
“How to Ace the Employment Interview”

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How to Ace the Employment Interview

- ❑ PURPOSE OF THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW
- ❑ PREPARATION--THE CRUCIAL STEP IN THE INTERVIEW PROCESS
- ❑ TIPS ON HOW TO "ACE" THE INTERVIEW
- ❑ THE "WOW" FACTOR—CANDIDATE DIFFERENTIATION
- ❑ USING THE S.T.A.R. METHOD TO ANSWER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
- ❑ FREQUENTLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
- ❑ INTERVIEWING DO'S AND DON'T'S
- ❑ SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Interviewing is
the most
important step
in the selection
process.

Selection Process:

*the process of
choosing individuals
who have relevant
qualifications to fill
existing or projected
job openings*

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Without some form of
an interview—
there is little chance of being
considered as a candidate for a
desired position.

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Purpose of the Interview

Purpose of the
employment
interview:

The Employer's
Perspective

- To determine the personality and character of the applicant
- To evaluate the candidate's communication skills
- To appraise the candidate's professional image and 'fit' into the company

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Purpose of the Interview

Purpose of the
employment
interview:

The Candidate's
Perspective

- To convince the interviewer that they are the very best candidate for the position.
- To demonstrate their character and personality traits.
- To exhibit their professional image.

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Step 1: Preparation

Interviewing requires:

- Planning
- Preparation
- Practice!

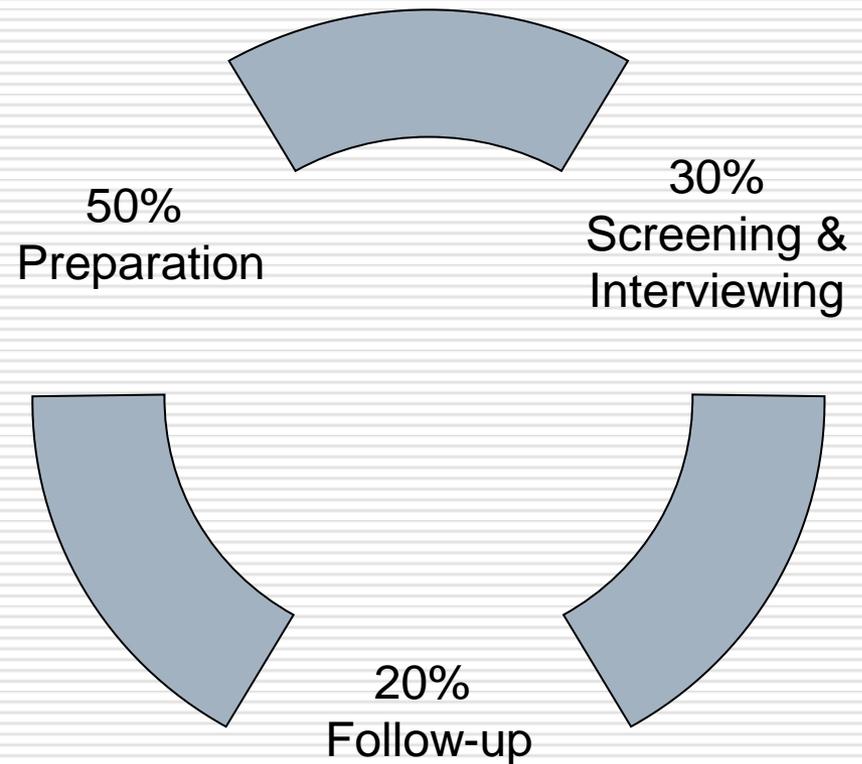
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Step 1: Preparation

Planning

Create a M.A.P. to guide your activities and guarantee success:

- M.A.P. = Managing Action Plan
- "Plan your work and work your plan."
- 80% / 20 % Rule of Success



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Step 1: Preparation

Self-analysis & Research

□ **Self-analysis:**

- Strengths
- Features & Benefits
- Personal & Professional
 - Goals & Objectives
 - Wants, Needs, & Desires
 - Salary requirements

□ **Organizational-analysis:**

- Company Overview
- Position Requirements
- Industry Issues
- Product / Service Info.
- Interviewer Traits
- Salary Range

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Step 2: The Interview

The Prescreen

Exude professionalism & create a positive first impression:

- The Entrance
- Nonverbal Cues
 - Manners
 - Social Etiquette
 - Norms & Customs
- Arrive 15 minutes early—no more no less.
- Be polite to everyone you meet—especially the “gatekeepers”
 - i.e. receptionist or security guard
- Do not talk or play on your cell phone!

