Interview Prep

If you are well-prepared and in the right mindset, a job interview can be an exciting, and even sometimes fun, experience. The only way to arrive at that wonderful place is to actually practice the craft -- you have to do it! This tip sheet will start you in the right direction. Best of luck.

Rules of Thumb for the Interview

Be yourself.

Approach each question as an opportunity to sell yourself and your experience.

Stay positive about previous employers; negativity will hinder your efforts to connect.

If cornered on the salary question, just give a range and never bring it up until they do.

Research, research, research then practice, practice, practice.

Practice your responses out loud.

Relax, lighten up and have fun with it!

Arrive early.

Prepare a little small talk to get you going.

Listen attentively.

Let the interviewer lead and end the interview.

Always relate responses to the position and your “fit” for the job.

Provide examples and stories whenever possible – highlight your skills and abilities.
**Interview Steps**
Thinking of the interview in segments can make the process more manageable:

1. **Research** – once you’ve scheduled the interview, learn as much as you can about the organization: demographics, culture, mission etc. See pre-interview checklist below.

2. **Plan, Prepare and Practice** – from directions to handling questions, get ready!

3. **Establish Rapport** -- research suggests that lasting impressions are often made in first 90 seconds! Be friendly, make eye contact, positive body language and tone of voice.

4. **Answer questions** – more on this below.

5. **Ask questions.**

6. **Close:** clearly state your interest, connect yourself to job, confirm next steps, and thank them for their time.

7. **Follow-up:** only 5% of applicants send a thank you note!

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**Pre-Interview Checklist** – things you should know before walking in the door:

- Company and department name; ideally names of interviewers
- CEO or president
- Ownership (public or private)
- Nature of business
- Major product lines
- Newest product line
- Last year's sales
- Recent growth record
- Major competitors
- Dress code (formal/informal)
- What else might be important to know going into the interview?
Handling Interview Questions

- Prepare in advance: ask, what experiences do I want to emphasize that will showcase my skills / strengths? Develop a quiver of stories and examples to support your responses.

- Respond with concise, specific answers under 60-seconds

- Sell yourself and demonstrate ability to perform job.

- Show how much you care about your work and how enthusiastic you are about the opportunity at hand.

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The Top Six Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your strengths?
3. What are your weaknesses?
4. What are your salary requirements?
5. Why should we hire you?
6. What do you know about our organization?

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More Resources

Sign up for an Interviewing Workshop here on campus, see the schedule: [http://www.metrostate.edu/career/workshops.html](http://www.metrostate.edu/career/workshops.html)

There are many excellent books on Interviewing in the Library and Learning Center and at Career Services in 147 Founders Hall, including:

* The Interview Rehearsal Book: Seven Steps to Job-Winning Interviews Using Acting Skills You Never Knew You Had by Deb Gottesman and Buzz Mauro. These actor authors use their theater background to help the reader overcome performance anxiety and give their best performance.

* 60 Seconds & You're Hired by Robin Ryan. Learn to effectively consolidate top attributes into five key themes and to communicate them in precise, under-a-minute exchanges.

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