

Job Search and Interviewing Guide

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Conducting a Job Search

A well-written effective résumé and sharpened interviewing skills are only two of the tools necessary for finding a job. Having a well-planned and organized approach to your job search will save you time and energy and allow you to locate and focus in on jobs you might have missed before.

Clear occupational goals and objectives are required for an effective job search. Knowing the kind of work you are looking for will keep your search in focus. No one is *really* looking for “any job.” Every job seeker has requirements for employment and limitations on their current qualifications. Without clear job search goals, the search will become aimless and ineffective.

Finding the right employer takes a lot of hard work and research. The most effective approach often entails using a combination of various job search strategies to secure a position. Initially, you should take certain steps to identify job targets and employers. This includes:

1. **Self-Assessment** - Do you have a clear sense of your interests, values and skills? If not, you might consider meeting with a staff member to talk about starting *Pathways* and the *HWS Assess Workbook*. During this effort, you should develop a clear sense of your interests, values and skills by completing the Strong Interest Inventory® and/or the Myers Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI).
2. **Develop Objectives** -Following assessment; develop a clear set of objectives for your job or internship search. You will also prepare a personal data sheet with all your employment-related information. This will make employment applications easier to fill out. Second, develop multiple résumés that market your skills to employers. It is a good idea to have one résumé for traditional mailings as well as an electronic version for emailing or posting online.
3. **Research Work Environments** - Have you considered the type of environments you prefer?
 - What is your preference in regards to hours worked per week, stress level, working independently or as part of a team, a formal or relaxed atmosphere, think about what kind of office environment you would optimally like to work in.
 - What do you enjoy doing? (When you spend the majority of your day doing something you enjoy your job tends to become much more satisfying.)
4. **Research What Size Company Would You Like to Work With?**
 - Don't overlook small and medium-sized organizations.
5. **Develop a Clear Networking Plan**
 - Meet with a staff member to learn how to utilize the Career Network and CareerSearch® and create relationships with HWS Alumni/ae as well as employers.

THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

- ❖ 75-80% of all available positions are never advertised. They are hidden from public view. The job seeker must utilize more aggressive job search strategies to uncover these opportunities.
- ❖ New positions are created every day. With new products, re-structuring and merger/takeovers, new jobs can open up anytime. Being in the right place at the right time can have its advantages.
- ❖ Jobs open up later. When you initially make contact with an organization, positions may not be available. However, you may have already met the potential employer and made your impression. Your candidacy will be remembered and reinforced with proper follow-up.
- ❖ Jobs come through referrals. Individual and personal contact can make the difference. These people do not get the job for you, but they can sometimes refer you to the individual who is hiring, allowing you to get your foot in the door.

Now that you understand a bit more about the hidden job market and understand that it is YOUR responsibility to find the employers, you are ready to start your job search.

Job Search Strategies

Today, there are more qualified candidates than there are job openings. Employers can afford to be selective and are less willing to take a chance on an applicant that appears to be marginal. There are considerable costs associated with the recruiting, selecting, hiring, and training of new employees. Because of this, employers are being more careful about hiring decisions, taking longer to evaluate applicants while looking for the maximum skills they can hire for the wage they have to pay. This means that today's job seeker needs the best preparation possible for the job search.

Prolonged unemployment, as a result of an unsuccessful job search, is most often caused for the following reasons:

- ✓ Cannot identify and articulate skills
- ✓ Poor interviewing skills
- ✓ Making a poor first impression
- ✓ Doesn't spend enough time on the job search

There are many ways to search for a new job or career. Listed below are some tasks that will help you find a job. You may not need to do all of them. Check off each task as you complete it.

