The Art of Interviewing

Kick Start your career
The Art of Interviewing

- Evaluate Yourself
  - Prepare today!

- Types of Interview Questions & Dissecting Effective Responses
  - General
  - Behavioral
  - Case Study
  - Off-the-wall

- Handling Illegal Questions
Prepare for the Interview

- Know Yourself.
  Decision Making Worksheet
- Know the position you are applying for – research the employer.
- Know the company listing the position – prepare a list of questions.
- Practice! Practice! Practice!
Evaluate Yourself

- **Non-Verbal Communication**
  - Handshake, posture, eye contact, friendliness

- **Verbal Communication**
  - Grammar, diction, limited use of non-words

- **Ability to Answer Questions**
  - Preparedness, responsiveness, confidence

- **Provide Relevant Examples**
  - Illustrate qualifications through relevant experiences
30 Second Impression!

- Dress Professionally
- Tip Sheet

90% of the way you communicate with other people is through body language (gestures, expressions, etc.)

-From Marie Farquharson’s book Body Talk
Preparing to answer interview Questions

Know the . . . .
- Company & Field
- Job Description
- Yourself (Skills, Values & Interests)
- Resume (Experience)

Make connections for the employer between what they are seeking and what you can provide. Scream, “I am the match you are looking for.”
TIPS for Answering!!

- **Create a Strategy**
  - Project your image/professional profile
  - Utilize your experiences, skills, interests and values as a backdrop to answer the question

- **Provide specific examples**
  - **STAR Acronym**
    - Situation
    - Task
    - Action
    - Result (Don’t forget this one)

- **Convey your individuality and excitement!!**
“Tell me about yourself.”

Intro question that appears very broad. However,

- Do not answer it in general terms (NO life story or irrelevant information).

- Think of it as a 1 – 2 minute “commercial” of your personal highlights.

- Focus on skills, accomplishments and relevant experiences.

- IMPORTANT: Mention why are you interested in the position/field.
Other General Questions

- What makes you the ideal candidate for this job?
- Why did you choose this major?
- What do you know about our organization?
- How do you plan to contribute to the success of our workplace?
- What do you value most?
- How do you compensate for your lack of experience?
- Is this really what you want to do?
Question: **What makes you the ideal candidate for this position?**

**MENTION YOUR STRONGEST QUALIFICATIONS** (Draw connections to the position for the employer).

“My international experience in addition to my position at the Technician as the Director of Advertising makes me an ideal candidate because I offer a global perspective as well as a broad range of skills applicable to public relations. I am also very excited about the position and confident in my abilities to excel in it.”
Behavior Based Questions

- Tell me about a time...
- Describe for me a situation when...
- Give an example of...

Your Goal: To illustrate for the interviewer that you have applied relevant skills in real situations
Examples

- Tell me about a time when you came up with a creative solution to a problem you were facing?
- Describe a situation where you had to let down a customer in order to uphold company policy.
- Have you experienced a failure when organizing a program, and how did you deal with it?
- What is the hardest decision you have ever had to make?
Answering the Weakness?

- Make it **skill based** rather than behavior based.
  - *I don’t feel my publishing skills are as strong as they could be.*
- Do not disguise a strength as a weakness.
- Beware of “canned” responses.
  - *I am a perfectionist.*
- Close by telling them how you plan to compensate.
  - *Since that experience last semester, I have tried really hard to find a better balance between close attention to detail and keeping sight of the big picture.*
Question: What are your weaknesses?

SKILL BASED WEAKNESS

“My technical skills are a weakness. I recognized it last year when I tried to put together a website for Alpha Zeta.”

HOW YOU COMPENSATE

“Since then, I have taken several of the free computer courses offered at my school and have increased my knowledge of programs like Dreamweaver, which I am excited about.”
Case Study Questions

- Case study presents “what would you do if…”
- How would you react in given scenario
- No right or wrong answers – but, there are better and worse answers
  - Explain your thought process and support answers with examples when possible
Examples

- How would you deal with an irate client?
- Give an example of the best way to sell a purse to a man.
- What would you do if one of the children you were watching threw a fit in the grocery store because they wanted some candy?
- How would you confront a fellow employee who you knew was misusing company equipment for their own private use?
- Sell me this calculator on my desk.
Question: How would you deal with an irate client?

“First, I would try to calm the client down by assuring them that their needs are very important to the company. Then, I would listen to what their problem was and work with them to decide upon a mutually agreeable resolution. If the client continued to be upset and I knew that I would not be able to resolve the problem, I would have him talk to the manager.”
Off-the-wall Questions

- Employers may ask to:
  - Measure creativity.
  - Watch for reactions.
  - Evaluate problem-solving and analytical skills.
  - Monitor ability to think quickly.
Examples

- If you could be a cartoon character, who would you be and why?
- Which fruit does your personality most resemble?
- If you had to describe yourself as an animal, what animal would you be?
- How many street signs are in a four block radius of the NCSU campus?
- If you could be anyone from history, who would you be?
Question: If you were a cartoon character, who would you be and why?

“Bugs Bunny- because he always likes a challenge, never loses his sense of humor and always ends up on his feet.”
Questions To Ask Employers

Why Ask Questions???
- A lack of questions may be mistaken as a lack of interest.
- To gain more information about the position/organization for yourself. Remember- it’s a mutual exchange of information.

Questions to Ask!!
- Ones that are not readily answered through company literature.
- Questions based on your conversation.
- Questions that demonstrate your knowledge of the company and field/industry.
Examples

- Why do you like working for this organization?
- Does your company value professional development among employees?
- Would you describe a typical day’s activities?
- What are your department’s major projects in the upcoming year?
- I know that you’ve recently experienced a period of very rapid growth. How has that changed the ways you operate?
- What is the next step in the search to fill this position?
After the Interview

- Send personal thank you notes to all interviewers via mail.
- Keep records in notebook.
  - Important dates, good or bad experience
- Stay in pursuit.
  - Follow-up with a phone call to review status of employee selections
Illegal Questions

- Birthplace, nationality, ancestry, or descent of applicant, applicant’s spouse, or parents
  - Your last name, Monet, is that French?
- Applicant’s sex or marital status
- Race or color
- Religion or religious days observed
- Physical disabilities or handicaps
- Pregnancy, birth control, and child care
- Number of dependents
Examples of Illegal questions

- Are you married?
- Do you have any children?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- How did your parent’s divorce affect you?
How to Handle Illegal Questions

You have the following choices:

- Answer
- Reply to the underlying concern
- Inquire about question’s relevance
- Change the subject
- End the interview
Before everything else, “Getting Ready” is the secret of success.

Henry Ford