trying to get.

Think before answering. If the question is unclear, ask for clarification.

2. Your objective is to tell about your skills, abilities, strengths, and achievements in an effective way. Use the P.A.R. (problem, action, result) method to help you remember to communicate the entirety of your experiences.

3. The key to answering a question correctly is to relate work experience, educational training, and personal strengths to the particular job for which you are applying.
4. Convey all positive qualities. Try to anticipate any negative perceptions that the employer may address and determine how you will turn negatives into positives.

5. Stress what you can give to the job throughout the interview.


7. Know the employer’s name and use it.

8. Practice. Ask a friend, spouse, or professional to help simulate an interview. Avoid memorizing what you want to say. Your words should flow naturally.

9. Always be truthful.

10. Relax. Nervousness is natural, but you shouldn’t let it overtake you.

B. Asking questions

1. Your questions affect the employer’s perception of you. Don’t ask about salary, benefits or hours. Do ask about the company (those questions not answered through your own research) and advancement potential.

2. Ask questions that convey your strengths. Your questions should always convey a sense of organized thought and analytical skills. (ex. Will I be involved in decision-making?)

3. Have 3 to 5 questions written out that you want to ask at the end of the interview.

IV. Concluding the Interview

A. Confirm your interest in the job.

1. Be sure to express your continued interest in the position to the interviewer.

B. Determine future contact.

1. Ask if you may call to find out about the status of the position. Leaving the follow-up in your hands will give you the opportunity to call back and restate your interest as well as gain information about your candidacy.

V. After the Interview

A. Follow up correspondence

1. Send a brief, formal thank you letter to your interviewer(s) no more than 72 hours after your interview. It reminds the employer of your abilities and qualifications, conveys your interest and assertiveness, and may distinguish you from others who did not follow up.

BEFORE YOU GO FOR AN INTERVIEW

Preparation is the key to a successful interview. Some suggestions for ways to prepare are listed.

LEARN ALL YOU CAN ABOUT THE COMPANY:

• Read the annual report, recruiting brochures, and other articles you find.

PREPARE FOR QUESTIONS YOU WILL BE ASKED ABOUT YOURSELF:

• Make a list of your skills and qualifications that you want the interviewer to know about.

• Look at your past and current leadership experiences and the leadership skills you have developed from these experiences. Questions will be asked about leadership and you can use this opportunity to market your leadership skills to the interviewer.
PREPARE FOR TRADITIONAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS:

• Be able to answer questions such as “Why do you want to work for our company?” – “Tell me about yourself.” – “What are your qualifications for this particular position?”

PREPARE FOR BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS:

• Become informed as to what behavior-based interviewing is and how it is conducted. As a brief introduction, this style of interviewing is based on the premise that past behavior will predict future performance. Interviewing questions are phrased to extract information about your qualities (leadership, organizational skills, ability to work under pressure, awareness of strengths and weaknesses, and past behaviors). The questions asked in a specific interview will attempt to determine how you will respond or behave in typical situations that are encountered in their work environment. Your performance examples can come from work experiences, internships, activities, hobbies, volunteer work, academic and social experiences.

• Practice answering questions according to the STAR (Situation-Task-Action-Result) method. This can be thought of as a storytelling format, where your answer has a beginning (the problem), a middle (the action), and an end (the result).

LIST SOME QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER:

• Where is the organization going?
• What plans or projects are being developed to maintain or increase its market share?
• Who are people with whom I will be working? May I talk with some of them?
• May I have a copy of the job description?
• What might be a typical first assignment?
• What is the potential for promotion within the organization?
• What is the company like as a place to work?
• How will the company help me meet the goals we agree on?
• If relocation is involved, how much will the company help?