JOB SEARCH CHECKLIST

- ___ 1. Define your objective – know what kind of work you would most enjoy and can perform the best.
- ___ 2. Ask employers, colleagues and other persons who know about your skills, for letters of recommendation and to serve as references for you
- ___ 3. Talk with contacts in business and industry, friends, family, and alumni/ae
- ___ 4. Prepare and update résumé.
- ___ 5. Develop a phone script for making initial inquiries.
- ___ 6. Call or send résumés to potential employers.
- ___ 7. Maintain an active file on employment inquiry contacts.
- ___ 8. Follow-up all employment contacts with thank you notes, telephone contacts, and/or sending more information about yourself.
- ___ 9. Plan how to get to the employment interviews and work sites.
- ___ 10. Prepare for interviews by finding out as much as possible about the employer.
- ___ 11. Do mock interviews to practice for the real thing. (Available through the Career Services)

RESOURCES FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

HWS Career Services

- Attend a *Ready, Set, Go!* seminar to get going on your senior year career goals, and learn how to register for the recruitment program
- Attend one of the many Alumni/ae career field panels
- Come in and do a mock interview to practice for the real job interviews
- Use the career library to research career fields as well as look up company information
- Meet with a career assistant or staff member to fine-tune your résumé(s) and cover letters
- Find out about Career Services programs at www.hws.edu/career

HWS Career Services Recruitment Program

- On-Campus recruiting – Meet with employers right here on campus!
- Off-Campus Recruiting – Watch for résumé submittal deadlines. Employers will then contact individuals to set up an interview
- Résumé Referral – Employers with openings are sent résumés of students participating in this service.
- Consortium Events/Career Fairs – A great opportunity to make personal contact with employers and possibly interview or set up an interview for a later date

Networking

- Utilize the Career Network offered through Career Services
- Develop a list of people who you can contact and give you access to job opportunities
- This list is not necessarily composed of people with hiring power, but they can provide you with valuable inside information and other job leads
- Keep in mind that networking accounts for approximately 70% of all successful job searches.
- Attend events on campus

Informational Interviews

- Interview professionals in the field to learn first-hand what the field is about
- Helps focus your career direction and target specific types of organizations
- Creates personal contacts

Focused Mailings

- Research company information online via CareerSearch as well as in the Career Services library
- Sending personally tailored cover letters and résumés to a few seriously selected and researched organizations. Match your background and skills to the employers organizational needs
- Follow-up is crucial! Calling an employer to make sure your application has been received, and following through with any contact you made reference to making in your cover letter shows that you are interested in the position and have the drive to go after the opportunity

Internet

- Serves as a valuable resources for conducting a computerized job search
- Assess occupational information, job listings, résumé banks, and organizational literature
- Be careful of fees! Also, beware that when you post your résumé on an unsecured site, anyone can read it

Advertisements/Want Ads

- Respond to announced vacancies
- Sources of vacancies include: local and national newspapers, professional journals, bulletin boards, newsletters and periodicals, listings with agencies, department of labor, in-house publications and Career Services library resources
- Keep in mind that about 80% of all jobs which exist in the market are unadvertised

Cold Calls

- “Door to door” approach
- Personally visit employers, make contact with hiring personnel
- Make cold calls when your energy is the highest. Usually this is in the morning, which is also typically the best time to reach employers before their day gets too hectic

Mass Mailings

- Sending a large volume of cover letters and résumés to hundreds of employers in a geographic area and/r career field of interest
- Market yourself well – follow-up is crucial!

Third Party Agencies

- Private employment agencies and state employment agencies help you gain job search training, provide counseling sessions and acquire vacancy listings
- Beware of costs! Some agencies require a portion of your salary as payment when you find a position. Others require a fee up front before they will help you

Job Search Tips

- ✓ Know yourself. Identify your interest and abilities.
- ✓ Develop transferable skills and make yourself marketable. Employers look highly upon individuals who gain some practical experience, whether through internships, externships, part-time, or full-time employment, or volunteer/extra-curricular activities.
- ✓ Use your contacts and talk to people in your career field of interest. People enjoy talking about what they do and can supply you with valuable information and help you form a network of job contacts in your career field. Don't be afraid to use all of your contacts including friends, family, professional contacts, professors, etc.
- ✓ Research. Utilize all your resources to research information about careers, job titles, responsibilities, and organizations.
- ✓ Look for opportunities to present yourself to a company. Convince an employer that the organization has a need and demonstrate how you can meet that need.
- ✓ Contact managers of divisions or departments within organizations rather than just the personnel office.
- ✓ Don't allow supply and demand to dictate your career. Supply and demand for a particular occupation may fluctuate over a period of time. Therefore select a career field that interests you and conduct a creative job search.
- ✓ Because you'll be finding jobs in a myriad of different places, (print media, Internet, classifieds, through networking, etc.), keeping a calendar of application due dates and a folder of the copied job listings is imperative. Otherwise, between classes and other obligations you may miss deadlines and forget with whom you have applications pending.
- ✓ It is a good idea to keep a record of your contacts with employers. Make a copy of each letter you write to an employer. You may wish to utilize a checklist to keep track of your various job applications, interviews, correspondence and job offers.

