Successful Interviewing Begins With Preparation

Presented by
Karin Kase, Program Manager

Anderson Career Services
What is an Interview?

A SALES CALL!
You’ve intrigued the employer. Now sell yourself!

1. Show your core skills
2. Communicate your qualifications
3. Demonstrate your fit with the company and their culture
Stages of Interviewing

1. Screening: On-campus or via telephone

2. Second round interview: Corporate HQ or at the location of the particular assignment

3. [OPTIONAL]
   Third round interview: On-site
Stages of Interviewing – continued

• Companies that follow this process:
  – Established companies with University HR teams/depts
  – Larger-sized organizations
  – Government agencies

• Companies that deviate from this process:
  – Smaller-sized companies
  – Organizations that are new to campus recruiting
Before Your Interview

Interview Preparation: Why Important?

1. To build your confidence
2. To show that you can and will do the job
3. Convince them without a doubt that you are the best match for this job
   (Job description analysis, company/industry review, general)

Business Attire: Why Important?

1. First impressions count, especially in an interview!
   (92% of employers say the appearance influences their opinion of a candidate)
2. Helps build your confidence by helping you be more at ease
   (professional AND comfortable)
Before Your Interview - *continued*

**Job Description Analysis**

Analyze to uncover potential interview questions:

- Technical Skills
- Soft Skills (communications, teamwork, etc.)
- Previous Experiences
- Corporate Culture
Before Your Interview - continued

Company/Industry Review

• Visit the company Web site:
  – Know the vision, mission, and core values
  – Core products and/or services
  – Major customer/market
  – Major competitors
  – Read press releases
• Leverage your contacts
• Read the paper
Before Your Interview - continued

Review these ideas BEFORE your interview:

- Your ideal job/manager
- Challenges
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Leadership
- Accomplishments
- Conflict Resolution
- Management
- Team work
- Communication
- Selling an idea through
- Your skills/likes/experiences
Pre-Interview Checklist

- Name, title and tel # of person you are meeting
- Exact address and location of organization
- Copy of job description to reference
- List of points you want to make
- Any questions about job/company
- Employment and education history
- Business card and copy of updated resume
- Optional: page with 2-3 references (include your contact info on the page)
- Optional: writing samples or other documentation, as required
Preparing for: The Screening Interview

Conduct a job description analysis.

Be prepared to answer questions related to:

• Major/career choice
• Resume review
• Company/industry knowledge
• Technical & soft skills relevant to the job
• Questions for the recruiter
Preparing for: The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Round Interview

Review the job description and your resume.

Be prepared to answer questions:
• Deeper dive into experience
• Behavioral
• Case
• Personality
• Soft skills
• Company fit
Types of Interview Questions

- Resume based
- Focus on Core skills
  (leadership, analytical, creativity, teamwork, communication, management, drive)
- Company (knowledge/fit)
- Functional (knowledge/experience/interest)
- Behavioral (past behavior)
- Case
Potential Interview Questions

Resume Based Questions
Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty to satisfy a customer?
Why did you leave the job at __________?
What was your most significant accomplishment at __________?
How would your supervisor at __________ rate your performance?
In what way or ways were you successful as President of __________ (student or community organization)?
Potential Interview Questions

Core Skills
How would you define good communication skills?
Are you comfortable presenting to large groups?
How well can you communicate to different levels of management?
Can you make fast decisions on the fly?
How strong are your analytical skills?
Are you good with numbers?
How do you prioritize your projects?
Potential Interview Questions

Company/Industry Fit

Why are you interested in this particular industry?
What are some of the major developments currently affecting this industry?
How do you keep up to speed with what is going on in this industry?
What are some of the major challenges facing this company?
How do we differentiate ourselves from the competition?
Who are some of our major competitors?
Potential Interview Questions

Functional

– Interests
Why are you pursuing a major in__________?
Why are you interested in a career as a ________?
What has been your favorite class; least favorite class? Why?

