



Bootcamp: Interviewing

Bootcamp: Interviewing Objectives

1. Explore how to practice and prepare before, during, and after an interview;
2. Discuss best practices and content for successful interviews; and
3. Practice how to use positive body language to deliver content well.

What makes an interview successful?

Brainstorm ideas below...

5 S-Questions Every Employer Asks

If hired, will this person:

1. **Show up?** – Have you figured out transportation? Are you dependable?
2. **Smile?** – Will you be an enjoyable presence, or a problem? Will you fit the work ‘culture’?
3. **Serve?** – Will you help without being asked? Or are you here to be served?
4. **Be Skilled?** – What are your special gifts? Are you teachable to learn new ones?
5. **Stay?** – Will you stick it out? Is training you a good investment?

Before, During, and After an Interview

Your interview goal is to humbly sell yourself to the employer, gently but concretely demonstrating how you can benefit the employer and their company. To succeed in a job interview, become familiar with these points about the interview process, along with effective interview techniques.

Read through the box below. Take a few minutes to **underline** any new considerations and **put a star** by the ones you think are most important.

Before the Interview

1. Locate potential employers. Call ahead to ask about location and manager availability.
2. Learn the details about the company by reading websites, articles and literature.
3. Talk to people who work for the company.
4. Know the company's vision, goals, products and customers.
5. Before the interview, confirm the time, exact location and directions.
6. Know the correct titles of supervisors and their role within the company.
7. Plan to arrive at least 15 minutes ahead of scheduled interview time.
8. Prepare your 60-second commercials and difficult interview questions.
9. Prepare your cover letter, resume, application and any other specific requests.
10. Prepare intelligent questions about the job that show you know about the company.
11. Get permission from your references to use their names.

During the Interview

DO:

1. Look professional. Check yourself in the mirror. (You will feel more confident)
2. Act enthusiastic, confident, and engaged when responding to questions.
3. Extend a firm and sincere handshake at the beginning and end of the interview. **if interviewing in person*

4. Maintain good eye contact throughout the interview. Focus on listening carefully.
5. Be confident, yet sincere, selling yourself in a humble, honest way.
6. Ask prepared questions about the job and company to show you're interested.
7. Name specifics about your experience, education and training, skills and abilities.
8. Relate how your experience can benefit the company.
9. Ask for the interviewer to describe the next steps in making the hiring decision.
10. Leave a clear message that you are interested in the job. Thank them for the interview.

DO NOT:

1. Chew gum. Use breath mints if needed. Brush your teeth before the interview.
2. Smoke at any time before the interview – the smell lingers and is off-putting.
3. Bring your children, spouse, significant other, or pets to the interview. **for virtual interviews, go to a quiet space without interruptions*
4. Ask about money on the first interview. Your objective is to first qualify for an offer.
5. Rush your answers or ramble.
6. Be afraid of short periods of silence.
7. Cross-examine or interrupt the interviewer.

After the interview

- Send a short, thank you note or e-mail within 24 hours after your interview.
- Evaluate yourself on what you did well and how you could improve on the next interview.
- Follow-up by phone within a week from your interview.

Research

Below are some websites you may use as resources to research companies and view comparable wages:

O*NET Online

<https://www.onetonline.org/>

O*NET Online has detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and HR professionals, students, researchers, and more!

Connecting Colorado

<https://www.connectingcolorado.com/>

- ✓ Job Seekers
- ✓ Register and upload resume
- ✓ Unemployment Benefits information
- ✓ Labor Market Information
- ✓ Links to other helpful government websites

Colorado Pay Scale – Extremely Detailed

<http://www.payscale.com/research/US/State=Colorado/Salary>

- ✓ Hourly Rate/Annual Salary
- ✓ Median Salary
- ✓ Bonus/Commission
- ✓ Skills/Experience Needed for job
- ✓ Job Satisfaction
- ✓ Job Description
- ✓ Pay Rate by degree/certificates

Indeed – Detailed

<http://www.indeed.com/salary>

- ✓ Average Salary
- ✓ National trends in salary
- ✓ Similar jobs' salaries
- ✓ Job Seeker

Glassdoor – Brief Details

www.glassdoor.com

- ✓ Minimum and Maximum salary
- ✓ Average Salary
- ✓ No hourly salary
- ✓ Companies

What's behind the question?