Remember, a large part of the job search process is being organized. Make sure that you keep a detailed list of whom you have applied to and when, where you found the job posting, as well as any contacts that you have had with each employer. The more you keep track, the easier the process will be!!

Informational Interviewing

Informational interviewing is a wonderful tool used by job seekers and those doing career exploration. Preliminary career research will allow you to create a prospective list of career fields and company names. Once completed, you are ready to call and set up informational interviews.

For the job search, informational interviewing is a networking effort targeted towards potential employers and professionals in a specific industry or field. This technique is used to gather information regarding skills, training, and experience needed for an occupation. It is also a method to learn about a specific company or about an industry. Never ask for a job during an informational interview, and always follow up with a thank you note!

BENEFITS OF INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING

- ✓ Explore a career to gather information about a specific organization or to investigate a specific job/field.
- ✓ Discover what skills are required for certain jobs and match them with your own abilities and strengths.
- ✓ View people in their work setting and find out how they feel about their job, as well as what type of lifestyle surrounds their careers. This will help you determine whether or not you could see yourself in a similar position.
- ✓ Make a good impression in a low-pressure situation and connect with individuals who may represent valuable job contacts in the future or lead you to other contacts and sources of job opportunities.
- ✓ Use the knowledge you gained of the field to convince future employers that you understand and are genuinely interested in their field.

METHODS FOR ARRANGING INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

Four methods for arranging an informational interview include telephoning, writing a letter or email, dropping by without an appointment, or by referral (mention the name of the person who referred you when contacting the individual). Ask if it would be possible to speak with a person in the career area of particular interest to you, for approximately 20 or 30 minutes. Indicate that you have an interest in and want to further investigate the career field. **Emphasize that you are not looking for a job!**

A SAMPLING OF QUESTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS

1. What do you do on a typical day?
2. What skills do you use most often?
3. What is most satisfying about your work?
4. What are the biggest frustrations?
5. What made you decide upon this career?
6. What courses, training and experience have been most helpful to you in your present work?
7. How does your work combine with your personal life?
8. How much flexibility do you have in regards to attire, hours of work, vacation schedule, place of residence, etc.?
9. Is there an opportunity to obtain a summer job or internship in this field? If so, where would I look?
10. Where are job vacancies for this field typically listed?
11. What is the salary range for an entry-level position?
12. Who else do you recommend that I contact?

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING TIPS

- ✓ Gain confidence in your interviewing skills. Schedule a mock interview with a counselor at Career Services.
- ✓ Plan an agenda. You have asked for the meeting, therefore you need to be prepared with questions.
- ✓ Dress professionally, just as you would for a job interview. See the page on interviewing tips for more information.
- ✓ Ask a range of questions, from impromptu, open-ended to focused, detailed questions. Focus your questions on the person. You want to tap into their expertise about the field.
- ✓ Carefully observe your surroundings. You can learn a great deal about an organization or individual through observation.
- ✓ After you have had a chance to ask your questions, ask the interviewee for an honest evaluation of how well you are suited for this job or career. If he/she doesn't feel your background is strong enough, ask about the areas needing improvement.
- ✓ Ask the interviewee for the names of other people in similar jobs and careers, to contact and ask if you may say that you were referred by the interviewee.
- ✓ Perform any follow-up the individual recommends. Stay in contact with the individual you interviewed. Also send a thank you note after the interview.