HOW TO RESEARCH A COMPANY

I. WHAT TO LOOK FOR

A. Information about the company:

• Type of products or services it provides.
• Size of company, growth within past 5 years, potential for growth, short term profit.
• Other competition within the field.
• Organizational structure, corporate relationship, private or public owned, present stock price.
• Geographical location, location of home office, number of sites, relocation policy.
• Future plans for new products, services, etc.
• Company philosophy, personnel policies, etc.
• Opportunities for professional development, training, etc.
B. Information about the position you’re seeking:

**Job description**

- Typical career path in your field.
- Names of persons in your area within the company.
- Name of manager or immediate supervisor in your area of interest.

**II. WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION**

A. The Internet:

- Find out about the company’s web address by telephoning the office or performing a search on one of the many search mechanisms.
- Most companies list general information about their products/services, in addition to information about various career opportunities on their homepage.

B. Basic information about U.S. Corporations:

- Multi-industry National Business Directories – contain lists of thousands of corporations by company name, geographic location, industry codes, rankings, and more. Include: Million Dollar Directory (Dunn and Bradstreet), Standard & Poor’s Register, Thomas Register of Manufacturers, Ward’s Largest U.S. Corporations
- Single-industry National Business Directories
- State Industrial Directories – provide information about company products, industry codes, officers, and employers.
- City Directories – can be found through local Chamber of Commerce and telephone directories.

**POTENTIAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS**

**QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED: TRADITIONAL INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How would you describe yourself?
3. What would your boss say about you?
4. What do you consider to be your major strengths? Weaknesses?
5. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
6. What are your short-term and long-term goals? When and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing to reach them?
7. When you waste time at work, where is it wasted?
8. Why did you choose this particular field of work?
9. What is your typical role as a group member?
10. Why did you select your university or college?
11. What are your long-term career goals?
12. Are you creative?
13. What is your ideal work environment?
14. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
15. Do you plan to continue your education?
16. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
17. Do you prefer to work with figures or words?
18. How do you manage your time/work week and make realistic deadlines?
19. How do you define success?
20. Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your college achievement?
21. How has your college experience prepared you for a professional career?
22. What college subjects did you enjoy the most? The least? Why?
23. What extracurricular activities are you or have you been involved in?
24. What have you learned from your participation in extracurricular activities?
25. Do you hold any positions of leadership in any organizations? Have you in the past?
26. If you had the chance to repeat your college career, what would you do differently?
27. What do you think determines an individual’s progress in a company?
28. What kind of rewards are most satisfying to you? How do these rewards affect your effort?
29. How important is communication and interaction with others on the job?
30. What do you feel is a satisfactory attendance record?
31. What are some of the things you find difficult to do? Why do you feel this way?
32. What kind of people do you like to work with?
33. What kind of people do you find difficult to work with? How have you successfully worked with this difficult type of person?
34. How do you take direction?
35. What have you done that shows initiative?
36. What special characteristics should I consider about you as a person?
37. What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your field? 38. How do you define cooperation?
39. What do you consider to be important aspects of an organization?
40. What did you like and dislike about your last position?
41. Why are you a good fit for the company and position?
42. Why are you seeking a job with this company?
43. How have you helped to increase sales, reduce costs, etc.?
44. How many people did you supervise in your last position?
45. What skills, experience and training do you have that make you qualified for this position?
46. Why should I hire you?
47. Why are you leaving your current position? / Why did you leave your last position?
48. What most interests you about the position we have? The least?
49. What are your salary requirements?
50. What qualities do you prefer in a boss?
51. What are your preferences about relocating?
52. How do you feel about working overtime?
53. If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you look for?
54. What is your general impression of your last company?
55. What past jobs have you held?
56. What job did you enjoy the most? The least? Why?
57. What do you know about our company?
58. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you wish to work?
59. What have you learned from your past positions?
60. In your current or past position, what 2 or 3 accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
61. Do you have any questions?

QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED: BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

1. Give me an example of a time when you had to address an unsatisfied customer. Tell me about the problem and the outcome.
2. Tell me about a time at your past job when a mistake you made cost the company time and money.
3. Tell me about the worst mistake you ever made on the job.
4. Describe a time when your work or an idea was criticized. How did you react?
5. Describe a time when you had to juggle multiple projects or duties. How did you handle the situation?
6. Describe the biggest challenge you faced in your last position. How did you handle the stress it created?
7. Give an example of a time when you took initiative at work.
8. What is the most effective way you have learned to deal with burnout?
9. Describe a time at work or school when you did more than was required.
10. Describe a time when you persuaded another person to take action on a matter of importance to you.
11. Tell me about a time when you were disappointed in the results of your efforts.
12. Describe how you handled the details of your last major project.
13. What process do you follow in problem solving? Give a specific example of a situation and outcome.
14. Describe one specific example of how your past job has helped prepare you for this job.
15. Think of a crisis situation when things got out of control. Why did it happen and what was your role?
16. Describe a high-pressure situation you faced in the past year. How did you respond?
17. Tell me about a time when you were particularly creative in solving a problem.

18. Tell me about a time when you got off-track in your academic or career progression. What did you do to remedy the situation?

19. Describe a time when your organizational skills saved the day.  20. Discuss a time when your integrity was challenged. How did you handle it?

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

1. How would you describe a typical day?

2. What is the normal daily routine for this position?

3. To whom will I report? Who are people with whom I will be working?

4. What qualifications would you expect the ideal candidate for this position to have?

5. What resources are available from the company? What kind of training is available to employees?

6. Will I be working as part of a team or independently? 6. What might be a typical first assignment?

7. How often, by whom, and on what basis will my performance be evaluated?

8. What is the potential for promotion within the organization?

9. Do most managers have advanced degrees? Are employees encouraged to pursue higher education?

10. What are the main objectives and responsibilities of this position?

11. What characteristics do the individuals who are successful in this position possess?

12. Where is the organization going? What are the long-term goals and objectives for this company and how does the company expect to meet these goals and objectives?

13. What plans or projects are being developed to maintain or increase its market share?

14. How would you describe the organizational culture (or work environment)?

15. What current industry-wide trends are likely to affect your organization?
FREQUENTLY ASKED DISCRIMINATORY QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTED RESPONSES

For Men or Women

1. Do you have plans for having children/family?  "I don’t know at present. I plan on having a career and believe my career will be successful with or without a family.”

2. What are your marriage plans?   “If what you are concerned with is my ability to travel or my commitment to my employer, I can assure you that I am quite aware of the job’s responsibilities and personal commitments involved.”

3. What does your husband/wife do?    “I am interested in working because …. What my husband/wife does is not relevant to my performance for your company.”

4. What happens if your husband/wife gets transferred or needs to relocate?  My husband’s/wife’s career will not interfere with my career.”

5. How old are you? “I wish to be evaluated on my skills, competence, and experience. Age is irrelevant.”

6. What is your date of birth? “I feel that my age is an advantage at work in terms of the broad-based experience it has afforded me.”

7. How would you feel about working for someone younger than you? “Age does not interfere with my ability to get along with others. I am adaptable and respect supervisors who are knowledgeable and competent.”

8. Who will take care of your children while you are at work? “I have made arrangements so that will interfere as little as possible with my work.”

THE SITE VISIT

The site visit is where a potential job is won or lost. It occurs after an on-campus or first interview when strong candidates are asked to visit the employer’s facility. It is also referred to as the second interview, the plant visit, or the on-site interview. It is not a guarantee of a job offer, but a chance to examine whether or not you will be a good match for the job and the organization. The actual experience may last from a half day to a full day and include interviewing and related activities. You may be asked to attend a dinner or informal session the day before your actual interviews. On the day of interviewing, you may have multiple interviews with individuals from different departments or domains in the company. Your interviews may be one-on-one, panel format, group, or a combination of different types. Typically after the second interview, candidate evaluations are conducted and an offer is made.

Before the visit

• Conduct thorough research on the organization/potential employer. Read up on the employer. Know their products, services, locations, names of CEO and other executives in your specific area, and other pertinent information.

• Prepare a thoughtful list of questions that will demonstrate your interest in the company and help make a better decision if you are offered the position. Questions can cover such areas as training, promotion, performance evaluation, corporate culture, and goals. Do not ask questions that can be found in the employer’s literature or on its website.

