



# INTERVIEWING

*"Preparing for a Successful Job Interview"*

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Soft Skills, Module 4

- **Understand the Types of Interviews**
- **Understand the Interview Process**
- **Describe How to Prepare for an Interview**
- **Identify the Types of Interview Questions**
- **Formulate an Interview Response**
- **Describe How to Discuss Weaknesses**
- **Avoid Interview Mistakes**
- **Conduct a Mock Interview**
- **Deal with Illegal Questions**
- **Complete the Interview Conversation Simulation**
- **Attend Hiring Fair**



**A job interview can be a stressful time of life filled with uncertainty and anxiety. The key words in the above statement is “can be.” You control the “can be.” Prior planning, preparation and practice eliminates the anxiety of the unknown when you begin to look at the interview process as an opportunity verses an event.**

**Interviews are an opportunity for you to**

**SHINE.**



## Elevator Pitch:

- 30 second explanation of you
- A speech that summarizes
  - ✓ who you are
  - ✓ what you do
  - ✓ why you are the best candidate or what you're looking for
- Tailor to interviewer and not to you

**Prepare,  
PRACTICE  
AND SAY IT  
WITH  
CONFIDENCE**

# Exercise #1

(Ice Breaker)



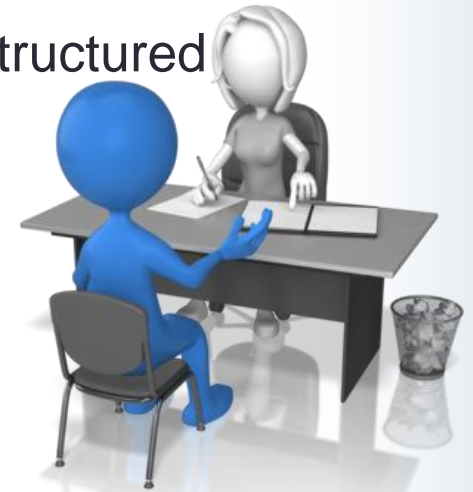
**“ELEVATOR PITCH PRACTICE”**

## ❑ **Structured (Directed):**

- Fixed format with prepared questions
- Questions are in same order for each interviewee
- Provides the precision and reliability required in structured environments

## ❑ **Unstructured (Undirected):**

- Interview without any set format
- Interviewer may still formulate some key questions in advance
- Allows for questions based on your responses
- Creates a friendly, non-threatening conversation
- Lacks consistency, precision and reliability amongst interviewees



### ❑ **Behavior:**

- Interested in past behaviors
- Looking for examples and details for how you dealt with problem-solving, adaptability, conflict resolution, and leadership
- Provides expectation for what the employer can expect when hiring you

### ❑ **Group:**

- Involves several applicants interviewed at the same time
- Provides a sense of each candidate's leadership style and skills
- Reveals if candidates are easily intimidated or overbearing when working with peers

## ☐ Telephone:

- Checking to see if you have the right qualifications
- Questions assess communication skills
- Provides spontaneous information that says whether or not you are truly interested in the job position

## ☐ Mealtime:

- Interview with or without a set format
- Reveals interpersonal skills & manners
  - How you handle your silverware
  - How you treat the host, other guests and serving staff
- Tip: Allow the interviewer to lead the conversation
- Tip: Order food quickly, non-messy, leave some food on the plate





## ➤ Before the Interview

- ✓ Complete the application in your own hand writing
- ✓ Research the company and the position in advance via
  - Internet
  - Company website
  - News
  - Social Media
  - Current employees
- ✓ Dress appropriately (consider the weather)

## ➤ Before the Interview (cont)

- ✓ Plan to be on-time (**15 minutes early**) to the interview
  - Time the route; Know the exact location
  - If possible, find out the name of the interviewer
  - Have your resume and/or letters of recommendation available to carry with you
- ✓ Practice the interview with someone who will tell you the truth
- ✓ Make mock interview as real as possible (include dress)
- ✓ Practice your responses in the mirror
- ✓ Prepare questions (write them down)

**HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF**

## ➤ At the Interview:

- ✓ Go alone
- ✓ Silence and put away cell phone & gadgets
- ✓ Keep a pleasant disposition – Smile/Be polite
- ✓ Firm handshake with eye contact
- ✓ Greet the Interviewer and introduce yourself
- ✓ Wait to be asked to have a seat
- ✓ Consciously maintain good posture