The Phone Interview

Once your résumé has been sent to a potential employer, much of your initial contact with those employers will be by phone. Below you will find some suggested guidelines to assist you in making a favorable and professional impression with employers.

ANSWERING MACHINES

Employers form impressions from their phone contact with potential job candidates. Make sure your answering machine has a professional message. This means that you should not have any music, inappropriate language or other unprofessional background noise.

Outline information needed from calls with family or other live-ins. If you are living with roommates, housemates or family members, let them know that you are searching for a job and that potential employers might be calling. You may want to create a phone script for them with a list of information they need to take from any employers that call (i.e., caller's name, company name, phone number, and any message they might have).

Return employer phone calls promptly and during normal business hours. Employers are very busy and will not spend unnecessary amounts of time trying to reach you. If you wait too long to return and employers call, he/she may assume you are not interested in the opportunity and contact another candidate.

PHONE INTERVIEWS

Some employers may want to conduct an initial screening interview with you by phone. Preparation is important! If you are not prepared to have a phone interview when an employer initially calls, request to set up an interview time that is mutually convenient for you both. The interview should be set up within the same week the employer contacts you, unless he/she has other dates in mind. Once a time has been set, **DO NOT MISS THE PHONE CALL!** Most phone interviews last 20-30 minutes.

Make sure you are in a quiet place. You should have the television, radio and other noisy equipment off while interviewing. Sit in a comfortable chair with your materials spread out on the table in front of you. Sit up and talk into the phone, this will allow you to project your voice clearly.

You should be prepared to discuss the same basic topics you would address in a face-to-face interview. Be ready to talk about your qualifications, skills, abilities, experience, and education. It is usually best to prepare ahead of time and have a list of points you want to convey to the employer. Remember, the employer cannot see you, so it is appropriate to have a written outline as well as your résumé and other pertinent information in front of you to assist you in answering questions.

Know what the next step will be. Before the conversation comes to a close, make sure you know when you can expect the employer to contact you again or when it would be best for you to call to follow up.

Interviewing on site. If the employer invites you to an interview at his/her place of business, make sure you immediately write down all the information needed, including the day and time of the interview, the business address and directions, and the names of the people with whom you will be interviewing.

Employment Interviews

In the employment interview, you are using the interview as an opportunity to show an employer your qualifications as well as decide whether or not the organization is a good fit for you. The employer is also using this opportunity to assess you as a person: your personality, skill areas, motivation, communications skills, experience, and career goals.

PREPARATION

Self-Assessment

Think about your skills, interests, strengths and weaknesses. Brainstorm how these areas relate to the job for which you are interviewing, and how your skills translate into selling points for you. Know exactly what you can do for the company before you go into the interview.

Research

Research the organization with whom you will be interviewing. Employers expect you to demonstrate some knowledge of their organization. You should be able to articulate what programs and positions the company offers and how your abilities fill its needs in these areas. You should also be aware of general information about the company's size, location, services, products and competitors. You should be able to find most of this information by using employer resources at Career Services, by writing to the company for literature or simply searching on the internet.

Mock Interview

Career Services offers the opportunity to participate in an interview experience with one of our professional staff before you have an employment interview. You should bring along a résumé to allow the career professional to ask you questions as related to your experience as possible. It is helpful for you to dress as if this was an actual interview as it will give you a better feel for what an actual interview will be like. These "mock" interviews can be videotaped if you feel you need to see how you are presenting yourself, and your responses and body language can be discussed.

Materials

Make sure you know the name of the interviewer, and the time and place of the interview. Get specific directions and plan to arrive early. Bring several copies of your résumé and any other relevant documents, such as writing samples, projects you've worked on, or awards. You should also have the names, addresses and phone numbers of references with you. Usually employers ask for three such references. Ask the interviewer for a business card so you'll have the necessary information to write a thank-you note.

APPEARANCE

Dress for success. This means dress professionally, conservatively and comfortably.

