

Interview Success

Career Development Centre
2014-2015

Career planning process model



Agenda

- **Part I – Before the Interview**
- **Part II – During the Interview**
- **Part III – Interview Follow-up**

Learning Objectives

- **Recognize** common interview pitfalls
- **Understand** how to prepare pre-interview
- **Discover** the importance of follow-up
- **Become aware** of interview preparation resources

The Job Interview

Think of the job interview as a **meeting**

Purpose: to find out whether or not there is a **suitable match** between your needs and skills, and the needs and opportunities of the employer

Is there **'a fit'**?



Common Interview Pitfalls

What do you think are some common interview mistakes?

Employers note:

- Being too vague
- Talking too much
- Dressing down
- Not asking questions
- Bringing up topics of salary/negotiation
- Projecting lack of career clarity
- Absence of job specific knowledge
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Not following up
- 'Trash talking'

Part I – Before the Interview

Interview Preparation

Key Areas of Research

- Yourself & Your Skills
- The Career Field/Job
- The Employer

Research Yourself

How well do you know yourself?

1. Identify, assess and understand what you are offering an employer
2. Compile a comprehensive list of your:
 1. Skills – hard and soft
 2. Experiences
 3. Qualifications
3. Be prepared to discuss these in depth

Research Your Skills

Hard skills - specific or tangible skills that can be measured:

- Years of experience
- Education/certification
- Artistic/musical skills
- Computer skills
(programs/hardware/software)
- Knowledge of specific methods or procedures
- Physical abilities
(strength, dexterity, speed)
- Mechanical/technical knowledge
- Languages
(written/verbal)
- Specialized training

Research Your Skills

Soft skills - intangible and not easily measured:

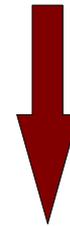
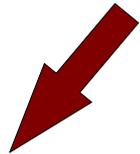
- Communication (written/oral)
- Ability to learn
- Responsibility/maturity
- Analytical/logical abilities
- Leadership
- Decision-making
- Tact/diplomacy
- Negotiation/consultation
- Adaptability
- Positive attitude
- Initiative/innovation
- Team work
- Interpersonal abilities
- Presentation/public speaking
- Co-ordination/planning

Layer Your Skills

i.e., Leadership

Decision-Making

Prioritization



Research

Analysis

Consultation

Goal-oriented

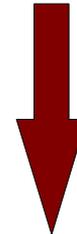
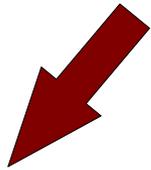
Organization

Layer Your Skills

i.e., Communication

Personable

Presentations



Engaging

Warm

Develop
rapport

Multi-
media
skills

Responsive
to an
audience

Research the Career/Job

How much do you know about the career field or industry?

Research and review the following:

1. **Hard and soft skill requirements**
2. Daily tasks and responsibilities
3. Affiliations (who does the job have contact/interact with?)

Be prepared to demonstrate your understanding of the career/job

Research the Employer

How well do you know the employer?

Research and review the following employer information:

1. History/Current Status
2. Products/Services
3. Industry/Sector (including key competitors)
4. Global/National/Local Presence
5. Culture/Environment

Research Resources

- Employer Websites (Press/News Releases)
- Blogs
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Magazines/Newspapers
- Career Events
- Professional Associations
- ASK program
- Marketline & Scott's Directories (library.wlu.ca)
- Similar Organizations (in other cities)
- Public Libraries

Prepare Your Agenda

Your agenda should be comprised of 5 or more key points you want to communicate to the employer during the interview:

Your agenda should include:

- Ability to discuss your relevant skills/qualifications
- Key experiences and achievements
- Knowledge of the company/industry
- Questions to ask the interviewer

Part II – During the Interview

Types of Questions

1. Baseline – Open ended

skills · strengths · weaknesses

2. Behavioural-based Questions

Past performance predicts future performance

Tell me about a time when...

Describe a situation that...

3. Competency-based Questions

Identify and/or discuss the competencies needed in the role

How would you approach...

Describe the core skills required to...

