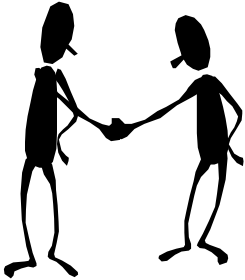
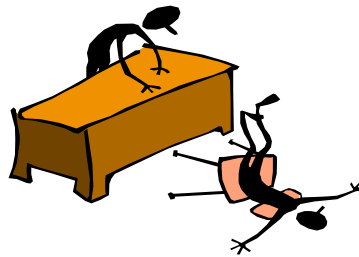


INTERVIEWING



A Presentation

by



THE OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

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tel: (617) 353 - 3590 web: www.bu.edu/careers



Office of the Dean of Students

THE AUDITION

THE AUDITION



ARE YOU READY TO INTERVIEW? (Part 1)

- ✓ Do you know what kind of job you're looking for? Yes No
- ✓ Have you identified your values, skills, interests and personality style and matched that information with selected industries and jobs? Yes No
- ✓ Have you explored your professional options and targeted employers? Yes No

- IF YOU ANSWERED **NO** TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMMITTING YOURSELF TO INTERVIEWING:

- Set up an **appointment with a career counselor** to discuss your situation. (617-353-3590)
- Join the **Career Exploration Group**, where students, in the process of making decisions about future careers, take values, skills, interest, and personality surveys. For more information, speak to a career counselor or call 617-353-3590 or 617-353-3540.
- To research careers and industries , check out **Web Resources** on our web site www.bu.edu/careers

- IF YOU ANSWERED **YES** TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTINUE.



ARE YOU READY TO INTERVIEW? (Part 2)

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Have you attended the Interviewing, Resume Writing, and/or Job Search Workshops? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Have you updated your resume and had it reviewed by a career counselor? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Have you signed up for on-campus recruiting with the Office of Career Services? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Have you investigated advertised openings? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Have you contacted employers directly? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ✓ Have you been networking with people who can assist you? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

- If you answered **NO** to any of the above questions and need assistance, please use the resources of our office. Visit our website - www.bu.edu/careers - or call us at 617-353 - 3590.

NOW, LET THE CURTAIN RISE...

INTERVIEWING INTERVIEWING

STAGE FRIGHT

INTERVIEWER: "Tell me about yourself." "What are your skills?" "Why should we hire you?"

YOU: "Well, well, I'm smart... I have to pay back loans... I need a job....HELPPP!!!"

STAGE PRESENCE

INTERVIEWING is a "two-way street", a mutual exchange of information:

- "Is this the right fit?" is what both you and the employer are striving to answer.

YOUR GOALS

- to convince the employer that you have the strengths, skills, achievements, motivation, and goals RELEVANT to the job.
- to see for yourself if the opportunity is a good match.

EMPLOYER GOALS

- to evaluate the match between you and the job and answer 3 questions:
 - **Can you do the job?** - skills, educational background, work experience
 - **Do you have the motivation and work ethic for the job?** - personal characteristics, achievements, knowledge of the organization
 - **Can you fit in?** - personality, match between you and the organization's goals

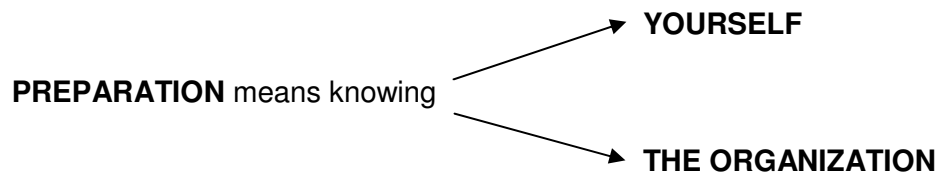
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=

PREPARATION

PREPARATION = **CONFIDENCE** and **ENTHUSIASM** in the interview.



College recruiters say students are not well prepared to answer:

★ ***WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OUR COMPANY?***

★ ***WHY DO YOU WANT THIS JOB?***

REHEARSAL

REHEARSAL

- An employer contacts you for an interview:

Write down:

- Name and Title of the interviewer(s)
- Interview location
- Contact telephone number
- Time and date of interview
- Ask for a job description to be sent if you don't already have one



Many of you have creative voice messages; however, during the job search, it's a good idea to make the voice message as concise and professional as possible.

- You have a period of time to **PREPARE** for the interview:

You need to research 2 areas:

- ✓ ***The Organization***
- ✓ ***Yourself***

• **RESEARCHING THE ORGANIZATION**

✓ ***Questions to research:***

- What are their established products, services and achievements?
- What are their new products, services and achievements?
- What is their organizational structure and culture?
- Where are the home offices and branches?
- What is the organization's history?
- What are the plans for the future?