DO'S

- ✓ For *Business Professional*: wear business attire in dark or conservative colors, with dark ties in simple patterns for the men. Also remember, the darker the color of the suit and tie, the lighter the color of the shirt.
- ✓ For *Business Casual*: wear professional but casual attire. For example: a polished skirt with a button-down blouse and a blazer for women, or an ironed pair of slacks, shirt, blazer, and tie for men.
- ✓ If you want to be safe, get your hands on the company's annual report. If the company is publicly traded, you can call the Investor Relations Department and obtain an annual report. Look at the pictures featured inside; this is how senior management wants the shareholders to perceive they dress everyday. Dressing in the same manner or style is a safe bet.
- ✓ Men: keep your hands neat, nails clean and trim.
- ✓ Women: no garish nail color or nail accessories, keep nails neat and trim.
- ✓ Wear good quality shoes and keep them shined.
- ✓ Women: for a professional look favor dark versions of the plain pump (closed toe and small heel) and carry an extra pair of stockings in case you get a run.
- ✓ Men: keep facial hair trimmed and neat.

DON'TS

- ✓ Avoid wearing short-sleeved shirts.
- ✓ Avoid trend-setting clothing. This goes for men and women. In general, employers are more willing to trust conservative dressers. Business styles change very little and there is no point risking a job offer by gambling on passing fashion fads.
- ✓ Women: Avoid heavy doses of pastels. Women can add authority by wearing less pink, baby blue and other pastels. There is also little professionalism to be found in dangly earrings, sexy shoes, and ankle bracelets. Do not wear stockings with overly fussy patterns, lace or seams.
- ✓ Men: avoid excess cologne, short socks, white socks, ties that are too long or too short, and wrinkled or un-pressed clothing.
- ✓ Women: avoid skirts that are more than three inches above the knee or excessively tight, excessive perfumes, too much jewelry, and wrinkled or un-pressed clothing.

Many impressions are made just by viewing a person's initial appearance, so take extra care to be well-dressed and groomed for your interview.

Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why did you choose to attend Hobart and William Smith Colleges?
3. How did you choose your major?
4. Which course did you find the most difficult and why? The least?
5. If you could go back and change any part of your college experience, what would it be? Why?
6. Did you join any school activities? Why?
7. Tell me about your most rewarding experience.
8. What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
9. Do you think that your grades are a good indicator of your academic achievement?
10. What have you learned from your participation in extracurricular activities?
11. Do you plan to continue your education?
12. In what kind of work environment are you the most comfortable?
13. How do you work under pressure?
14. How has your education prepared you for the world of work? This specific job?
15. What are your short-term and long-term goals?
16. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
17. How would your friends describe you?
18. What motivates you to do a good job?
19. If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you look for in a candidate?
20. Why should I hire you?
21. Describe your ideal job.
22. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company/organization?
23. Tell me about my company.
24. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
25. What other types of jobs are you considering? Other organizations?
26. How do you feel about traveling/working overtime/spending weekends at the office?
27. What factors are most important to you in a job?
28. What do you see yourself doing in five years? In ten years?
29. What do you really want to do in life?
30. Would you rather be in charge of a project or work as part of a team?
31. What do you find personally rewarding?
32. Do you prefer to work in a group or alone?
33. What qualities should a successful supervisor/manager possess?
34. What have you learned from your mistakes?
35. What has inspired you the most in your life?
36. How do you spend your spare time?
37. What percentage of college expenses did you earn? How?
38. How did you spend your vacations while you were in school?
39. Do you prefer any specific geographic location? Why?
40. How did you learn about us?
41. Tell me about your management/educational philosophy?
42. Give me your definition of success.
43. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?

44. What have you done that shows initiative and willingness to work?
45. How do you react to criticism?
46. What is your greatest failure? What did you learn from it?
47. Have you had any supervisory experience?
48. When could you start work?
49. Do you consider yourself a creative person?
50. Have you held a leadership position?
51. Describe yourself with one word.
52. Why did you choose your particular field of work?
53. What qualifications do you have that you think will make you successful in your field?
54. Have you ever had any difficulty getting along with fellow students or faculty?
55. What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
56. In what part-time or summer jobs have you been the most interested and why?
57. What major problem have you encountered and how did you deal with it?
58. How have you changed since you started college?
59. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?
60. Do you have any questions for me?