• Bring extra copies of your resume and any paperwork you might have forwarded to an employer previously (such as reference sheets, college transcripts, samples of your work). Also bring a notebook and black or blue pen for
filling out forms. Bring money and an extra change of clothes if necessary. Have the contact information of the person(s) you will be meeting in case your plans change unexpectedly (flight delays or changes, difficulty finding the building, etc.).

• Be prepared to meet people who are not part of your formal agenda. Be polite and friendly with everyone you meet.

• Know your expected / desired salary range. Though salary should not be brought up until an offer is extended, it is wise to know your worth in advance. Know last year’s salary range for your field and degree level.

**During the visit**

• Arrive dressed appropriately for the job as well as for what might be a full day of interviews.

• Be clear about what type of job you are interested in. Don’t say “I am willing to consider anything you have.” Be honest about relocation. If you will not relocate to a specific location, make that clear. Don’t appear to be open to relocation just to “please” the employer or to keep your options with that organization open if this is not an option for you.

• Your role at the interview is to respond to questions, ask your own questions, and observe. You are there to evaluate the employer and to determine if your expectations are met for job content, company culture and values, organizational structure, and lifestyles. Take note of how employees interact and other aspects of the physical environment. Remember: the site visit / interview is a two-way street.

• Gather business cards and contact information prior to ending each interview or meeting with any individual you might want to have further contact with (send thank you notes, requesting further information, etc.). In other words, don’t leave an interview without some sort of closure.

**After the visit**

• Record your impressions of your performance. Jot down impressions of the experience, people you met, things you observed so that the experience remains fresh in your mind even after some time has passed. These notes may be helpful to reference in your thank you notes and further conversations with employees of the organization.
SKYRE INTERVIEWS

Video interviews are a new trend in the graduate job process. On the one hand they help recruiters and organizations filter candidates at an early stage, but because they’re different, there’s potential to cause intimidation among graduate job seekers. So, before you get nervous, get knowledgeable and read the tips below.

Doing an important interview over Skype was once a novelty. These days, it’s quickly becoming common practice. The growing prominence of Skype interviews has given rise to a whole school of thought on Skype etiquette and how to make the best impression over a Skype video call.

Here are the Top Five Skype Interview Tips according to the experts:

1. Practice makes perfect
   “Practicing means testing a Skype video call with a friend or family member to get a feel for it, but it also means double-checking that all of your technical components are in order.”

First off, be sure that you are running the latest version of Skype so you’re getting the best performance. Here’s where you go if you need to update Skype.

- Next, verify that your microphone is in good working order. If you don’t have the chance to test the mic with a friend, there is a built-in “Skype test call” function in your Skype contacts. It is always smart to use a headset, as it will have better sound quality than your computer (that said, you should always test the headset too).

- It is also essential to check that your internet connection can handle a video call. You generally need at least 1.2Mbps of bandwidth for a good quality HD video. A LAN connection is best, then Wi-Fi, and mobile 3G or 4G is a last resort for an important interview.”

- If there’s any chance that you’ll have to do a demonstration during the interview – such as writing code or solving a written problem – make sure you’re using a desktop or laptop and have practiced Skype’s ‘Share screen…’ and ‘Send files…’ functions.”

Resources for troubleshooting can be found at support.skype.com.
2. Set the scene

- Be aware of what’s behind you. Clear away clutter. A simple backdrop will look best on the other end of the Skype call.

- Background noise can break your concentration and interrupt your interview. Eliminating background noise obviously starts with choosing a quiet location. Then you need to account for all of the X factors inside and outside of your interview space: close doors and windows and be sure that someone dependable keeps your pets and kids occupied.

3. Look the part

It’s true that interview attire varies depending on your industry. Whether you decide to sport business clothes or not, it is worth looking at what news anchors and talk show hosts wear on TV. The color palette used in their outfits is optimal for the camera.