RESOURCES TO RESEARCH COMPANIES



Libraries:

- Mugar: (Lexus, Nexus)
- Kirstein Business Library, 20 City Hall Avenue, (617) 523-0860
- Career Resource Library, Office of Career Services, 19 Deerfield St.



Websites:

- www.bu.edu/careers → [Job Search](#) → [Researching Companies](#)
- Web sites of individual companies and organizations



Annual reports and additional company literature:

- obtain through calling company, internet and library research



Contact and talk to people who work in the company or organization:

- Career Advisory Network: Database of alumni willing to talk to students and other alumni. (www.bu.edu/careers → [Career Exploration](#) → [Informational Interviewing](#))
- Alumni representatives at individual BU colleges



Additional resources:

- Chamber of Commerce, professional journals, business/trade association newsletters

• RESEARCHING YOURSELF

- ✓ **Know yourself:** Be prepared to articulate the match between you and the job, the organization and the industry.
- ✓ **Questions to think about:**
 - Why are you interested in this particular position and organization?
 - How is your education relevant?
 - What RELEVANT experiences have you had...work, internships, academic projects?
 - What skills have you acquired that are RELEVANT to this position?
 - What are your current and long-range career goals?
 - What are your achievements/accomplishments?
 - What are your strengths and weaknesses that might impact positively or negatively on your ability to do the job?
 - What questions do you have for the employer that will help you assess your interest this position?

ADDITIONAL PREPARATION



Prepare references: Ideally, find 3-5 professors and/or supervisors who are willing to serve as references. Create a list of references to bring to the interview.

Oh, no! I forgot to
shine my shoes



Dress appropriately: Be neat and clean. No extremes! In general, a suit or sports coat with a necktie and slacks for men and a suit or tailored dress for women.



Arrival: Arrive at least 10-15 minutes early for the interview in order to acclimate yourself and observe the interactions and culture of the setting.



Bring extra copies of your resume: They may have misplaced yours and/or you may be meeting with several interviewers.



A Dry Run: A few days before the interview, practice going to the interview site. See how long it takes. Check out the area. Having a visual image of where you're going often lessens the nervousness.

OPENING NIGHT

OPENING NIGHT

THE INTERVIEW

- **THREE BASIC TYPES OF INTERVIEWS:** traditional, behavioral, case

Traditional:

- ✓ A conversation between the employer and interviewee ranging from structured to informal where the employer asks questions.
- ✓ Some sample questions:

career-specific/technical questions:

- How has your major helped prepare you for this position?
- What technical skills did you use and develop at _____?
- Describe your (computer, language, teaching methodology) skills.

open-ended questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths? weaknesses?
- What do you consider your greatest accomplishments?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- Why should we hire you?

career-goal questions:

- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What are your long-range career goals?

Behavioral (often used in consulting interviews):

- ✓ This type of interview is focused on an applicant's past actions and behaviors as a predictor of future performance.
- ✓ The interviewer can get a more "objective" sense of the applicant's qualifications by focusing on what you actually did instead of what you think you would do.
- ✓ Some sample questions:
 - Describe a situation when you were able to get your co-workers or classmates who disliked each other to work together.
 - Tell me about a time you had to use your oral and/or written communication skills to effectively get your point across.
 - Discuss a situation when you faced a major problem in a project. How did you solve it?
 - Give me an example of a time you managed several projects at once.

Case Interview (consulting firms and financial banking):

- ✓ This type of interview involves presenting a business "case study" for you to problem-solve.
- ✓ The interviewer is more interested in your approach to solving the problem and your thought process, rather than the "correct" answer.
- ✓ The interviewer is interested in your ability to think on your feet, your analytical skills and how well you communicate your conclusions.
- ✓ You need to listen carefully as the interviewer outlines the facts of the case.
- ✓ The interview is an interactive process with you continuing to ask questions for clarification, explaining your thought process while moving forward to a conclusion.
- ✓ Some sample questions:
 - You are a consultant to an auto parts company. Profit margins have decreased by 25% and market share to 10% from 30%. What is the cause of the company's problems? (Business Case)
 - In the United States, how many gallons of white house paint are sold annually? (Guesstimate)
 - Why are manhole covers round? (Brainteaser)

• THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

Screening:

- ✓ This is the first interview and, if part of on-campus recruiting, is on campus with the organization's college recruiter.
- ✓ The recruiter is seeking to determine if you match the basic qualifications and criteria for the job. He/She doesn't have the power to hire you, but can eliminate you ("screen you out").
- ✓ This interview generally lasts 1/2 hour.

Selection:

- ✓ This interview (or series of interviews) takes place on site at the organization.
- ✓ The interviewer(s) are looking to assess and select the best candidate for the job.
- ✓ You'll be interviewed by staff members of the department you're interested in working for, including the department manager, supervisors, and perhaps other employees.
- ✓ This interview may take most of the day and may be divided into separate meetings.