INAPPROPRIATE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are certain questions that are not related to how well a person can perform a particular job. In some cases, they are also illegal. You should be aware of these topics and be prepared to respond. Here are some ways to deal with inappropriate questions:

- ❖ If you are not bothered by the question asked, you can answer honestly.
- ❖ If you are bothered by the question, tactfully respond without offending the interviewer. For example: “I really don’t feel that _____ would have an impact on my ability to do this job” or “I’ve carefully considered all factors relating to this job and my personal affairs are in order.”

Examples

1. Are you married, divorced, separated or single?
2. How old are you?
3. Do you have any children? What childcare arrangements have you made?
4. Do you go to church?
5. Do you have any debts?
6. Do you own or rent your home?
7. To what social and political groups do you belong?
8. Are you living with anyone?
9. Have you ever been arrested?
10. How much do you weigh? How tall are you?
11. Where were you born? Are you a U.S. citizen?
12. Do you have any handicaps or disabilities?

The Second Interview

The second interview is often the point at which you may receive a job offer from the employer. At the same time, it is an opportunity for you to consider the company environment and work style to see if it is a good fit for you. ***Would you want to spend the majority of your day in this organization?*** By observing the environment and asking questions, you will be able to assess the culture.

THINGS TO OBSERVE

- Dress code
- Ratio of men to women
- Age groups
- Condition of facility (old or new)
- Presence of technology
- Interactions between staff
- Environment (formal or relaxed)

TIPS

- Make sure you understand the interview arrangements in advance.
 - ✓ Location
 - ✓ Travel arrangements
 - ✓ Expenses (prepaid or will you be reimbursed?)
 - ✓ Contacts (with whom will you be meeting?)
- Be prepared for a full day of interviewing.
 - ✓ A typical day can be up to eight hours long, and during this time you might participate in up to twelve interviews.
- Leave early to ensure that you will arrive on time. Allow for traffic and for getting lost! Arriving early also gives you a chance to use the restroom, relax for a moment before the interview, and gather your thoughts.
- Make sure that your appearance is neat and professional. You may want to have a roll of breath mints with you.
- When in a second interview, you may encounter different types of interviews, such as case interviews or group interviews. You may also be requested to complete writing samples or answer problem-solving questions. Read through the following pages for information on what these situations might entail.

CASE INTERVIEWS

In this type of interview, the interviewer takes the candidate through a series of steps and evaluates how he/she tackles the various levels. The steps can range from identifying a critical issue, to breaking a problem into its component, to finally identifying one or more solutions.

- STEP 1.** Big Picture Thinking. The interviewer lays out the facts and asks the candidate to articulate the critical issues facing the business. This requires an ability to focus on key issues, not every issue. The interviewer will then ask why the candidate chose to answer as he/she did.
- STEP 2.** Problem-Solving Logic. The interviewer asks the candidate to lay out all the elements of the problem and what factors should be considered.
- STEP 3.** Focusing on Value. The interviewer then lets the candidate choose which avenues to pursue, leaving the discussion open-ended. The interviewer determines if the candidate is instinctive about which path to choose, and asks why the candidate selected this path.
- STEP 4.** Depth and Breadth – Business Intuition. The interviewer asks the candidate some probing questions about how he/she would analyze a key area.
- STEP 5.** Results Orientation. The interviewer asks the candidate how he/she would implement his/her solution. The interviewer could pose a tricky or hostile client situation to see how a candidate would get results in a difficult environment.

(Taken from “How to Ace the Case Interview,” Bain & Company)

WRITING SAMPLES

The interviewer will ask you to produce a writing sample on the spot. They may want you to argue or defend a particular issue, or summarize data to support a philosophy or viewpoint.

PROBLEM-SOLVING

You may be asked to solve a particular problem, either off the top of your head or with paper and pencil, during the interview. Some examples of this are probability and quantitative problems.

GROUP INTERVIEWS

In this type of interview, you will meet with several interviewers simultaneously. They may be from different departments of the company or all from the department in which you are trying to obtain a position. It is important to be aware of who comprises the group, so that you can address issues in your answers and questions that pertain to those positions and departments. You should address the entire group when answering a question.