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--The Introduction

An appropriate introduction sets the tone for a successful interview.

- *Politely greet the interviewer*
 - *"Good Morning, Mr. Smith."*
 - *Express delight in meeting them*
- *Politely introduce yourself*
 - *State your first and last names*
 - *Thank them for their time*
- *Stand up straight*
- *Smile genuinely*
- *Firmly shake hands*
- *Make direct eye contact*

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW—Establish Rapport

Establishing rapport with the interviewer will create a positive, friendly, cooperative atmosphere.

- *Make appropriate small talk*
 - *Ask about something in their office or on their desk*
 - *Try to find commonalities with the interviewer*
 - *Talk about sports or the weather*
- *Be an active listener /Be observant*
 - *Be aware of the interviewer's non-verbal cues*
- *Use humor and compliments*

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--Establish Control

Establish control
over the interview
immediately.

- Seating arrangement
 - *Sit corner to corner for cooperation not across a desk in opposition*
 - *Wait for the interviewer to offer you a seat and to sit before you sit down*
- *Use your resume as an agenda for the interview*
- *Control your nervous distracting behaviors*
 - *Be aware of your non-verbal cues*
- *Take notes, if allowed*
 - *Ask permission first*

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--Answering Questions

Answer questions effectively in relation to your :

- Three most relevant strengths
- Three differentiating features
- How you would benefit the organization

Differentiation based on:

- *Education*
- *Training*
- *Knowledge*
- *Abilities*
- *Transferable Skills*
- *Functional Skills*
- *Work Experience*
- *Personality Traits*
- *Extracurricular Activities*
- *Professional & Social Affiliations*

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--Answering Questions

Answer questions effectively:

Prepare several relevant real-life success stories to describe your accomplishments and positive results.

Include :

- *Real Life Examples*
- *Concrete Data*
- *Quantifiable Results*
- *Tangible Benefits*
- *Specific Details*

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DURING THE INTERVIEW--Answering Questions

Answer questions effectively:

- Tell a 'story'

Each example should have:

- A beginning
 - Explain the issue / situation / conflict
 - Describe the characters
- A middle
 - Describe actions taken to resolve conflict / situation / issue
 - Include the 'climax' of the story
- An ending
 - An explanation of the conclusion and resolution to the problem and the results achieved

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--Answering Questions

Answering questions effectively:

- *Use the S.T.A.R.
Method for Answering
Interview Questions*

- *ST = Explain the
Situation or Task that
occurred*
- *A = Explain the
specific Actions
that you took to deal
with it*
- *R = Explain the
tangible Results
or conclusion to the
situation*

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--"The WOW Factor"

Drawing conclusions and making connections:

- Saving Time
- Making \$ \$ \$
- Solving Problems

- Demonstrate that you are knowledgeable of the issues, problems, or pain facing the organization / industry / product / service.
- Articulate how your skills enable you to solve those issues, problems, or pain facing the organization.
- Describe how your skills enable you to *make or save money for the organization*.

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--"The WOW Factor"

"Putting it Together / Connecting the Dots":

- Make the connection between what you have learned about each organization and position and what you can offer the employer in terms of features and benefits.

- Be able to articulate to the employer:
 - How you 'fit' the organization
 - How you 'match' the job description
 - Why you want to work for each specific organization

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--"The WOW Factor"

Differentiate your interview answers from other candidates:

- Demonstrate using real-life examples of how your features & benefits have allowed you to solve the problems or relieve the pain of the organizations where you have previously worked.
- Provide legitimate and sincere reasons as to why you want to work for that specific organization.
- Demonstrate your understanding of the 'big picture'

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--"The WOW Factor"

Differentiate your special features & benefits from other candidates:

- Articulate how your features & benefits match the job requirements and how you fit into the organizational culture.
- Explain how your features & benefits allow you to produce results in terms of saving money or making money for the organization.