– Skills/Attributes
Tell me about an experience or assignment that required you to analyze a financial statement.
Give me an example of a time when you had a leadership role? How successful were you? What did you learn from this experience?
Behavioral Interview Questions

*Past performance is the best predictor of future performance*

- *Tell me about a time…*
- *Give me an example of…*

**APPROACH TO BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS:**
- More than just answering the question
- EVERYTHING you say is important

Use the **STAR** framework to respond:
- **S**-situation
- **T**-task
- **A**-action
- **R**-result

[Logo: UNM Anderson School of Management]
Behavioral Interview Questions

Based on key skill areas identified by the hiring manager

Example of Behavioral Interview Question:

Skill Area:
  Leadership - Ability to manage cross-functional teams and lead projects from idea generation to product launch.

Potential Interview Question:
  “Tell me about a time when you successfully led a team or group towards a goal.”
Example of Behavioral Interview Question (continued):

Possible Response:

SITUATION – As President of the student chapter of the AMA, two of my goals were to increase employer networking and increase our involvement in the community.

TASK – I met with our VP of Community Service over winter break and together, we decided to increase our presence with local employers by seeing to partner with them in a community service activity.
Behavioral Interview Questions

Example of Behavioral Interview Question (continued):

Possible Response:

ACTION – The VP and I targeted Bueno Foods and approached them with the idea. She loved it and last week, 16 of our members helped to build a Habitat for Humanity house with the entire Marketing Dept of Bueno Foods. I contacted the local paper and they sent a photographer and reporter to cover the story.

RESULT – The VP of Marketing at Bueno Foods is bringing two of her Brand Managers to campus next week to conduct mock interviews with our members.
Example of Behavioral Interview Question (continued):

What the interviewer is listening for:

- Is the person able to assume a role of authority?  
  (create a vision, advocate new ideas, delegate responsibilities)

- Did the person demonstrate key skill areas?  
  (self-motivation, creativity, relationship-building)
Case Interview Questions

*Case interview questions are situational interview questions.*

They demonstrate key points that can help you get that job:

- How familiar are you with basic technical knowledge of that field?
  (ex: familiarity with balance sheets and income statements if Accounting, understanding of financial ratios if Finance, familiarity with different forms of promotion if Marketing…)
- What is your thought process when confronted with a problem or issue?

A case question can be based on a situation with which they are currently faced – or may be based on a hypothetical situation that is frequently encountered in that line of work.

Prepare for case questions by:

- Reviewing the key concepts in the relevant field
- Having a strong understanding of the requirements of the position and scope of responsibility.
Interview Curve Balls

Somewhere during the course of the interview someone might ask,

“Do you have any other offers?”
“Why did you leave your last job?”
“What is your current salary?”

Are you prepared to answer these questions?
Closing the Interview

Remember: this is a sales call. CLOSE THE SALE!

• They will ask: “Do you have any questions for us?”
  – Always, always, always have questions prepared
  – Demonstrates your knowledge of and interest in the job
  – Come up with a long list in case some are addressed during the interview

• Before ending the interview, always finish by restating your fit and interest in the job: “Before I go I want to let you know that I am very interested in moving forward with the process. This position is a great fit because__________________.”

• Ask about next steps

• ALWAYS get a business card – for the thank you letter you will send immediately following the interview
Questions for the Employer

• What is the career track for this kind of role?
• What are some of the major challenges associated with this position?
• What kind of projects will I be assigned to during the first six months?
• Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
• How has the industry changed in the last five years?
• Where do you see it heading in the next five years?
After the Interview

• Debrief with yourself
  – Write down notes about your discussion
  – What points were emphasized?
  – Any concerns about hiring you?
  – What’s important for this job?

• Send a thank you
  – Immediately! Same day or next day – but no later than 1 week afterwards.
  – Email is sometimes okay, but handwritten (card) is best
  – Address issues discussed in the interview
  – Reiterate your interest
  – Keep it short and to the point
Final Tips

• Arrive early
• Dress professionally
• Control your nerves – it’s a sales transaction
• Have empathy for your interviewer (what are they looking for? what are their needs? what are their concerns?)
• Be personable
• Think about your NON-VERBAL communication
• Focus on the positive
• Close the sale
• Follow up with a thank you immediately afterwards
And Remember…

It’s not necessarily the best candidate that gets the job, but actually the best interviewee.