REMEMBER:

Answer each individual’s question with the same enthusiasm as you did the first time you were asked. You will be meeting with a number of people who will have no idea what you have discussed prior to interviewing with them.

Behavior-Based Interviews

WHAT IS BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING?

Behavior-Based Interviewing is a style of interviewing that more and more companies are using in their hiring process. The basic premise behind behavioral interviewing is this: ***The most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.*** Traditional interview questions ask general things such as “Tell me about yourself.” The process of behavioral interviewing is much more probing, with the interviewer asking for specific examples of when the interviewee demonstrated particular behaviors or skills.

IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING

- ❖ Employers predetermine which skills are necessary for the position they are looking to fill and then ask very pointed questions to determine if the candidate possesses those skills. To assess which skills the employer is seeking, talk with alumni/ae, read the company literature carefully, and listen closely during the company’s information session.
- ❖ Your interview preparation should include identifying examples of situations in which you have demonstrated the behaviors for a given company, club, or organization.
- ❖ Always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely.
- ❖ In the interview, your response needs to be specific and detailed. Speak about a particular situation that relates to the question, not a general one. Briefly explain the situation, what you did specifically, and the positive result or outcome. Frame it in a three step process:
1. Situation 2. Action 3. Result/Outcome
- ❖ The interviewee tells a story for a few minutes; typically the interviewer will pick apart the story to get at the specific behavior(s). The interviewer can probe further for more depth or detail such as “What were you thinking at that point?” or “Tell me more about your meeting with that person” or “Lead me through your decision process.”
- ❖ Your résumé will serve as a good guide when answering these questions. Refresh your memory regarding your achievements in the past couple of years. Demonstration of the activities, classes, team involvements, community service, and work experience. In addition, you may use examples of which you may be proud, such as competing in a marathon, running for president of a club or organization, exhibiting art in a show, biking across the country, etc.

Sample Behavior-Based Interview Questions

These are often difficult questions to answer on the fly. Use this sheet to jot down some examples of stories in your past that you would use to answer each question. Careful preparation is the key to an effective behavior-based interview. Setting up an appointment for a behavior-based mock interview with any of the Career Development Counselors is an excellent way to practice.

1. Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.
2. Describe a time when you were faced with problems or stresses at work that tested your coping skills, and what you did to remedy the situation.
3. Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.
4. Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic to solve a problem.
5. By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and environments.
6. Give me an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
7. Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get across an important point.
8. Give me a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
9. Give me an example of an important goal which you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
10. Tell me about a situation in the past year in which you had to deal with a very upset customer or co-worker.
11. Describe the most significant or creative presentation which you have had to complete.
12. Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
13. Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have liked you personally (or vice versa).
14. Give me an example of when you have had to exhibit good leadership skills and abilities.

Follow-Up Letters

THANK YOU LETTER

You should send a thank you letter to an interviewer, recruiter, and/or person who coordinated your visit as soon as possible following the actual interview (within three days is usually customary). Follow-up letters jog the memory of the person to whom you spoke; they help the interviewer recall who you are and for what position you are applying. The main purpose of this letter is to extend your appreciation to the interviewer for taking time to meet with you, but it also serves to give you more exposure.

The letter should include:

- ✓ A statement thanking the interviewer. Mention the position for which you were interviewed, the date and the location of the interview.
- ✓ A reaffirmation of your interest and your confidence that you can do the job. Mention specific job duties that were discussed in the interview and which of your traits or experiences would provide a foundation for further growth and contribution.
- ✓ An expression of your willingness to provide additional supporting information. Also include here any information requested at the interview.
- ✓ A simple cordial closing.

SAMPLE LETTER

123 Main Street
Geneva, NY 12345
October 24, 2002

Mr. Joseph Jones
Director of Personnel
Success Corporation
1 Easy Street
New York, NY 45678

Dear Mr. Jones:

It was a pleasure to have met with you during my visit to your company earlier this week. Our conversation confirmed to me that the Assistant Director of Human Resources position is exactly the type of quality experience in which I am interested.