Employers carefully select the questions they ask. They're trying to determine crucial information. It's important for you to know why they're asking the question.

Activity: Write down why an employer would ask each of the following questions.

1. Why do you want to work here?
2. What do you know about us?
3. Why should I hire you?
4. Why did you leave your previous employer?
5. If you could turn back time and live your life over, what would you do differently?
6. Describe the ideal work environment for you.
7. Tell me about the worst boss you ever had.
8. If you could change one thing about your last job, what would it be?
9. How do you think your coworkers would describe you, both good and bad?

Practice Interview Questions

- Tell me a little bit about yourself.
- Why would you be a great employee for our company? Please describe one or two of your strengths.
- What do you consider to be a weakness and how are you dealing with it?
- Why did you leave your last job and what have you been doing since then?
- Describe a difficult work situation and what you did to overcome it?
- Describe a situation that you had to overcome an obstacle in order to accomplish your work or achieve a goal?
- Why are you seeking new job opportunities?
- I see you haven't worked for _____ (months or years). What have you been doing during that time?
- What would be the ideal work environment for you?
- What hours are you available to work?
- Going from one position to another can be difficult. What problems have you encountered in changing jobs and how did you handle them?
- How would working here relate to your career goals?
- Describe your relationship with your current or last boss.
- Give me some examples of the things you have done that go considerably beyond what is required by your job.
- During past performance reviews, what have been consistently cited as your major assets? Why?
- During a thorough reference check, what areas can we expect to find where your overall performance and effectiveness might be improved?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Do not provide information regarding your age, race, disability, religion, national origin, citizenship, marital status, number of children, or sexual orientation. Questions related to these areas should not be asked by the interviewer.

4Rs of Answering Difficult Questions

Think about a question you HOPE no one will ask you in an interview and write it below:

Let's examine the 4Rs of Answering Difficult Questions. As a group, let's **read through** each of the 4Rs and **answer** the questions.

Relay Just Enough – First, determine how much you need to share. Be honest, but also wise in what you share. Sharing too much means you might say something negative unnecessarily, but if you say too little, the employer may assume the worst. This is more art than science, but the most important thing is to be honest. What might you say if:

- You were involved with violent crime? *[I got caught up in the wrong crowd, and we were trying to make money the wrong way.]*
- You got fired for stealing? *[I broke company policy.]*
- You were arrested for a non-violent crime, like selling drugs? *[I looked to the wrong things to provide for my family.]*
- You were fired for being late? *[I had a hard time getting to work at that time because I didn't have transportation.]*

Recognize Your Mistakes – Secondly, name something that you regret or would do differently if you had another chance. No matter what the circumstances were in past jobs, find a way to communicate that shows you have learned and grown. What might you say if:

- You had a felony on your record? *[I see now that what I did destroyed the lives of others and my own. I regret I ever thought that was an acceptable way to support myself.]*
- You got fired for smarting off at your boss? *[I regret letting my emotions get in the way of work. I should have been more respectful. It cost me my job and also was an inappropriate way for me to communicate.]*
- You were fired by a boss who truly was terrible (racist or sexist)? *[My past boss had a very negative communication style. A bunch of others left when I did as he occasionally used inappropriate language. However, I wish I had complained to the Human Resources division, rather than walking off that job.]*

Reveal What's Changed – Many of us can look back and realize that the mistakes we've made have made us stronger. Some of the best employees in the world are former offenders, because they have realized their former way of life doesn't work. They know they have to work extra hard to keep a position. In an interview, these folks must name specific ways they have changed and give examples. Name some examples of change you might share in regard to:

- Jobs you've completed successfully: _____
- Service opportunities you've had: _____

Recite Your 60-second Commercial – Finally, tie in that 60-second commercial seamlessly. Make sure that you end on a positive note—and not with excuses. Steer the focus of the interview to your positive points with proof! Leave the interviewer with a good taste in their mouth and the reminder of your strengths and why you are the perfect candidate for this position.

Behavioral Interview Questions/S.T.A.R. Technique

One of the most popular interview types employers are currently using is called a “Behavioral Interview”. The believe behind the behavioral interview is that your past behavior will predict your future performance at the company you are interviewing with.