• STAGES OF THE INTERVIEW

SCENE I - *The Greeting:* (5% - 10%)

- ✓ This is the "first impression" stage.
- ✓ Research has shown that many interviewers often make up their mind about a candidate in the first five minutes of an interview.
- ✓ "First Impression" attributes:
 - Firm handshake (No "dead fish")
 - Good eye contact
 - Friendly, genuine smile
 - Good posture
 - Relaxed and confident introduction (Stay away from one word "yes" and "no" answers)

SCENE II - *Question and Answer*: (60% - 70%)

- ✓ This is the question and answer stage and takes up the bulk of the interview.
- ✓ The more this part is a naturally flowing conversation rather than a strict question and answer the better you can exhibit your personality.
- ✓ You want to have prepared specific examples representing skills, past experiences, achievements and personal characteristics that show your match for the job.
- ✓ You want to highlight the positive, your motivation and enthusiasm for the position.
- ✓ If you need time to think before answering a question, feel free to ask for a moment so you can give a thoughtful answer.
- ✓ Listening can be as important as speaking, so listen carefully to the questions being asked and feel free to ask for clarification.



The STAR Technique:

When answering most questions, it's important to give specific examples to illustrate a strength or a skill. The example should cover the following:

S = Situation you're describing

T = Task you were performing

A = Action you took

R = Result/positive outcome

SCENE III - *Your Questions:* (15% - 20%)

✓ This is your chance to ask questions that reflect positively on your motivation and values.

✓ Having questions reflects your genuine interest in the organization and the job.

✓ Some examples (to ask):

- In researching your company, I read in the _____ that you are planning to _____ . Can you tell me more about that?
- Can you describe a typical day?
- What specific tasks does the position require?
- What kind of supervision will there be?
- How will the work be evaluated?
- How is project work allotted among the consultants?
- Can you describe in more detail the training program for new employees?
- What's a typical career path for someone starting in my position?

✓ Some examples (not to ask):

- What does your company do?
- How long is the lunch break?
- How many breaks are there in a day?
- How soon do I get a vacation?
- I understand this job involves weekend work. Do I really have to do that?
- How many absences does the company allow per year?
- Does the company provide free parking?
- NOTE: Specific questions about salary and benefits should not be asked until you are one of the final candidates or you are offered the job.

SCENE IV - *The Closing:* (5% - 10%)

✓ If you sense the interviewer is trying to close the interview and you are interested in the position, briefly highlight your relevant skills and reaffirm your interest in the position.

✓ Before you leave, ask when you might expect to hear from them; what their decision-making time line is. Ask if it is all right to call them if you don't hear by then.

✓ Get business cards, offer to leave your list of references, and remember the guidelines for the greeting: strong handshake, good eye contact, and a genuine smile.

CURTAIN CALL - The *Follow-up*:

- ✓ Soon after the interview, jot down highlights summarizing the interview:
 - important points made
 - things you learned about the organization
 - details about the job responsibilities
 - questions, concerns you still have

- ✓ Write a thank you note:
 - brief and not more than 1 page
 - express your thanks
 - refer to specific issues discussed
 - reaffirm your interest
 - use business cards to spell names correctly



COMEDY CLUB

- INTERVIEW BLOOPERS -

- A candidate showed up for an interview during on-campus recruiting. There were 3 companies interviewing, and he had forgotten the name of the one he was supposed to interview with. He missed out on the interview.

- A recent college graduate arrived at the interview wearing a beautiful new suit - - with all the tags still on the sleeve.

- A candidate's cellular phone rang during the interview. She said, "excuse me," and answered the call.

- When a candidate was asked about his hobbies, he stood up and began to tap dance around the office.

- During the interview, an alarm clock went off in the candidate's briefcase. He shut it off, apologized and said he had to leave for another interview.

- The candidate announced she hadn't had lunch and proceeded to eat a hamburger and french fries during the interview.

- The candidate wore a Walkman during the interview and said she could interview and listen to music at the same time.

- The candidate came to the interview with a moped and left it in the reception area. He didn't want it to get stolen, and stated that he would require indoor parking for the moped.

SCARY QUESTIONS

- **"What do you consider one (a few) of your weaknesses?"**

- ✓ While you're not being asked to bare your soul, try to come up with something you believe is honestly a weakness.
- ✓ Stay away from weaknesses that are closely connected to the job requirements.
- ✓ The important thing is not that you have a weakness (we all do, including the interviewer), but that you demonstrate that you are self-aware and show problem-solving skills in your attempts to improve.

- **"Why is your GPA low?" "Why were you unemployed?" "Why were you fired?"**

- ✓ Be honest about major problems and present your case in a positive manner.
- ✓ For any sensitive area, you must honestly explain the circumstances and avoid blaming others (e.g. if you blame a professor for failure, an interviewer might assume you'll also blame a boss for failure).