## ➤ At the Interview (cont):

- ✓ Listen attentively to the question (lean forward),  
Internalize before responding
- ✓ Keep eye contact with the interviewer when responding
- ✓ Answer questions completely; appropriate details to support the point and do not ramble
- ✓ Be enthusiastic about the job position and working at the company
- ✓ DO NOT LIE (I do not know but will gladly learn)
- ✓ DO NOT discuss health, personal finances and problems

### ➤ At the Interview (cont):

- ✓ DO NOT make negative statements about a previous employer
- ✓ If asked about weaknesses, always end with steps taken to reduce/eliminate the weaknesses
- ✓ Ask questions that reinforce your interest in the position and company
- ✓ ASK FOR THE JOB and what type of follow-up you should expect
- ✓ Firm handshake and eye contact when departing
- ✓ Thank interviewer for their time and consideration



## ➤ After the Interview

- ✓ Send the Recruiter/Interviewer a “Thank You” note
- ✓ Remember the names of those encountered (write them down)
- ✓ If given permission to call back for the results of the interview – Call Back

# Implementing Business Etiquette Training

- Reflect impeccable grooming from head to toe
- Wear appropriate accessories that accent the attire
- Modest perfume, cologne and jewelry
- Eliminate nervousness by asking yourself:



- ✓ Why am I nervous?
- ✓ Don't I have adequate skills and experience for the job?
- ✓ Why do I want/need this job?

*(Locating your self will help focus you back to confidence)*

# Implementing Business Etiquette Training

- Speak with confident, yet not overconfident
- Speak clearly and concisely
- Project your voice so that you are heard, yet not too loud
- Body language tips (your body parts are talking too)
  - ✓ look interviewer in the eye without staring
  - ✓ smile when appropriate
  - ✓ remain alert
  - ✓ good posture (do not cross your arms)
  - ✓ no gum or chew tobacco





# Active Listening Tips

- Listen with an open mind
- Listen for specific details
- Listen objectively, without judgment or Interruption
- Make eye contact and fully engage
- Ask clarification type questions
- Avoid the temptation to think about what you are going to say next



# Communicate and Connect

**Action** - something you do; connecting visually; what the interviewer sees

- Arrive on time
- Make eye contact and give firm handshake
- Posture and alertness
- Confident questions and responses

# Communicate and Connect

**Thought** – something you know; connecting intellectually; what the interviewer understands

- Experienced and technically proficient
- Authentic interview responses
- Prepared and well versed on the company and position

# Communicate and Connect

**Emotion** – something you feel; connecting emotionally; what the interviewer feels

- Passionate, heartfelt responses, w/o too much emotion
- Excitement about working at the company
- Excitement about making a difference in the company and others

# Behavior Based Questions

*“Behavior is the best predictor of future performance”*

- Usually starts with “Give me an example when you...”
- Do not respond with a story that depicts you in a negative manner
- If you do not understand a question, ask for clarity
- Explain the goal for your story
- Do not be afraid to ask for feedback
- Don’t be intimidated

# Problem Solving Questions

*“Focus on delivering the right way to the answer verses the right answer”*

- Listen attentively for the details of what is being asked
- Ask clarifying questions
- Use the S.T.A.R. method when responding (covered later in this presentation)
- Prepare strong examples in advance of the interview that are relevant to the position
- Be specific about the actions that were taken
- Be concise
- Explain in detail how you reached your conclusion

# Aggressive Questions

*“Remember that non-verbal communication speaks”*

- The interviewer’s disposition does not dictate your responses, body language, attitude or emotions - You do
- Usually a scare tactic to gage your stress level
- Remain focused on why you are interviewing for the position
- Be prepared to answer the “weakness” question
  - ✓ What is your greatest weakness?
- Be prepared to answer the “hypothetical situation” question
  - ✓ Have you ever made a mistake that cost the company money?
- Do Not be intimidated

# Unrelated Questions

*“Do your best to relate your response to the question, job position and/or qualities”*

- EXAMPLE: If you could eliminate one of the U.S. states, which one would it be and why?
- I would not eliminate any of the U.S. states. There is a personal pride that each American enjoys being unified and on one accord. We may not always agree, but the freedom and liberty of belonging to the best team in the world is worth the numerous discussions of different opinion. I would not want to take that away from anyone.

