

Interviewing Tips

Before the Interview

- ◆ **Review (your qualifications)**
 - Be able to state your K-A-S-E. What do you have to offer?
 - Knowledge?
 - Achievements?
 - Skills?
 - Experience?
 - Be prepared to communicate information about your qualifications, especially those related to the position's requirements.
- ◆ **Research (the organization)**
 - Read the job description to learn about the scope of the position and the qualifications of the ideal person for it.
 - Visit the organization's web site to learn about size, growth patterns, mission, products or services, competitors, culture and reputation, and organization history.
 - If you know an employee, get the "inside story" on the organization.
 - "Google" the organization or check other sources, such as industry or professional organization guides, newspapers, magazines/journals, public library, or Chamber of Commerce directories.
 - Know about the interview location, directions, and parking. If possible, take a trial run.
 - Prepare some meaningful questions for the interviewer so you can make an effective career decision if offered the job.
- ◆ **Rehearse (your interviewing skills)**
 - Review interviewing resources on the Career Services Center's website at www.clarion.edu/14174.
 - Attend interviewing workshops offered by CSC.
 - Schedule a mock (practice) interview with a CSC staff member.
 - Role play an interview session with a friend, with one of you assuming the role of the interviewer and the other the role of the interviewee.
 - Practice with a webcam or a video camera so you can assess your interviewing skills.

On Interview Day

- ◆ **Be prompt and prepared**
 - Give yourself plenty of time and arrive 10-15 minutes early.
 - Take the following materials in case you need them:
 - Extra copies of your resumé
 - Transcript(s)
 - List of references
 - Samples of work or a portfolio (optional)
 - Notebook and pen for making notes immediately after the interview
- ◆ **Make a positive first impression**
 - Dress appropriately to project an image of professionalism and confidence.
 - Visualize yourself as being at ease and expressing enthusiasm, competence and professionalism. Your thoughts can positively affect your actions.
 - Allow time to check your appearance before greeting the interviewer.
 - Check in with the receptionist and be professional while waiting for the interviewer.

- Be courteous and friendly to everyone.
- Greet the interviewer by Mr. (or Ms.) and last name. Don't use the interviewer's first name unless you have been requested to do so.
- Introduce yourself in a confident manner. Avoid nervous laughter.
- Wait for the interviewer to initiate a handshake. Shake hands firmly and SMILE!
- Remain standing until you are offered a seat.

◆ **Communicate Effectively**

- Think of the interview as a sales presentation for Y-O-U. Show that you are a professional.
- Be positive and confident, but not overbearing.
- Pay attention to your posture and other non-verbal communication skills. Maintain eye contact. Limit excessive gesturing.
- Listen attentively to the question. Let the interviewer finish each question, then respond with pertinent information about your qualifications.
- Be thorough, but brief. Answer the question; don't digress or ramble.
- Provide examples to support your comments. Use the S-T-A-R approach to illustrate. Think of a situation you were in, the task for which you were responsible, the action you took, and the results or accomplishments.
- Don't talk too quickly or too slowly. Avoid a boring presentation; use your voice's tone to show enthusiasm for the position.
- Use correct grammar and pronunciation. Communicate clearly; don't mumble or talk too softly.
- Avoid jargon and slang. Omit using such expressions as *yeah, y'know, cool, stuff like that*, and don't fill pauses with *um, uh, or like*.

◆ **Closing**

- Watch the interviewer for signs that the interview should end.
- Express interest in the position (if you are sincerely interested in it)
- Ask for a business card (so you can follow up with a thank-you letter)
- Thank the interviewer for the opportunity to speak with him/her.

After the Interview

◆ **Follow-up**

- Record important or interesting comments of the interviewer (after you've left the interview).
- Jot down significant information about the position or organization.
- Send a thank-you letter to the interviewer within two business days. Express your appreciation for the interview, emphasize your qualifications, and reaffirm your interest in the position.
- Follow up with a phone call if the decision date passes with no response from the employer.

◆ **Evaluate**

- Use the interview as a learning experience. Assess your interviewing skills and decide what you need to improve.
 - Were you prepared?
 - What would you do differently next time?
- Is the job a good fit for you?

Career Services Center
 Clarion University
 114 Egbert
 Clarion, PA 16214
 Phone: 814-393-2323
www.clarion.edu/career
careers@clarion.edu
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This publication and other interviewing resources are available online at www.clarion.edu/14174.