

INTERVIEWING

Interview preparation and practice are your tickets to successful interviews. You can learn the skills which will help you market yourself effectively at an interview. Practicing for interviews can increase your confidence and enable you to look forward to your interviews.

A key to better interviewing is to understand that the interview is a two-way exchange of information. You and the employer both need to gather information. The employer is selling the organization to you and assessing your potential for the position; you are marketing your skills, knowledge, and personality to the employer and seeking information to help you evaluate the employer and the position.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

• KNOW YOURSELF

Take an inventory of your skills/abilities, personal attributes, experience, education. Prepare by listing activities that you have done (past jobs, volunteer work, school projects, extra-curricular involvements, etc.). Consider the skills/abilities you have developed and issues/situations you have encountered. List several of your strongest skills with examples of how you have demonstrated each of them.

Factors Valued by Employers

- Communication skills (verbal and written)
- Interpersonal abilities
- Flexibility/versatility
- Realistic career objective
- Integrity/honesty/personal accountability
- Computer Aptitude
- Motivation/initiative
- Attitude
- Leadership
- Self-confidence
- Analytical/problem solving
- Organizational skills

Consider your career plans and goals. Make an appointment to see a Career Counselor if you need help in clarifying your goals.

• KNOW YOUR CAREER FIELD

Use the Majors/Career Fields link on the Career Center website (<http://cc.camden.rutgers.edu/majorcareer.html>). View the Online Career Library (http://www.vault.com/cb/careerlib/careerlib_main.jsp), password is *rutgerssuccess*. Check the Alumni Career Network (<http://careers1.rutgers.edu/alumni/main.asp>), password is *raptors*, to contact alumni for career information such as a description of a typical work day and an inside view of the industry. Research your career choice to determine the skills, abilities and personal traits required to fulfill the responsibilities of positions within your career field.

• RESEARCH THE EMPLOYER

Employers expect that you will know something about their company/organization. Check employers' websites, use Career Center's Researching Employers website (<http://cc.camden.rutgers.edu/ResearchingEmployers.html>), browse the web for employer listings. Helpful employer information includes: products, services, location, history, growth.

• PREPARE YOUR PRESENTATION

A business suit is the appropriate attire for most professional interviews. Appearance is the first thing people notice at an interview. Dress neatly and keep jewelry and cologne/perfume to a minimum.

Practice responses to possible interview questions. Outline the key points that you plan to stress. Prepare a brief statement about yourself and become comfortable with talking about yourself without memorizing sentences.

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your greatest strengths? Weakness?
3. What motivates you to succeed?
4. Why are you interested in this position? Our organization?
5. How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?
6. Have you ever had difficulty with a supervisor/instructor? How did you resolve the conflict?
7. Describe your greatest accomplishment (related to career/personal)?
8. How would your (best friend, supervisor, co-worker) describe you?
9. What are your long range and short term career goals?
10. How do you handle stress?
11. Why should we hire you?

Questions to Ask

1. Why is this position open?
2. How often has it been filled in the past five years?
What were the main reasons?
3. What is the career path for this position?
4. What type of person are you seeking?
5. How would you describe your company culture?
6. What type of internal and external training do you provide?

DURING THE INTERVIEW

First impressions do count! Arrive 10-15 minutes early and realize that you will begin to be evaluated as soon as you are identified. Be pleasant to the receptionist. Greet the interviewer by name, with a smile, eye contact, and a firm handshake. Speak clearly and directly. Be aware of your posture; stand and sit without slouching.

Show confidence in yourself and your ability to perform the job! Maintain good eye contact with the interviewer, without staring, and take an active part in the interview. Convey enthusiasm. Be specific and focused; use examples wherever possible. Speak clearly and concisely. Listen carefully. Remember to smile at appropriate moments. Ask questions of the interviewer.

At the end of the interview, thank the interviewer, reiterate your interest in the job and why you are a great candidate. Ask “What is the next step in this process?” Be sure you have the interviewer’s name, title & address.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Spend a few minutes right after the interview summarizing the positive and negative aspects.
 - Send a thank you letter/e-mail.
 - Make follow-up phone calls.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT THE CAREER CENTER

• **PERFECT INTERVIEW** - The Career Center offers you the opportunity to practice and perfect your interviewing skills via “Perfect Interview”, a computer program which creates a realistic “simulated interview” experience where you are asked challenging questions. When you use Perfect Interview, you’ll see interview questions that are custom tailored to your level of experience, education, and qualifications — from entry-level all the way up to senior management. You can also tell Perfect Interview to concentrate on specific question categories, such as management skills, when you use it. You have the option to use a **video capture feature** in Perfect Interview, which allows you to record and playback your answers to each interview question. *Call or visit the Career Center to schedule time on “Perfect Interview”.*

Books on Interviewing:

- **Ace Your Case!** Consulting Interviews
- **Case In Point III:** 40 Case Questions - More Interviewing Tips
- **Interview Magic:** Job Interview Secrets from America’s Career and Life Coach
- **Knock ‘Em Dead:** With great answers to over 200 tough interview questions
- **Sweaty Palms:** The Neglected Art of Being Interviewed
- **Behavior-Based Interviewing**