***Response shows decisiveness and value for teamwork***



# The “S.T.A.R.” Method

- S - SITUATION
- T - TASK
- A - ACTION
- R – RESULTS

# The “S.T.A.R.” Method

Explain Your Examples in Detail

**S – SITUATION**

*Explain the situation*

# The “S.T.A.R.” Method

Explain Your Examples in Detail

## T – TASK

*Explain the task of the role that you played*

# The “S.T.A.R.” Method

Explain Your Examples in Detail

## A – ACTION

*Which action did you take?*

# The “S.T.A.R.” Method

Explain Your Examples in Detail

## R – RESULTS

*What resulted from  
your action?*

# Exercise #2

**“ANSWERING INTERVIEW  
TYPE QUESTIONS USING  
THE  
S.T.A.R. METHOD”**

# HOMework

- ✓ Practice your Elevator Pitch
- ✓ Practice answering the remaining interview questions (handout) using the S.T.A.R method
- ✓ Identify and write out two of your interview responses



# INTERVIEWING, DAY 2

*"Preparing for a Successful Job Interview"*

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- Be honest and do not reference essential skills as a weakness (*“I pay too much attention to details”*)
- Discuss work related weaknesses
- Discuss how you’ve conquered or working to fix those weaknesses
- Discuss a negative an employer already knows, and add steps taken to overcome the challenge



- DO NOT become defensive
- DO NOT try to be a perfectionist who works too much
- DO NOT make your weakness common to all employees in your field
- This is a time to display your self-awareness

- Poor personal appearance or chewing gum
- Tardiness for interview
- “Know-it-all” attitude, overaggressive
- Lack of interest, enthusiasm
- Lack of preparation for interview about company
- Sloppy completed job application



- Too many excuses
- Unwillingness to admit mistakes
- Apparent lack of maturity
- No clear vision for career planning
- Refusal to accept criticism
- Financially Incompetent



- Poor eye contact and body language
- Lack of confidence
- Visible nervousness interfering with responses
- Making negative statements about previous employer
- Too selective about type of position, hours, days and/or location



# Exercise #3

**“MOCK INTERVIEW”**

**Any questions that reveals age, race, national origin, gender, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, disabilities, arrest and conviction record, military discharge status, gender, or pregnancy status**

Questions that violate state and federal discrimination laws are considered illegal interview questions. Most employers are familiar with the laws regarding what questions they can and cannot ask during a job interview. If you feel a question is inappropriate, DO NOT get upset and refuse to answer.

Example of an Appropriate Response:

Ask the question *“Can you tell me how that pertains to the job?”* in a polite and respectful manner, using the appropriate tone



# Exercise #4

## “INTERVIEW SIMULATION”

(Located on Blackboard)

WHAT HAVE YOU  
LEARNED FROM  
YOUR MISTAKES?

HOW DO YOU  
HANDLE STRESS  
AND PRESSURE?

WHAT ARE YOUR  
HOBBIES AND  
INTERESTS?

WHAT DO YOU  
EXPECT FROM A  
SUPERVISOR?

WHY SHOULD WE  
HIRE YOU?

WHAT WAS YOUR  
BIGGEST  
ACCOMPLISHMENT?

WHERE DO  
YOU SEE  
YOURSELF IN  
FIVE YEARS?

HOW DO YOU  
HANDLE DIFFICULT  
PEOPLE?

## SEE THE INTERVIEW AS AN OPPORTUNITY AND NOT AN EVENT

- ✓ Prepare (research company, verify time and location, practice, review your work history, select attire/accessories in advance)
- ✓ Rehearse your interview answers with a professional, if possible
- ✓ DO NOT be late
- ✓ DO NOT forget to say Thank You

**Hiring Fair** A hiring fair brings together job seekers and employers with job opportunities that need to be filled immediately. The exchange between employer and applicant is considered a true interview which usually takes place in a meeting room between 1-2 interviewees and a job applicant.

✧ For Career Fair and Job Fair (see Glossary definitions)



# HIRING FAIR

Friday, July 10<sup>th</sup>  
10:00 – 12:00

# QUESTIONS???

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Thank you for your time and attention.

