

INTERVIEW TIPS

The interview is an opportunity for you to convince the employer that you have the skills, knowledge and experience necessary for the job. On the flip side, the employer will be selling the organization to you and you will want to be prepared with questions to ask about the position and company. To be successful in an interview, you must be prepared! You will not only need to market yourself by knowing what you have to offer the employer but will have to show an interest in the organization by asking good well-thought out questions about the position and company.

Here are some basic tips to help you succeed in your next interview:

1. Before the Interview

- Research the company prior to the interview and be prepared to ask some questions at the end
- Read your resume just before the interview to boost your confidence and calm your nerves and focus
- Show up at least 10 minutes early
- Get a good night's sleep the night before
- Eat something before the interview
- Dress appropriately for the company environment; err on the side of over-dressing
- Be clean, neat, and well-groomed
- Bring enough copies of your resume and references for the interviewers as well as any pertinent information: transcript, work samples, portfolio
- Have a pen and paper to take notes

2. Getting Started in the Interview

- First impressions are lasting impressions! **YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION!**
- Establish rapport with the interviewer(s) and follow their lead (casual/formal)
- Smile and make eye contact
- Shake employer's hand firmly

3. During the Interview - 'Exchanging of Information'

- Always look the employer in eye when responding and smile frequently
- Be aware of the employers reactions
- Be aware of your posture and non-verbal messages (avoid closed postures and don't look bored or anxious)
- Control any nervous habits
- Don't talk too much (most answers should be between 30 & 90 seconds; no longer than 3 mins)

- Show enthusiasm for the job throughout interview
- Be positive! Leave negative comments at home - never apologize for skills and experience that you do not have
- Remember that you are a sales person in the interview so consider every question as an opportunity to sell yourself
- Don't assume anything - the employer only knows what you choose to tell them
- Take time to think before speaking and stay focussed
- Always expand in your answer - avoid "yes" or "no" responses
- Ask for clarification - be sure you are answering the right question

4. Closing the Interview

- Restate your interest in the position after asking questions
- Leave relevant materials with the employer
- Ask when you will be notified about the decision
- If unknown, ask if you can follow up
- If offered hand, shake firmly; or offer yours
- Leave employer with a positive impression

REMEMBER: The best jobs go to the candidates with the best interviewing skills!

Online resources:

Search for "Interview Tips":

- themuse.com/advice/
- quintcareers.com
- umanitoba.ca/student/careerservices

Career Services offers workshops on interview preparation and will meet with students individually for interview preparation. The interview workbook is available on our website at: ***http://umanitoba.ca/student/careerservices/media/Interview_Workbook.pdf***

Step 3: Anticipate and Practice Questions

TRADITIONAL QUESTIONS

"TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF."

Power of 3's

E

Education

Degree
Courses

1

S

Skills

3 Strongest Relevant
Skills

2

P

Personal

In my spare time.....

3

Step 3: Anticipate and Practice Questions

BEHAVIOUR DESCRIPTIVE QUESTIONS

SITUATION

TASK

ACTION

RESULTS

Sample Question - Matrix: (PQ) Work as a team, communication skills, ability to respond to challenging work situations, problem solving, and conflict resolution

Describe a time when you did not work well with a co-worker. How did you resolve the issue and ensure completion of the task on time and at a high quality?

- Excellent (10)
 Very Good (8)
 Good (6)
 Fair (4)
 Poor (2)

Interviewee Response

Interviewer criteria

STAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognize conflict and a desire to address it quickly - Seek and understand cause of conflict from co-worker’s point of view - Compromise as appropriate while staying task and goal oriented - Act professionally, respectfully and diplomatically towards peers and colleagues - Overall judgement and behaviour - Supports group discussion and put collaborative goals ahead of own - Tactfully disagrees if others ideas compromise set goals of the project - Supportive to coworker
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SAMPLE Behavioural Interview Questions Grouped by Competency

ADAPTABILITY

- Tell me about a situation in which you have had to adjust to changes over which you had no control. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you had to adjust to a classmate's or colleague's working style in order to complete a project or achieve your objectives.
- How was your transition from high school to college? Did you face any particular problems? How did you handle them?

ANALYTICAL SKILLS / PROBLEM SOLVING

- Describe the project or situation that best demonstrates your analytical abilities. What was your role?
- Tell me about a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. To whom did you make the recommendation? What was your reasoning? What kind of thought process did you go through? Why? Was the recommendation accepted? If not, why?
- Tell me about a situation where you had to solve a difficult problem. What did you do? What was your thought process? What was the outcome? What do you wish you had done differently?
- What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision? Why?