I was especially impressed to learn that the Assistant Director plays a significant role in contracting with insurance companies. As I mentioned in our interview, I have extensive experience in the health care industry performing these types of activities. I think my skills would be of benefit to you in exploring and developing the area of HMO contracts.

I would like to express my sincere interest in working for the Success Corporation. If there is any further information you would find helpful in making a decision regarding my employment, please feel free to contact me at (315) 123-4567. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Signature Here

Jane Doe

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF JOB OFFER

After a job offer has been extended, it is important to respond within two or three days of receipt. Most employers will understand if you need a little time to consider their offer. This allows you to think about the offer, and if it is not acceptable, perhaps come up with a counter-offer.

The letter should:

- ✓ Indicate receipt of the letter or verbal offer, and re-state the terms, position and salary.
- ✓ Reaffirm your interest in the position/company.
- ✓ Provide a date by which you will contact the employer with your decision.

Note: Do not ask for a delay of more than one week.

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Use this letter to formally accept a job offer, even if you may have accepted over the telephone. You should notify the employer as soon as you have made the decision to accept a job. The letter should convey positive feelings about the job and your future with your new employer.

The letter should:

- ✓ Indicate date of receipt of letter or phone call.
- ✓ State position that was offered.
- ✓ State salary level at which you are accepting the position.
- ✓ Confirm starting date.
- ✓ Indicate any change of address that will occur before you start your job.

Note: It is courteous to express personal thanks to particular people who were especially helpful during the interview process. You may want to send individual thank you notes out to those people.

JOB REJECTION LETTER

Write this letter when you wish to decline a job offer that has already been made. Be positive about your decision, and do not make unfavorable comparisons to others or belittle the organization. The tone of the letter should remain warm, as you thank the employer and respectfully decline the offer.

This letter should:

- ✓ Indicate your appreciation of the job offer.
- ✓ If applicable, you may indicate that you are turning the job down based upon a more suitable course of action for your career goals at this time (graduate school, another organization).
- ✓ Mention some positive results from the interview.
- ✓ Personally thank everyone that helped you.

RESPONDING TO REJECTION

It is important to thank the employer for meeting with you, even if you did not receive a position. This is especially true if the company is one at which you think you will reapply to at a future date.

This letter should:

- ✓ Thank the employer for taking the time and effort to interview you.
- ✓ While expressing your disappointment at not being offered the position, acknowledge their need to make the choice that they did.
- ✓ Mention positive results from the interview.
- ✓ Personally thank anyone who was particularly helpful.

Note: Be positive, as you may wish to reapply to this organization in the future.

Resources

Web-Based Resources

Career Search	http://beta.careersearch.net//client
Wetfeet:	http://www.wetfeet.com
Vault Online Career Library	http://www.vault.com
Hoover's:	http://www.business.com
Occupational Outlook Handbook	http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm
Ferguson's Career Guidance Center	http://www.fofweb.com
Spotlight on Careers	http://www.spotlightoncareers.org/
eRecruiting	http://hws.erecruiting.com
America's Career Infonet	http://www.acinet.org/acinet/
Fortune 500 Lists	http://money.cnn.com/lists/index.html
Collegegrad	http://www.collegegrad.com/
AfterCollege	https://www.aftercollege.com
America's Job Bank	http://www.ajb.org
Boston Works	http://www.bostonworks.com
Going Global	http://online.goinglobal.com

Career Services Library Resources

Come into Career Services and utilize any of our library resources. There is a combination of Career Research, Job Search, Company Contact Information, Field Specific and posted Job Listings available –just to name a few!!

A staff person or career assistant can help you navigate through our resources, which are available during our office hours from 8:30AM to 5 PM.

Utilize any and all resources to find jobs and before going into a job interview. Beyond checking out the resources above, try searching on the web for sites that post jobs or for a specific company. Do an informational interview with an alumni, family friend, or acquaintance that works at a company of interest to you, or at a company you have an interview with. Meet with a Career Services staff member to get more ideas about how to research job opportunities and the companies you want to know more thoroughly.