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--"The WOW Factor"

□ Characteristics to demonstrate:

- Personality traits
- Manners
- Professionalism
- Composure
- Self-confidence
- Communication style

□ Tactics to implement:

- Sell yourself continuously.
- Have a two-way conversation
- Show interest in the work not just the rewards
- Be positive and enthusiastic
- Be honest and straightforward

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--The Close

- Bring a list of questions to ask the interviewer.
 - About the position, the company, the industry, the product or service.

- Ask for the job if you want it!
 - Be assertive and direct.
 - Never stop selling yourself.
 - Repeat your key features and benefits and how they relate to the position.

- Ask about the 'next step' in the selection process.
 - What should you expect next? When will they be making a decision?
 - How will they inform you? Should you follow-up with them? If so, when and how?

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Step 2: The Interview

DURING THE INTERVIEW--The Close

Before you leave:

- Remind the interviewer of your strengths and why you are the right candidate for the job.
- Thank the interviewer for their time and information they shared with you.
- Shake the interviewer's hand firmly, smile, and look them directly in the eyes.
- Ask the interviewer for their card and contact information.

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Step 3: The Conclusion

AFTER THE INTERVIEW--The Follow-up Process

Follow-up Correspondence:

“The Thank You Note”

□ Include in the note:

- Ask for the job.
- Continue to sell yourself.
- Remind the interviewer of the specifics of your conversation.
- Ask to be considered for the next step in the process.
- Offer sincere appreciation.

- Write a hand-written thank you note to the interviewer and mail immediately.
- Email a thank you note within 24 hours of the interview.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- INTERVIEWING DO'S & DON'TS
- 10 COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
- PREPARATION for EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS
- SOURCES OF INFORMATION for RESEARCH

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Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

- Do not discuss compensation until you have been made a solid job offer.
- Do not speak negatively of your former employer.
- Do not exaggerate your accomplishments or credentials.
- Do not make excuses for yourself when answering interview questions—explain the most positive version of the truth possible.
- Do not 'tweet', blog, or post any information about the interviewer, company, or position on any social networking sites after the interview.

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Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

- Do not become emotional.
- Do not expect an immediate job offer.
- Do not consume alcohol or tobacco during an interview.
- Do not discuss your family, religious views, political affiliations, hobbies, or personal life, etc.
- Do not use slang, profanity, or inappropriate language.
- Do not become too 'familiar' or casual with the interviewer.
- Do not eat garlic or smoke prior to an interview.

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Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

- Do not answer questions with trite or cliché responses.
- Do not go off on tangents.
 - Be brief and concise in your answers.
 - Stay relevant and to the main point of the question.
- Do not answer with an opinion, theory, or vague response.
- Do not use lingo or industry terms that you are not truly familiar with or knowledgeable about the meaning.
- Do not exaggerate, be cocky, or act conceded.
- Do not 'wing it'.

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Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

- Do practice your interview question answers.
- Do get directions and parking instructions prior to the interview.
- Do bring cash and the interviewer's contact information with you.
- Do check yourself in a mirror prior to entering the interviewer's office.
- Do have a mint prior to the interview.
- Do ask questions during the interview.
- Do maintain a conversational flow.
- Do research the company, industry, position, product or services, competitors, and salary range to be knowledgeable.

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Interviewing Do's and Don'ts

- Do adjust privacy settings on social networking sites to 'private' or 'friends only' view.
- Do be honest and positive.
- Do interview in person rather than over the phone, if possible.
- Do follow-through with any activities that you committed to do.
- Do be prepared to attend two or three interviews with each company. Be patient...the selection process takes several weeks or months to complete.