COMMUNICATION

- Tell me about a recent successful experience in making a speech or presentation? How did you prepare? What obstacles did you face? How did you handle them?
- Have you ever had to "sell" an idea to your classmates or co-workers? How did you do it? Did they accept your idea?
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa). How did you handle the situation? What obstacles or difficulties did you face? How did you deal with them?
- Tell me about a time in which you had to use your written communication skills in order to get an important point across.

CREATIVITY

- When was the last time you thought "outside the box" and how did you do it? Why?
- Tell me about a problem that you've solved in a unique or unusual way. What was the outcome? Were you happy or satisfied with it?
- Give me an example of when someone brought you a new idea that was odd or unusual. What did you do?

DECISION MAKING

- Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision without all the information you needed. How did you handle it? Why? Were you happy with the outcome?
- Give me an example of a time when you had to be quick in coming to a decision. What obstacles did you face? What did you do?
- What is the most difficult decision you've had to make? How did you arrive at your decision? What was the result?

GOAL SETTING

- Give me an example of an important goal which you have set and tell me how you reached it. What steps did you take? What obstacles did you encounter? How did you overcome the obstacles?
- Tell me about a goal that you set that you did not reach. What steps did you take? What obstacles did you encounter? How did it make you feel?

INITIATIVE

- Describe a project or idea (not necessarily your own) that was implemented primarily because of your efforts. What was your role? What was the outcome?
- Describe a situation in which you recognized a potential problem as an opportunity. What did you do? What was the result? What do you wish you had done differently?
- Tell me about a project you initiated. What did you do? Why? What was the outcome? Were you happy with the result?
- Tell me about a time when your initiative caused a change to occur.
- What was the best idea you came up with during your professional or college career? How did you apply it?

INTEGRITY/HONESTY

- Discuss a time when your integrity was challenged. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you experienced a loss for doing what is right. How did you react?
- Tell me about a business situation when you felt honesty was inappropriate. Why? What did you do?
- Give a specific example of a policy you conformed to with which you did not agree. Why?

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How/why was this person difficult? How did you handle it? How did the relationship progress?
- Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. How did you handle it?
- Describe a recent unpopular decision you made. How was it received? How did you handle it?
- What, in your opinion, are the key ingredients in guiding and maintaining successful business relationships? Give me examples of how you have made these work for you.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa). How did you handle the situation?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work on a team with someone you did not get along with. What happened?
- Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual, and how you dealt with it. What was the outcome? How did you feel about it?

LEADERSHIP

- Tell me about a team project when you had to take the lead or take charge of the project? What did you do? How did you do it? What was the result?
- Describe a leadership role of yours. Why did you commit your time to it? How did you feel about it?
- What is the toughest group that you have had to get cooperation from? What were the obstacles? How did you handle the situation? What were the reactions of the group members? What was the end result?

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION / TIME MANAGEMENT

- Describe a situation that required you to do a number of things at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
- How do you prioritize projects and tasks when scheduling your time? Give me some examples.
- Tell me about a project that you planned. How did you organize and schedule the tasks? Tell me about your action plan.

TEAMWORK

- Describe a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you worked with a classmate or colleague who was not doing their share of the work. How did you handle it?
- Describe a situation in which you had to arrive at a compromise or help others to compromise. What was your role? What steps did you take? What was the result?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work on a team that did not get along. What happened? What role did you take? What was the result?

PROBES / FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

- What steps did you take?
- What action did you take?
- What happened after that?
- What did you say?
- How did he/she react?
- How did you handle that?
- What was your reaction?
- How did you feel about that?
- What was the outcome/result?
- Were you happy with that outcome/result?
- What do you wish you had done differently?
- What did you learn from that?
- How did you resolve that?
- What was the outcome of that?
- Why did you decide to do that?
- What was your logic?
- What was your reasoning?
- Where were you when this happened?
- What time was it?
- Who else was involved?
- Tell me more about your interaction with that person.
- What was your role?
- What obstacles did you face?
- What were you thinking at that point?
- Lead me through your decision process.
- How did you prepare for that?
- Why?
- How?
- When?
- Where?

Source: <http://www.besmith.com/SampleInterviewQuestions.pdf>