- **Illegal Questions: "Are you a U.S. citizen?" "Do you plan on having children?" "Do you have any disabilities?" "Have you ever been arrested?"**

- ✓ There are federal, state, and local laws that cover what questions employers may legally ask. These include questions about race, religion, national origin, marital status/children, age, prior arrest record, disabilities, and affiliations (trade unions, social clubs, etc.).
- ✓ There are various ways you can handle illegal questions:
 - You could answer the question. However, if you do, you are giving information that is not necessarily related to your **ability** to do the job. This can affect your chances.
 - You may refuse to answer the question. This is your legal right, but depending on how confrontational you are, it may affect your candidacy.
 - You should attempt to identify the concern that lies behind the employer's question and respond to that concern.
- ✓ If you run into illegal questions while interviewing through our office, please speak with a member of the staff so that we may follow up.
- ✓ Employers are permitted to ask questions to determine if any aspect of the applicant's situation affects his/her ability to do the job. (e.g. "Are you able to perform the tasks of the job?").

TOP TEN TIPS

TOP TEN TIPS

- **PREPARE:** Research yourself and the organization/company
- **PRACTICE, PRACTICE:** Role-play with a friend and/or practice in front of a mirror
- **"FIRST IMPRESSIONS":**
 - Be on time (Arrive 10 - 15 minutes before the interview)
 - Be self-confident: Firm handshake, good eye contact
 - Be pleasant, friendly, courteous: genuine smile, nice greeting
 - Be appropriately dressed and well groomed
- **BE RELAXED AND COOL:** You're well prepared, aren't you?
- **SHOW YOUR ENERGY:** You're unique, not just another job seeker
- **BE CONCISE AND CONCRETE:** Keep answers short and to the point
 - Remember the **STAR** technique
 - Stay away from tangents
- **LISTEN CAREFULLY:** Stay alert and in tune with the interviewer
- **BODY LANGUAGE:** Express your personality through facial expressions and gestures
- **ASK QUESTIONS:** This shows your thoroughness, motivation, and interest in the job
- **ACCEPT YOUR NERVOUSNESS:** This is a special event, nervousness is understandable.
 - Use relaxation techniques (e.g. slow breathing)
 - Remind yourself how well prepared you are
 - Take your time, don't rush

"TO BE OR NOT TO BE" ...

"TO BE OR NOT TO BE" ...

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS
QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

Open-ended

- Tell me about yourself
- Why should we hire you?
- What are your strengths? weaknesses?
- How would you describe yourself?
- What has (have) been your greatest challenge(s)?
- What types of situations put you under pressure, and how do you deal with pressure?
- What is your most significant accomplishment to date?
- Give me a situation in which you failed. How did you handle it?
- If I asked the people who know you well to describe you, what three words would they use?
- What have the experiences on your resume taught you about managing and working with people?

Working style

- When you take on a project do you prefer to work individually or in a group?
- What are your team-player qualities? Give examples.
- Describe a situation where you had to work with someone who was difficult. How did you handle it?
- What type of work environment appeals to you most?
- Describe the type of manager you prefer.

Career-specific/technical

- How has your educational background prepared you for this position?
- How have your hands-on experiences - e.g., work, internships, volunteer work - prepared you for this position?
- Why are you interested in our organization?
- What interests you about this job?
- Why have you chosen this particular profession?
- What challenges are you looking for in a position?
- What can you contribute to this company?
- What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
- What software packages are you familiar with and at what level of proficiency?

College related

- Why did you choose to attend this college?
- What factors did you consider in choosing your major?
- Of the courses you have had at college, which courses have you enjoyed the most?
- Does your GPA accurately reflect your abilities?
- How have you changed personally since starting college?
- If you could change a decision you made while at college what would you change and why?
- Why did you choose the campus activities you did? What did you gain? What did you contribute?
- In a particular leadership role you held, what was your greatest challenge?
- Since attending college, what is the toughest decision that you have had to make?

Career-goals

- What short/long-term goals have you set for yourself? How are you planning to achieve them?
- Where do you expect to be 5 years from now?
- What skills are you interested in developing?
- Do you envision future education through graduate study or other additional training?

Miscellaneous

- Of the hobbies and interests listed on your resume what is your favorite and tell me why?
- With which other companies are you interviewing?

THE



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www.jobweb.com/Resumes_Interviews/default.htm

The online version of interview advice from the magazine JOB CHOICES published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

www.collegegrad.com/intv

Interviewing advice covering college recruiting to on-site interviewing, job fair approaches, dressing for success, and negotiations.

www.quintcareers.com/intvres.html

Guide to web links covering interviewing topics, including traditional and behavioral interviewing.

<http://content.monster.com/interview/home.aspx>

Interviewing tips, plus an interactive exercise that lets you test answers to real questions.