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USC University of Southern California

Interview Skills

An interview is one of the most important steps in securing a career with an organization, employer, or graduate school. It is usually the last step in determining whether a candidate is the right fit for the organization or opportunity. The interview personalizes the application process for both the organization and prospective candidate. Preparation and execution are key to a successful interview. The following provides quick but effective suggestions on how to prepare for and nail your next interview.

Know yourself

Be able to talk about your

- ◊ Résumé
- ◊ Personality
- ◊ Abilities & Skills
- ◊ Interests
- ◊ Values
- ◊ Experiences
- ◊ Interest in the position
- ◊ Interest in the organization

Know the organization | Position

Research the organization, industry, and position. Learn the organization's:

- ◊ Leadership
- ◊ Culture & values
- ◊ Competitors

Research resources

- ◊ *Website;* for the organization
- ◊ *Linked-In;* company profiles
- ◊ *Social media*
- ◊ *Candid Career*; employee tips
- ◊ *Glass Door*; company reviews
- ◊ *Hoovers;* industry insights

10 Questions you need to be able to answer

- ◊ Tell me about yourself.
- ◊ What interests you in the organization?
- ◊ What interests you in this position?
- ◊ What is your relevant experience? Be specific.
- ◊ What are your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
- ◊ What are your greatest skills? For example?
- ◊ What distinguishes you from other candidates?
- ◊ What is your preferred work-environment?
- ◊ Where do you see yourself # years from now?
- ◊ How will you contribute to the company?

Prepare 1-3 questions to ask the interviewer (s)

Verbal & Non-Verbal Language

1. Manage emotions. Take deep breaths and visualize.
2. Think about what you say and how you say it. Leave a positive implicit and explicit impression.
3. Utilize the S.O.L.E.R. communication technique:

- ◊ **S**it squarely
- ◊ **O**pen sitting posture
- ◊ **L**ean forward slightly
- ◊ **E**ye-contact always
- ◊ **R**elaxed body language

Big Interview Mock Interview AI

Big Interview is a powerful AI-enhanced interviewing tool to help you excel in interviews. Log into Handshake and select *Resources; Interview Preparation Resources*

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Behavioral Interview Questions

Behavioral interview questions are typically prefaced with the phrase, *"Tell me about a time you…"*

Behavioral interview questions do not have a right or wrong answer. Rather, they are designed to inform the interviewer about a candidate's pattern of behavior, or reaction to a situation to ascertain like behaviors if hired. Use the STAR method to address behavioral interview questions:

S **Situation**	T **Task**	A **Action**	R **Result**
Introduce the interviewer to the situation. Share a situation that is appropriate and underscores your actions and result	Inform the interviewer of the task you had to accomplish	Describe the specific actions taken to help you accomplish the task. What did you do? How did you do it?	Conclude your response by sharing the result of your actions. What did you accomplish? Did you complete the task? What did you learn?

Behavioral Question Example

Tell me about a time you had to problem-solve

Sample Response:

(S) *When I worked as a portfolio manager for a small music streaming start-up, the president of the company requested that all portfolio managers audit each artist in their portfolio to determine and report on digital downloads and revenue. Up to that time, we had not performed an audit let alone had an audit process all managers could implement since we had only been in operation for a few weeks.*

(T) *My supervisor asked me to create and present an audit process and plan.*

(A) *I thought about the matter until I had a possible solution. I determined the total number of managers and identified how many artists each manager had in their portfolio. I then created a web-based database for each manager to log into and enter data for each artist in their portfolio. I designed the database to distinguish between domestic downloads by U.S. region and international downloads. I worked with the IT department to sync our music download files to the database. I tested the database and when I determined it worked, I created and shared instructions with the managers and held a training session.*

(R) *As a result, each manager could now determine the total number of downloads for each artist in their portfolio when they logged into the database. Then, they simply had to multiply the number of downloads times download-costs to determine total revenue per artists. For international downloads, managers had the additional step of converting revenue to U.S. dollars. The plan worked and we improved process and database later that year.*