

It is critical to remember that first impressions matter in the interview process. The interview is not just a chance for an employer to learn more about the applicant's personal and professional attributes, but also a time to determine fit for the position and organization. It is also the applicant's chance to better understand the position and if the goals of the company match their career goals, objective and skill set. This is also an opportunity to get an inside view of the company and work environment.

## Types of Interviews

### Phone/Skype Interview

- Employers often use this opportunity to screen the applicant before bringing them into an office for a lengthier face-to-face interview. They ask general questions to determine if the candidate possesses the required skills to perform the job. This gives applicants the opportunity to expound upon their resumes and talk about their strengths. Phone interviews traditionally last about 30 minutes.

### Screening Interview

- The focus of this face-to-face meeting is to determine whether the applicant's qualifications match the employer's needs and vice-versa. It is often an initial interview to determine whether an applicant will be invited for a second, more in-depth interview. This interview may last 30 minutes to an hour, but may also be longer.

### Panel Interview

- Common for graduate/professional school interviews, the panel interview may also be used in the professional sector. The advantage of this type of interview is that applicants get to meet more than one person at a time. Candidates should be sure to make eye contact with everyone in the room. It is tempting to focus on just one person.

### Group Interview

- This allows the employer to meet with multiple interviewees at one time. The employer typically instructs the applicants to interact with each other or go around the room and answer questions. Employers are looking for how you interact with the other applicants. It is important to remain true to your own qualifications and not try to compete with another person's answers.

## Prepare Yourself

- Interviews can be an intimidating task if you are unprepared.
- Preparation and practice are key ingredients to a successful interview. Identify potential questions and practice responding to those questions multiple times.
- You must be able to talk about yourself and your previous work experience with confidence and enthusiasm. Never speak negatively about yourself or a past employer. It can be a small world, especially within an industry.

### Know the Employer

- How long has the employer been in operation?
- Where is the organization's main office? How many other locations do they have?
- Is it a public or private organization?
- Has the organization been in the news lately? For what reason(s)?
- What are the services/products/programs this organization provides?
- Who are its competitors?
- How is it doing relative to its competitors?
- What are the organization's short and long term goals?
- What else is the organization known for such as community involvement, special programs, or great working atmosphere?
- What challenges or difficulties does the organization face?
- How can I help solve these challenges in my future role?

### Questions for the Interviewer

- What are some of the qualifications you expect the ideal candidate for this position to have?
- What characteristics do individuals who are successful in this position possess?
- Could you describe the normal daily routine for this position?
- How will I be trained if I am hired for this position?
- What opportunities will there be for professional development?
- How will my performance be evaluated? How often? By whom?

### Behavioral Based Interviewing

Behavioral based interviewing is a common style of interviewing that most companies use in their hiring process. The basic premise behind behavioral interviewing is that past situations predict future performance. These types of questions are more probing and boil down to three main areas: Can you do the job? Will you love the job? Can we work with you?

### C-A-R Strategy for Answering Questions

**Circumstance:** Describe a specific situation you were directly involved in and recount it as it occurred. What and who was involved? Tell the interviewer about a particular situation that relates to the question. Use examples from past internships, work experience, classes, team involvement and community service.

**Action:** What needed to be done? What did you do to solve the situation? Always emphasize your strengths and your specific actions. Have success stories prepared ahead of time that represent your skills, qualities and characteristics.

**Result:** What happened as a result of your behavior? What did you learn from the situation?

**Make sure to send a thank you note to everyone you had a significant conversation with.**