



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

DO

1. Know about the organization. Learn about products, services, financial status, locations, history, structure, culture, and current news.
2. Know about the current job market, trends in your field, and typical entry-level jobs.
3. Have in mind some questions about the organization to demonstrate your preparedness and to garner additional information.
4. Have the appropriate information with you in case you are requested to fill out an application or provide references. You should have the names, addresses, and telephone numbers for at least three references.
5. Double check the date, time, and location of the interview. Arrive at least five minutes before the scheduled appointment. It is better to arrive twenty minutes early and sit in your car, then to be late for an appointment.
6. Be certain that you are appropriately dressed and spotlessly groomed.
7. Remove your outer coat and make last minute adjustments in your appearance before going into the waiting or interview room. **First impressions count!**
8. Use the interviewer's name once or twice during the interview. It is appropriate to refer to the interviewer as "Mr." or "Ms." unless otherwise indicated.
9. Offer a firm handshake at entry and conclusion of interview.
10. Watch the interviewer for clues regarding when to sit and indicating the interview is over.
11. Meet the interviewer's eyes when you are talking and listening.
12. Sell yourself effectively. Communicate about your skills, talents, background, immediate career interests, and reasons for your choices.
13. Present your credentials positively. Be honest and brief about shortcomings. Focus on strengths.
14. Express your willingness to learn new tasks and skills. Be prepared to provide background qualifications.
15. Express enthusiasm for the opportunity to participate in the professional environment.
16. **Be yourself! Be friendly, smile and communicate freely**, even though you may be in an uncomfortable situation.
17. Write a thank-you note soon after your interview. It is appropriate to ask the recruiter for a business card so you will have an accurate name and address.
18. Critique your own interview – what happened, what did you like, what will you change for next time?

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR BUSINESS INTERVIEWS

DO NOT

1. Fail to show up or arrive late for an interview. Unavoidable situations should be handled in a concise, professional manner.
2. Participate in interviews simply for practice. Employers are busy professionals. Practice, instead, with your family and friends.
3. Take a seat before the interviewer invites you.
4. Chew gum or smoke. If offered refreshments, use good judgement.
5. Have a poor physical appearance. Excellent grooming and proper clothes are essential!
6. Fake answers or make up things which you think will sound impressive.
7. Bring up or extensively explain and defend what you feel are your weak points.
8. **Use one-syllable answers.** Elaborate your answers. Employers are seeking your knowledge and ideas. Poor verbal communication is one of the main reasons students are not hired!
9. Criticize former employers or professors.
10. Sound unsure or “scattered” about your career preferences by saying you will “take anything” or by describing a wide range of unrelated career interests.
11. Oversell – you are not a superperson!
12. Undersell – you DO have skills and talents to offer.
13. Use expressions like, “you know,” “to tell the truth,” or “frankly speaking.”
14. Bring up salary.
15. Exhibit unrealistic expectations about your entry-level job in terms of responsibility, freedom, salary, and promotions.
16. Expect the interviewer to hire you on the spot.
17. Expect to perform at 100% perfection in every interview. You are human. Mistakes are O.K.
18. Expect instant success.

WHAT EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR IN APPLICANTS

Most students possess the prerequisites of education and experience required by an employer. “Personal chemistry” and intangible subjective factors frequently make the crucial difference in the selection process. Employers judge applicants on the following, either in a formal or informal manner.

1. **APPEARANCE: Immaculate grooming is essential. Clothing must be conservative.** Suits are recommended for both men and women. Hair styles must be neat. Jewelry, except for the basic minimum, should be avoided. Avoid perfume and colognes.
2. **PERSONALITY, STYLE:** Be courteous. Act with appropriate mix of self-confidence and respect. Spontaneous, natural interaction with a bit of humor and a relaxed sparkle mark you as someone who is intelligent, lively, and interesting to be around. Let your natural personal uniqueness show. No one wants to hire a dull, boring robot.
3. **ENERGY, DRIVE, AMBITION:** Energetic posture and movements, fresh appearance, apparent good physical and emotional health, positive and focused conversation are excellent qualities.
4. **LEADERSHIP AURA:** A self-confident manner, carriage, eye contact, handshakes, and smile connote leadership. You must be sure of yourself to lead others. Implicit in this is that you inspire trust and are likeable.
5. **POSITIVE ATTITUDE:** Display prudent optimism, a hopeful, confident view without being a Pollyanna. Don’t criticize or complain about past employers, your university, or the weather.
6. **ARTICULATE:** Express yourself in fluent, grammatically correct language. Use appropriate, professional terminology. Avoid slang and profanity. Be sure to let employers know your thoughts, ideas, and goals. If you do not articulate, the interviewer may label you as being unable to communicate and, therefore, probably will not fit you into their organization.
7. **TEAM PLAYER:** Employers are seeking employees who will fit into their corporate culture as well as being capable of contributing.
8. **THOUGHTFUL:** No one wants a “yes” man. An intelligent person usually weighs a question a second or two before responding. Don’t be a glib. Some questions really are difficult and no one knows the answer to everything immediately. Being thoughtful is not the same as being uncertain and insecure.
9. **BREADTH OF INTEREST:** An educated person knows about his chosen field and a little about many other topics...art, politics, travel, economics, literature, and music. Being able to converse widely marks you as a mature, educated, interesting person. Be cautious about taking sides on controversial issues.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your short-range goals and objectives? When and why did you establish these goals? How are you preparing yourself to achieve them?
3. What do you see yourself doing in five/ten years from now?
4. What would you like most of all to accomplish in your career?
5. How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
6. What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
7. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
8. Which is more important to you, the money or the type of job?
9. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
10. How do you think a friend or professor who knows you well would describe you?
11. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
12. How has your college experience prepared you for a business career?
13. Why should I hire you?
14. Describe a leadership position you have held.
15. What qualifications do you possess that you feel will make you successful in business?
16. How do you determine or evaluate success?
17. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
18. How well do you work with other people and what experiences have you had working on teams?
19. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
20. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
21. Think of someone you dislike and tell me why you dislike that person.
22. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.
23. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
24. Discuss the most important event in your life.
25. Describe your most rewarding college experience.

COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (cont.)

26. What qualities would you look for if you were hiring a graduate for this position?
27. Why did you select your college or university?
28. What college subjects did you like best? Why?
29. What college subjects did you like least? Why?
30. If you could do so, how would you plan your academic program differently? Why?
31. What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
32. Do you have plans for continued study? An advanced degree?
33. Do you think that your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement?
34. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
35. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
36. How do you work under pressure?
37. In what part-time or summer jobs have you been most interested? Why?
38. How would you describe the ideal job?
39. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
40. What do you know about our company?
41. Have you had any contact with the people working in this position?
42. What do you forecast for our company/industry in the future?
43. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
44. Are you seeking employment in a company of a certain size? Why?
45. How is the job search going? Who else are you talking with?
46. Do you have a geographical preference? Why?
47. Will you relocate? Does relocation bother you?
48. Are you willing to travel?
49. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
50. What have you learned from your mistakes?
51. What questions of yours can I answer?

Behavioral Based Interviews

Behaviorally-based interview questions are used to collect information about how the applicant has performed in the past. It is believed that the best predictor of an individual's future success is his/her past behavior.

The interviewer asks the applicant to talk about a situation where he/she has used a particular skill at some other time, either in a job setting or in the individual's personal life.

Behaviorally-based questions have three important parts:

The EVENT in which the person used the skill.

The ACTION the person took in the situation.

The RESULT or outcome of the situation.

EVENT:

Interviewer: "Tell me about a situation where you were given a large project to accomplish without a lot of direction."

OR

"Tell me about a situation when you had to work as a member of a team and there was conflict among the team members."

A recruiter must be certain that the applicant gives a specific event, not a hypothetical project. (Here's what I usually do, or here is how I would handle that in the future.) The recruiter will probe and push to get the interviewee to talk about a specific event.

ACTION

After the applicant has explained the details of the event or situation, they will be asked **what action(s) they took in the situation.**

Interviewer: "What did you do in this situation?" "What was your role?" "How did you solve the problem?"

RESULT

Finally, the applicant could be asked the result of the event or situation.

Interviewer: "So, what was the outcome?" "How did it turn out in the end?"

At the point the recruiter will have a pretty good understanding of how the applicant behaved in a situation and what actions he or she took to impact the final outcome.

Behavioral Based Interviews (cont.)

Additional questions

1. Describe an occasion when you found yourself in conflict with someone, co-worker, team member....
 - ☐ Tell me exactly what caused the conflict.
 - ☐ How did you respond?
 - ☐ What was the outcome?
2. When was the last time you lost your temper? This could be at school or at work.
 - ☐ Why did you loose your temper?
 - ☐ How did you respond?
 - ☐ What was the outcome?
3. What was the most difficult decision you ever had to make?
 - ☐ Talk about the thought process and what considerations went into the decision making process.
4. Describe a time when you had to bend the rules to accomplish a task.
 - ☐ Exactly what prompted the need?
 - ☐ What did you do? What action did you take?
 - ☐ What was the outcome?
5. What has been your worst mistake?
 - ☐ What prompted or caused you to make the mistake?
 - ☐ What action did you take?
 - ☐ What were the consequences?
6. Tell me about a time when you believed you were doing well.
7. Tell me about a time when you believed things were NOT going well.
8. Tell me about a time when your supervisor took credit for your work.
9. Tell me about a time when you made a major mistake and your supervisor had to correct it.
10. Tell me about a time when you had to convince your supervisor you were correct and he/she was not.
11. Tell me about a time when you had to sell your idea to a team.
12. Tell me about a time when your teammates did not pull their own weight.
13. Tell me about a time when you encountered a difficult situation and what you did about it.
14. Tell me about a time when you had to respond to an extremely stressful situation. Give an example.
15. Tell me about a time when you had to be reprimanded, and how did you react.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK THE EMPLOYER

Regarding the job itself

1. What major tasks are involved and what are their key characteristics?
2. What skills are needed to perform each task?
3. Approximately what percent of the time will the intern spend on each task?
4. Who else will the intern interact with? What are these people like? What percent of the time will the intern be with them?
5. How much discretion will the intern have in deciding how to perform the job?
6. How is performance measured in this internship?
7. Specifically, what type of advancement opportunities are available after graduation?
8. What is the decision-making process regarding full-time hires?

Regarding the organization

1. Describe the company (employment, number of divisions, locations, assets, sales volume, net income).
2. What are its prospects for future growth – market penetration?
3. Specifically, what parts of the industry will probably grow?
4. What are the industry's most important characteristics? (Is business seasonal? What type of organizations do well or poorly?)
5. What important technologies does the organization use?
6. Has the organization been restructured recently? If so, how and why?
7. Describe long and short range plans.
8. What are the major issues facing the company?

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