

**BUSINESS EDUCATION
COMPACT**
Interview Basics



QUESTIONS?

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Prepare for the Interview

- Rehearse answers to those questions
- Do a practice or mock interview
- DO NOT rehearse canned answers out of books
 - *Interviewers have heard them all*
- Make sure to point out the skills you have in relation to what they are looking for



Critical Success Factors

What are employers looking for?

- Positive attitude toward work
- Proficiency in field of study
- Communication skills (written & oral)
- Interpersonal skills
- Confidence
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Flexibility
- Self-motivation
- Leadership
- Teamwork



Research the Company

Why do it?

- You may be asked “*What do you know about our company?*”
- Even if you aren’t asked – you should express your knowledge of the company to the interviewer

How do you do it?

- Company website
- Annual reports or other printed materials from the company
- People you know who work there (part of your network)
- Customers and vendors
- Use the Internet



Be On Time!

Why do it?

- Surveys reveal that if you’re even a few minutes late, you’re usually ELIMINATED
- ALWAYS strive to get to an interview early
 - Protect yourself from unexpected delays
 - Allows time to collect thoughts

How do you do it?

- Make sure you can find the company
- Ask for directions, get maps, do a dry run
- Allow time to
 - get lost
 - get tied up in traffic
 - find a parking place
- DON'T arrive more than 15 minutes early



Interview Dress

See the BEC presentation on
DRESS FOR SUCCESS



The Handshake

Greet your interviewer enthusiastically

How do you do it?

- Stand up and extend your hand for the handshake
- Medium-to-firm handshake
 - No **DEAD FISH**
 - No **BONE-CRUSHER**
- Ultra-warm **SMILE**
- Sample Greetings:
 - “**Good Morning, I’m glad to meet you**”
 - “**Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a candidate for this position.**”



Establishing Rapport

Interviews are as much about you having the skills as they are about establishing a connection with the interviewer

How do you do it?

- Try to find common interests
- Look around the interviewer's office for clues



Bring a Resume!

- Offer a copy of your resume
- Have one handy if interviewer has trouble locating his/her copy
- Bring extra copies if there are more than one interviewer
- Remember to bring references with you as well!



Eye Contact and other Nonverbal Cues

- Establishing and maintaining eye contact with your interviewer is extremely important!
 - Don't look up at walls and ceiling for answers
 - Don't cast eyes downward
 - Look at the interviewer's NOSE to maintain eye contact!
- Make sure to SMILE
- Sit up straight
- Sit on the edge of your seat to appear EAGER!

HINT! Conduct a mock interview with a friend and have the friend critique ONLY your nonverbal cues!



Bad Habits to Avoid

- Um's and Uh's when speaking
- Speaking too softly
- Fading out at end of response
- Touching face, mouth, scratching head
- Sweating
- Smoking
- Chewing gum
- Twiddling thumbs
- Tapping a pencil
- Humming
- Whistling
- Nose picking
- Stretching parts of the body
- Staring
- Cleaning finger nails
- Using slang or profanity
- Calling the interviewer by his/her first name (unless asked)
- Fidgeting
- Twirling in chair



Show Enthusiasm and Confidence

Best way to show ENTHUSIASM in an interview?

Big, warm, consistent SMILE!

Best way to show CONFIDENCE in an interview?

Strong, forceful voice



Frequently Asked Questions

- "Tell me about yourself"
- "What are your strengths?"
- "What are your weaknesses?"
- "Where do you want to be in 5, 10 or 15 years?" Or "What do you want to do with your life?"
- "Have you ever had a conflict with a boss or professor?"
- "Why should we hire you?"
- "How would you describe your ideal job?"
- "Would you rather work with information or with people?"
- "What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?"
- "How has your education prepared you for your career?"
- "How much training do you think you'll need to become a productive employee?"
- "Why is your GPA not higher?"
- "Why did you choose to attend this college?"
- "Do you have any actual work experience in this field?"

Read on for advice on how to handle these questions!



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

- QUESTION:

- ***“Tell me about yourself”***

- HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***Don't give the story of your life***

- ***Give a brief rundown including:***

- » *Education*

- » *Previous job titles*

- » *Target your answers specifically toward how your experience and/or education will be useful in the position*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

- QUESTION:

- ***“What are your strengths?”***

- HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***Talk about strengths that are very specific to the job you're interviewing for***



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

- QUESTION:

- *“Why should we hire you?”*

- HOW TO ANSWER:

- *Talk about what sets you apart*

- *Be specific about how your qualities match the employer’s needs*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

- QUESTION:

- *“How would you describe your ideal job?”*

- HOW TO ANSWER:

- *Your description of your ideal job should sound like the job you’re interviewing for*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

■ QUESTION:

- ***“Would you rather work with information or with people?”***

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***Ideally – BOTH***
 - » *Tailor your response to the job and describe strengths in each area*
 - » *Don't make yourself sound weak in either area*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