One of the best ways to answer behavioral interview questions is to use the S.T.A.R. Technique. Behavioral interview questions usually (but not always) start with one of the following phrases:

- Give an example...
- Tell me about a time...
- Describe to me...
- When have you demonstrated...

In order to accurately represent your skills, talents and ability to handle different situations while answering interview questions, use the following guide:

Situation – Describe the context of the situation

Task – What was required of you?

Action – What did you actually do?

Result – How was the situation resolved?

Practice Question:

Write your response below to the question: *Tell me about a time you had a conflict at work and how it resolved.*

S –

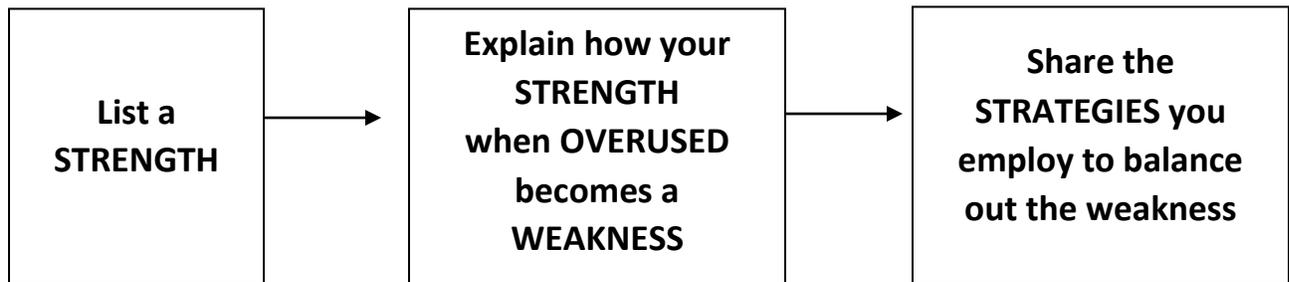
T –

A –

R –

Formula: Weakness Question

One of the most challenging questions an interviewer will ask sounds something like: Tell me about a weakness. This can both trigger us and lead to oversharing of information that derails the interview. Here is a strategy to turn this question into an opportunity to highlight your insight and problem-solving skills.



Practice

List a few of your strengths below:

-
-
-
-

Choose one strength:

When overused, this becomes a weakness because:

My strategy for addressing or overcoming this weakness is:

Negative Body Language

As a group, read through this list and practice these negative body signals.

<i>Body Language:</i>	<i>Communicates:</i>
Crossed or folded arms	Defensive, closed attitude
Moving hand to facial area	Insincerity or possible lying/shielding face
Fidgeting, twisting	Nervousness, stress, boredom
Shifting gaze away	Shiftiness or discomfort
Fiddling with clothing	Insincerity or distracted
Folding hands behind head	Arrogance
Frowning	Discomfort or annoyance
Continual smiling	Weakness or insincerity
Frozen smiles	Tension
Slouching	Depression or defiance
Sighing	Frustration or boredom
Doodling on note pad	Boredom or lacking attention span

4 Ps of Positive Body Language

Examine the *4 Ps of Positive Body Language* in your notes. After a volunteer reads each one, everyone will turn to a partner and **demonstrate** the skill.

Powerful Posture: When sitting, sit up and lean slightly forward to show you're excited about the opportunity! When standing, stand straight up with your hands at your side. Keep your hands out of your pockets, and walk quickly. Don't slouch or shuffle your feet. Every bit of your posture and movement should say: "I'm ready to work – even right now if you'll let me!"

Pleasant Face: Smile at appropriate times, especially when first being introduced. Think positive thoughts when you are speaking; this will make your smile sincere and your manner friendly. Avoid negative thoughts that will result in frowning. Maintain good eye contact with your employer to communicate that you are listening and interested in what they are saying.

Put Your Hands to Use: **if in person* – Give a good, firm handshake when you meet somebody, and again when you leave. When speaking, use your hands to accentuate the point you're making. If you fidget (even when meeting virtually), use stress ball or something to occupy hands.

Practice Speaking at the Right Volume: Spend some time developing a professional voice where you do not speak too loudly *or* too softly; this communicates a self-controlled professional who can work with others. When speaking to your boss, never mumble. Speak as clearly as you can, using words he will best understand. Do not use too much slang.

Reference: Workforce Boulder County Staff. (2018). *Interview Packet*. www.wfbc.org