- Avoid stripes or patterned clothing. Small details tend to be hard to encode and may appear messy on the viewer’s screen

- All of those things your mother told you about maintaining eye contact and good posture also hold true for a Skype interview. In terms of eye contact, it can be tempting to stare at the image of the interviewer or the image of yourself on the computer screen. It is fine to do that a bit, but you need to train your eyes on the camera. Only by looking straight into the camera will it give the interviewer the impression that you are looking at them.

- It’s also important to sit up straight as a camera angle from below will multiple your number of chins and a camera angle from above will shrink your size. If you are using a laptop with a built-in camera, it can be worthwhile to boost it up on a stack of books so that it’s at eye-level.

- Get all of your upper body in the visible area on camera, not just your face. Hand gestures are an important part of natural communication. You don’t want to be constrained to just wiggling your shoulders.

4. Be enthusiastic and give it your all

Skype gives us amazing opportunities to connect with people. You can truly feel as if you are in the same room as the other person, but it is still up to you to take advantage of all that Skype has to offer and to engage that person on the other end of the call.
As with all interviews, it is essential to speak clearly and convey enthusiasm. Being in the comfort of your own home is not an excuse to get overly comfortable or lapse into a monotone. As they say in sales jobs, you need to be ‘smiling through the call.’ Keep energy in your voice.”

http://blogs.skype.com/2013/02/07/looking-for-your-next-job-here-are-the-definitive-top-five-skype-interview-tips/
You just got word that you landed a job interview with a company that really interests you -- only there's a slight catch.

You won't be meeting with your interviewer(s) face to face. Instead, you'll be taking part in a phone interview, the results of which will determine whether you're invited to meet with company representatives in person.

Many companies use phone interviews as an initial employment screening technique for a variety of reasons. Because they're generally brief, phone interviews save companies time. They also serve as a more realistic screening alternative for cases in which companies are considering out-of-town (or out-of-state and foreign) candidates.

So the chances are pretty good that, at some point in your job hunt, you'll be asked to participate in a 20- to 30-minute phone interview with either one person or several people on the other end of the line. In many ways, the way you prepare for a phone interview isn't all that different from the way you'd get ready for a face-to-face interview -- save for a few slight additions to and modifications of your list of preparation tasks.

Here's what to do:

- **Treat the phone interview seriously, just as you would a face-to-face interview.** Be sure to research the company, study the job description, and practices your responses to anticipated questions.

- **Have your resume and cover letter in front of you.** You'll almost certainly be asked about some of the information that appears on these documents. You might also want to have in front of you any supporting materials that relate to information in your resume and cover letter, like documents you've designed or written, a portfolio of your various projects, or the written position description from your key internship.
- **Make a cheat sheet.** You can have a sheet in front of you that list information about the company, job description, as well as important points you want to make known to the interview. Jot down a few notes about the most critical points you want to make with your interviewer(s). Are there certain skills and experiences you want to emphasize? Do you have certain interests or passions you want your interviewer(s) to know about and understand? Be sure these pieces of information appear on your crib sheet. Then touch on them during the interview, even if your only chance to do so is at the end of the session when the interviewer asks you if you have any questions or anything to add.

- **Get a high-quality phone and make sure you are in a space that has excellent reception.**

- **Shower, groom and dress up (at least a little).** Odd advice? Perhaps. But focusing on your appearance, just as you would for a normal interview, will put you in the right frame of mind from a psychological standpoint. You won't do as well in your phone interview if you're lying in bed, for example, or if you're draped over your couch in your pajamas. Again, there's a psychological, frame-of-mind aspect to consider here. But on a more tangible level, research has shown that you project yourself better when you're standing up, and you'll feel more knowledgeable and confident.

Phone interviews can be tricky, especially since you aren't able to read your interviewers' nonverbal cues like facial expressions and body language during the session -- a big difference from the typical interview. But if you prepare well for your phone interview, you won't need to read anyone's non-verbal’s to gauge your performance. You'll know for sure how you've done because you'll be invited to a face-to-face interview, where you'll have yet another opportunity to prove you're the best person for the job.