Case-Scenarios

4. Situational/hypothetical Questions

Describe the action you would take in solving the problem presented

Most Common Type of Interview

Responding To Behaviour-Based Questions

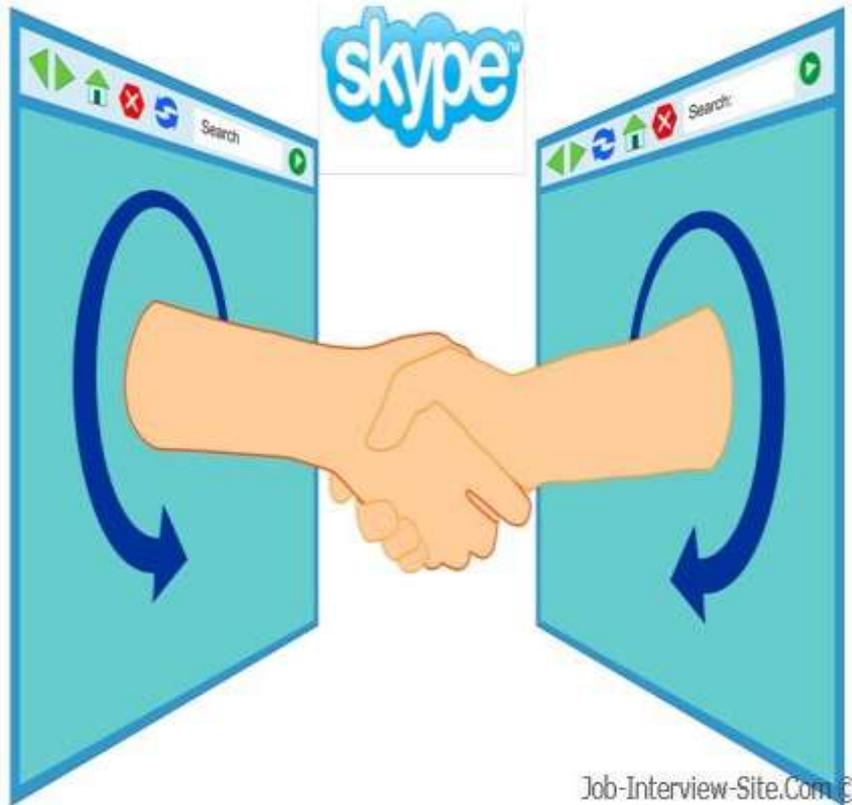
Using STARR

Other Types of Interviews

- **Screening Interview:** brief and used to screen out inappropriate candidates. Often conducted by phone.
- **Telephone/ Skype Interview**
- **Video Interview**
- **Competency-based Interview**
- **Panel Interviews**
- **Group Interviews**

(Interview Guidebook, p. 25)

INTERVIEW OVER



Skype interviews are a growing trend

- Create a professional username
- Test the technology far in advance to address any tech issues (audio, picture, etc.)
- Prepare your surroundings - clean up and arrange a quiet uninterrupted space
- Practice a Skype interview with a friend and record it. Practice again!
 - Head positioning
 - Voice clarity
 - Lighting
- Smile and make eye contact, sit up straight

Other Common Questions

Interview Demonstration

Common Opener

The Opener – “Tell me about yourself?”

- Interviewers are looking for professional information, education, experience and activities (not personal details)
- Begin with a tangible time period and tell the interviewer what path took you to the current opportunity
- The answer should take approx. 45 seconds and include only the **highlights** of your journey!
- Use this opportunity to set an agenda to build upon throughout the interview

Common Questions

What do you see as your Key Strengths/Skills?

- Identify 3 - 4 Strengths (Hard and Soft Skills)
- Select relevant, non-generic skills
- List the 'main' skills you are going to discuss first, then discuss them one at a time, connecting them to the job:

“The three key skills I would like to focus on are my excellent communication skills, organization, and decision making skills. Specifically, in terms of my communications skills, my ability to...e.g., generate rapport with clients and develop and deliver effective presentations to different audiences would be very relevant to this job...in the past I used my communications skills to...in the current job I would be able to...”

Common Questions

“What do you consider to be your Weakness?”

- **Avoid** a ‘fake’ weakness!
- Identify a weakness that is “**trainable**” not a **character trait**
- If you have an obvious weakness – address it
 - Computer program (e.g. Excel)
 - New products and services of the organization
 - New to a location, sector or industry
 - Practices, clients and competitors of an organization
- Be **brief** and indicate how you will address the weakness

Common Questions

“Why have you chosen this career path?”

- Begin with identifying experiences that have tweaked your interest in this field
- Do not reveal any uncertainty toward the role; employers are concerned about retention
- Consider adding a statement about how your skills are a good match for the demands of the job

Common Questions

“What do you know about our organization?”

- Demonstrate that you have researched the organization (history, mission/mandate, products/services)
- Identify what resources you utilize to keep tabs on the organization (email alerts, Blogs)

Common Questions

“What are your Salary Expectations?”

- Demonstrate credibility by knowing a realistic and appropriate salary range (LMI, salaryexpert.com, ASK)
- Redirect the question (‘What were you considering would be a fair salary range based on my level of knowledge, training and experience?’)

Other Common Questions

What are your career goals?

(Hint: make them relevant)

What do you think about recent changes in this field or where do you see this field heading?

(Hint: do your homework)

Questions for the Interviewer

- Do not ask superficial questions
- Always prepare 5-8 questions which demonstrate your familiarity with the organization/industry
- Focus on the future, i.e., training/project opportunities, your role, your supervisor, team philosophy, primary initial duties, work environment, company direction
- Do not ask about salary and benefits
- Be respectful of the time, do not ask too many questions, especially if the interview is running late

Inappropriate Questions

In general, within North America, laws prohibit discrimination in employment based on:

- Disability
- Marital status
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Religious affiliation
- National origin
- Ethnic background

There are exceptions (e.g., government and international hiring) so research and understand the rules that may apply to your situation

Part III – Interview Follow-up

After the Interview

A 2011 study (collegerecruiter.com) showed:

22% of hiring managers less likely to hire someone who does not send a thank you note

86% believed when a candidate does not follow-up with a thank you note it showed lack of follow-through

56% state it made them believe that a candidate was not serious about the job opportunity



Translation: **Send a thank you message within 24 hours of your interview!**

If You Have Not Heard a Response

Within 10 days, you can follow-up with a phone call:

- Indicate that you are checking on the **status** of their decision (do not request the decision over the phone)

Even if you are not the successful candidate:

- Thank the employer for the opportunity
- Ask if you may contact them again in the future
- Inquire whether you can obtain feedback on your interview so you can learn and grow

Do not burn bridges!

You may not have been the person who
fit the current job,
but things may change and there may
be other similar or new opportunities
in the future!

Career Resources

- Book an **interview coaching** or a **practice interview appointment** at x4495
- [Interview Skills Resources online](#)
- Interview Stream The logo for 'INTERVIEW STREAM' features the word 'INTERVIEW' in a light grey, sans-serif font and 'STREAM' in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly overlapping and have a subtle shadow effect.
- Drop-in hours, **Monday through Thursday, 1 – 3 p.m.** for quick questions
- Visit wlu.ca/career to access:
 - Career Workshops
 - Employment Guidebooks
 - Schedule of Career and Employer Events

Connect with us!

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