

INTERVIEW SKILLS

Often the interview is a stressful experience, few realize that it is a two-way street, a chance for an employer to get to know you better and for you to learn more about the organization.

1. Research the company and know the job description

Not sure where to start? Check out <https://www.starbucks.ca/careers/interview-tips> for an example of how a company asks its potential employees to research their company.

Print the job description out, review and highlight all the skills that you match. Try to think of a story or an example of a time when you have used that skill that another job, in class or during a volunteer opportunity.

2. Know yourself

Once you know what the company wants and what the job is, review your resume so you feel confident in how you match the job. Employers say the primary reason they do not hire a candidate is because the interviewee could not clearly state their skills.

3. Prepare your answers to common interview questions

| What They Are Asking | What They Want You To Tell Them |
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| <i>"Tell me about yourself"</i> | Imagine that you are in an elevator on the 10th floor going to the main floor with the hiring manager. They ask you to tell them something about yourself. Knowing that you only have about 30 seconds to answer the question, What information do you choose to share? Discuss: 1- Education 2- Relevant skills (3 SKILLS) that match with the job 3- Personal Interests / Activities/ Characteristic |
| <i>"What kind of experience have you had?"</i> | Relate experience relevant to the job and can be from work experiences, school, volunteering or practicum. |
| <i>"Why should we hire you?"</i> | Draw a match between the employers needs and your skills and experience using specific examples from your resume |
| <i>"What are your goals for the next five years?"</i> | What are your goals within this organization |
| <i>"Why would you want to work with this company?"</i> | The way you answer this question is dependent on your research of the company |

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| “What is your greatest weakness?” | Identify a skill/area you are weak in and the steps you have taken to improve. Managers are looking at how you react to a challenge and how you face obstacles in your life. |
| “Tell me about a time....” | This is another style of an interview question called a Behavioural Descriptive question. The interviewer wants to know how handled past situations in order to see how will react to a similar situation in the future. Answer by Situation: Explain the problem (situation) Action: What did you do? Results: What was the end result? Did you receive any feedback? |

4. PRACTICE your interview skills

Visit Career Development Services for a practice “mock” interview, practice with a classmate or a friend. Some people even record themselves during their practice to check if there body language and speech is appropriate.

Interview Tips: Before, Day of, During and After!

Before The Interview Checklist

- Confirm time and date of interview
- Print off required documents
- Locate the building and where to park/bus
- If possible, get a good night’s sleep the night before
- Know the position title
- Set aside the clothes you are going to wear, research
- Review the actual job description what is appropriate for an interview in your field
- Know the interviewer’s name/title

Day Of The Interview Checklist

- Dress appropriately for your field
- What to bring:
 - ✓ Cover letter, resume, references, pen and paper (transcript, portfolios and work samples if applicable)
- Read your resume just before the interview to:
 - ✓ Boost your confidence
 - ✓ Do a final rehearsal
 - ✓ Calm your nerves and focus
- Show up at least 10 minutes early

During The Interview Reminders

- Be aware of non-verbal messages – fidgeting, body language, facial expression
- Maintain eye contact
- Be positive – take every opportunity to sell yourself!
- Be prepared to repeat info from your resume – don’t assume the employer knows
- Take a moment to think or ask for clarification – provide complete and relevant answer

Closing And After The Interview

- Leave relevant materials with the employer
- If offered hand, shake firmly; or offer yours
- Ask when you will be notified about the decision
- If unknown, ask if you can follow up
- Do something nice for yourself when you get home!
- Send a follow-up/thank you email
- Restate your interest in the position after asking questions

Most Common Mistakes People Make

- ✗ Not introducing themselves
- ✗ Giving a weak handshake
- ✗ Being negative about their past work experiences
- ✗ Not researching the company or managers
- ✗ Not smiling during the interview