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Commonly Asked Behavioral Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself? What are your strengths / weaknesses?
2. Describe the most significant work related problem you have had to solve in your most recent work experience and how you solved the problem. What were the results or conclusion?
3. Give an example of when you have done more than what was required of you in your job / position.
4. Describe the way in which you maintain a check on the accuracy of your work. Give an example.
5. Describe how you manage your time at work. How do you ensure that you will meet required deadlines with accurate results?
6. What types of decisions do you make rapidly and which decisions do you take more time making? Give an example.
7. What are some obstacles you had to overcome to get where you are today? How did you overcome those obstacles?
8. What kind of pressure do you feel most affects your job? Why? How do you deal with it?
9. Give me an example of a time when your ethics or integrity were challenged. Explain how you dealt with this situation.
10. What is it that you do well that is not apparent in your work history? Give an example.

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STEP 1: Preparation

Self-Analysis

S.W.O.T. Self-Analysis:

Step 1

Conduct a self-analysis to determine your personal *Opportunities & Threats* both internally and externally.

- *External economic conditions*
 - *Unemployment*
 - *Recession*
- *Business, social, and demographic trends*
 - *The "Green" Movement*
 - *Diversity and Multiculturalism*
 - *Aging of the Workforce*
 - *Multi-generational Workforce*
- *Understand how these trends may affect your career opportunities and choices*

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STEP 1: Preparation

Self-Analysis

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Step 2

Determine your relevant and differentiating personal Strengths & Weaknesses

Strengths & Weaknesses in terms of your Features & Benefits:

□ Features:

- What specialized knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, education, traits, etc. that you offer as an employee and how these will benefit the employer.

□ Benefits:

- How you are able to resolve problems and relieve pain for the organization.
- Results that you are capable of producing or have produced in the past.

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STEP 1: Preparation

Self-Analysis

S.W.O.T. Analysis:

Step 3

Determine your personal and professional goals and objectives and wants and needs.

- *What type of position you want to perform?*
- *How you are qualified for that particular position?*
- *Why you want to perform that particular position?*
- *Why you want to work for that particular organization?*

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Step 1: Preparation

Organizational Research

Research:

Understand what each specific employer wants and needs in their employees.

Learn about:

- the organization
- the position
- the industry
- the interviewer
- the product / service
- the salary range

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Step 1: Preparation

Research--Sources

Sources of information:

- the company's website
- the job description
- internet search engines
- newspaper & magazine articles
- industry journals
- annual reports
- personal interviews
- site visit
- salary surveys

- Ask any librarian for assistance to find a variety of data & information!

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STEP 1: Preparation

Organizing Documents

Step 1:

Prepare specialized and targeted documents specific to each position / company for which you apply.

- Resume
- Cover Letter
- References

Step 2:

Organize Documentation

- Bring several copies of your resume, cover letter, and references on quality paper.
- Bring information to fill out an application.
 - Names and addresses of previous employers
 - Dates and titles of employment
 - Supervisors' names and contact information
 - Salary history

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Step 1: Preparation

Professional Image--Appropriate Appearance

Professional Appearance:

- Follow specific instructions of the interviewer.
- It is best to appear conservative rather than trendy.
- Appropriate interview attire, shoes, and accessories:
 - Clean, wrinkle-free, lint-free, interview clothes
 - Clean, scuff-free, polished leather shoes
- Proper grooming:
 - Clean hair, clean-shaven, clean nails, natural makeup, no fragrance / no cologne, fresh breath
 - No visible tattoos or body piercing

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STEP 1:Preparation

Commonly Asked Interview Questions--PRACTICE!

- Review commonly asked interview questions
 - See “10 Frequently Asked Interview Questions” takeaway
- Write down your answers.
 - Relate answers specifically to:
 - What your differentiating features and benefits are.
 - What you have learned about the position, organization, and industry.
 - What issues and problems are facing the company / industry.
 - What solutions or results you can offer the company.
- Prepare answers specific to each company / position.
- *Role play answering interview questions with a friend or relative.*
- *Take part in a Mock Interview Workshop to practice verbal answers specific to each company / position.*
- Videotape the mock interview and review video to determine your opportunities for improvement.

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STEP 1:Preparation

Questions for the Interviewer--Putting it Together

- *Prepare three questions to ask the prospective employer.*
 - About:
 - the company
 - the position
 - the industry
 - the product / service
 - the next step
- Demonstrate your knowledge of the position, organization, industry, and product or service.
- Exhibit your understanding of the company and how you fit into the company's 'big picture'.

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Sources of Presented Information

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