■ QUESTION:

- ***“What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?”***

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***Question is designed to get the following information:***
 - » *How you will get along with management*
 - » *How you see yourself as a manager*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

■ QUESTION:

- ***“How has your education prepared you for your career?”***

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- *Describe your educational preparation as specific to the job as you can*
- *Provide concrete examples, when possible*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

■ QUESTION:

- ***“How much training do you think you’ll need to become a productive employee?”***

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***The key word is PRODUCTIVE***
 - » *You can be productive immediately*
 - » *Express confidence in your ability to make an immediate IMPACT!*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

■ QUESTION:

- ***“Why is your GPA not higher?”***

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***Don't whine or make excuses***
- ***Your response should enhance your value as an employee***
 - » *You were very involved with sports, extracurriculars that may have hurt your grades, but made you more well-rounded*
 - » *You held a job while in school, which hurt your grades but gave you great experience*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

■ QUESTION:

- ***“Why did you choose to attend this college?”***

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***Focus on what makes your college experience worthwhile from the EMPLOYER'S point of view***
 - » *How will the employer BENEFIT from your specific education at your college?*
 - » *Show thoughtful decision-making skills*



Handling Frequently Asked Questions

■ QUESTION:

- ***“Do you have any actual work experience in this field?”***

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***Discuss key skills you have gained from your work experiences***
 - » *Discuss how these skills will help the employer*



Other Frequently Asked Questions

■ Yes or No Questions:

- ***“Are you a team player?”***
- ***“Are you a goal-oriented person?”***
- ***“Do you handle conflict well?”***
- ***“Do you handle pressure well?”***

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- ***NEVER respond with just “yes” or “no”***
 - » *ALWAYS elaborate and be prepared to give specific and current examples*
 - » *Use a variety of examples*



Other Frequently Asked Questions

■ QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COMPANY

- *“What do you think it takes to be successful in this career?”*
- *“Why do you want to work in _____ industry?”*
- *“What do you know about our company?”*
- *“Why are you interested in our company?”*

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- *RESEARCH THE COMPANY...and you'll have no problems answering these questions!*



Other Frequently Asked Questions

■ “THOUGHT” QUESTIONS

- *“What goals do you have in your career?”*
- *“What motivates you?”*
- *“What were your favorite classes and why?”*
- *“Who were your favorite professors and why?”*

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- *Responses should be:*
 - » *Thoughtful*
 - » *NOT self-serving*
 - » *Specific to the job, if possible*



Other Frequently Asked Questions

■ “OFF-THE-WALL” QUESTIONS

- *“If you had to live your life over again, what would you change?”*
- *“If you were a color, what color would you be and why?”*
- *“If they were making a movie of your life, who should be hired to play you in it?”*

■ HOW TO ANSWER:

- **THE TRICK – KEEPING YOUR COOL AND YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR!**
 - » *There are no wrong answers (generally speaking)*
 - » *Demonstrates how well you think on your feet!*



YOUR TURN

Why you should ASK QUESTIONS!

■ MUST ASK AT LEAST ONE QUESTION!

- ***If you DON'T:***
 - » *Signals the interviewer that you don't have any interest in the job or company*
- ***DON'T ask questions where the answer is***
 - » *Obvious*
 - » *Readily available*
 - » *Has been discussed in the interview*
 - » *About salary or benefits*



YOUR TURN

Questions to ask the interviewer

- “Can you describe a typical day for someone in this position?”
- “What is the top priority of the person who accepts this job?”
- “What are the day-to-day expectations and responsibilities of this job?”
- “How will my leadership responsibilities and performance be measured, by whom and how often?”
- “Can you describe the company’s management style?”
- “What are the company’s values”
- “How would you characterize the management philosophy of this organization? Of your department?”



YOUR TURN

Questions to ask the interviewer

- “Does the organization support ongoing training and education for employees to stay current in their fields?”
- “What do you think is the greatest opportunity facing the organization in the near future? The biggest threat?”
- “Why did you come to work here? What keeps you here?”
- “How is the department perceived within the organization?”
- “Is there a formal process for advancement within the organization?”
- “What are the traits and skills of people who are the most successful within the organization?”

MAKE SURE YOU ASK ABOUT THE NEXT STEP IN THE PROCESS – OR EVEN ASK FOR THE JOB – BEFORE THE END OF THE INTERVIEW!!



Questions NOT to ask the interviewer

- **Any ME FIRST questions**
 - *What you can do for me instead of what I can do for you*
- **Questions that reveal insecurities**
 - *Questions phrased in terms of job security*
- **Questions that reveal weaknesses**
 - *“Will I have to meet a lot of deadlines?”*
- **Questions asked in a confrontational tone**
- **Questions demonstrating you failed to listen to earlier information**



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