What Gets the Interview?

• Degree
• Value around the degree
  - Prior Experience
  - Accomplishments
  - Internships/co-ops
  - Course choices
• Personal Qualities
• Disciplined Job Search
• Marketing Yourself (to everyone!)
• Resume (but not by itself)
• Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
• Can Do, Will Do, Fit

Top 10 Places Employers Find New Hires

1. Company's Internship program
2. Company's co-op program
3. On-campus Interviews
4. Employee referrals
5. Career/job fairs
6. Faculty contacts
7. Internet job postings (own company)
8. Job postings to career center
9. Student clubs/organizations
10. Internet job postings

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Interviewing Goals

Your personal goals:
- Market yourself successfully; show your value.
- Determine whether you will enjoy and do well in the company and the job.
- Gather information to make a sound decision.

Employer's goals:
- Evaluate how well you fit the job.
- Determine your value to the company.
- Decide who continues to be interviewed.
- Sell the company to you if you are a strong candidate.
Before the Interview - Preparation

- Before the job search begins, change your voicemail/email so it sounds/looks professional.
- Get directions to the interview site - check for clearance.
- Research the company/organization - get information regarding products, locations, growth record, responsibilities, and recent news. Lack of knowledge about the company can be a deal-breaker.
- Make several copies of your resume and your references.
- Dress conservatively and professionally, preferably a business suit for both men and women or your most professional attire if you do not own a business suit.
- Don't forget the "Total Communication Package"

Before the Interview (Contd.)

Total Communication Package
Words 12%
Tone of Voice 36%
Non-Verbals (Body Language) 52%

Halo Effect:
The first 15-20 seconds of a new encounter can define the tone and expectations of all that follows.

Before the Interview (Contd.)

Know the Type of Interview

Screening
Primary Purpose: To Screen You Out
- Phone
- Career Fair
- Information Session
- On-campus Interview
- Remote

Selection
Primary Purpose: To Confirm Prior Positive Impressions
- On-site
- Pass around to others
- Managers/employees
- Individual or Panel
- Can be 1 hour to full day in length

Before the Interview - Preparation (contd.)

- Take a binder/portfolio to take notes if necessary and to carry your resume, references, and examples of your work (if applicable).
- Anticipate questions and practice your answers.
- Be prepared to talk about all of the information provided on your resume; everything on your resume is fair game.
- Prepare questions to ask the employer.
- Rehearse answers with a friend or career counselor.

INTERVIEW DAY

Interview Day

- Arrive 10-15 minutes ahead of time.
- Interview starts in the parking lot.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- Treat the receptionist/secretary with respect.
- Reduce "clutter"
- Be aware of the "Total Communication Package"
During the Interview
- Presentation & Presence
  - Maintain eye contact (without staring) and shake hands firmly
  - Sit up straight and maintain good posture
  - Eliminate non-words such as "uh" or "um"
  - Match facial expressions and rate of speech with the employer
- Your goal: Demonstrate value and show how you are a solution to their "problem".
- Pausing before you answer a question is OK.
- Ask for clarification or restatement of questions at any time.

During the Interview – contd.
- Be honest if you are unable to answer a question. Offer a thoughtful way you would seek an answer.
- Display enthusiasm for the position.
- Look for opportunities to highlight strengths and match them to the job's requirements. Use examples to illustrate.
- Show that you embrace the company culture.
- Restate your interest in and enthusiasm for the job.
- Inquire about next steps in the process and when your next point of contact with the employer will take place.
- Thank the interviewer for their time.
- Ask for a business card from all those with whom you speak.

Basic Interview Questions
Top Six Interview Questions
1. Tell me about yourself
2. What are your strengths?
3. What are your weaknesses?
4. What do you know about our company?
5. Why should we hire you?
6. What are your salary requirements?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Following Up
- Send a brief thank-you note to each employer you spoke to within 24-48 hours after the interview. Express your gratitude for the opportunity to interview, reaffirm your interest in the position, re-coup any gaps that remain from the interview.
- Evaluate your personal performance to make improvements for future interviews.
- Follow-up with a telephone call if you have not heard from the employer within a specified timeframe. If you are unsure about what to do, talk to a career counselor.
- Don't stop your job search - keep moving.

No-no's & Challenges
Interviewing Taboos

- Initiating discussion of salary/benefits during the first interview.
- Arriving too early or being late.
- Chewing gum or fidgeting during the interview.
- Making inappropriate small talk. Follow the interviewer's lead.
- Constantly taking notes.
- Asking the recruiter for a date.
- Discussing religion, politics, or potentially controversial issues.
- Making negative comments about former employers, colleagues.
- Smoking just before the interview.
- Wearing heavy perfume/cologne.
- Having questionable information on your social networking sites. Employers check Google and other sites. Clean up Facebook, Twitter, etc.

CHALLENGES

Dealing with Behavior-Based Questions
- Designed to make you think on your feet.
- Will ask for examples or give scenarios.
- Show ability to make good judgment calls.
- Example: "How would you deal with a co-worker who's poor job performance is affecting the quality of your work?"

Handling Rejection
- Don't take it personally (hard to do).
- Be clear about what you have and don't have control over.
- Learn from the experience.

Other Tips and Techniques

- www.ncsu.edu/career
- Job Search Guide (online or hard copy)
- UCC Resource Library
- Your Career Counselor

Appointments: Call 919-515-2396
INTERVIEW PREPARATION CHECKLIST

1. Practice, practice, practice...with family, friends, colleagues, etc. Take advantage of video practice sessions in the career center. Review the interview section in your workshop notebook. Use a tape recorder to record your responses to practice questions and critique for length, content, conciseness, and detractors (e.g. using "um," "ah," etc.) Check out career web sites for interview insights and online practice interviews.

2. Research the company for information about size, product lines, number of locations, and any other significant current or pending events. If possible, visit the site to verify location and travel time plus to get a feel for how employees dress.

3. Be prompt. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early. Allow for unusual traffic situations, parking and clearing security. The interview begins in the parking lot. You never know who you will see or what their role may be in the interview process. Be polite and courteous to all persons you meet.

4. Know who your interviewer(s) will be and their role(s) in the hiring process. Verify the interview location.

5. Dress appropriately. One level above working attire is a good guide. Neatness and cleanliness counts. If interviewing out of town, bring an extra outfit, just in case. Leave the chewing gum and heavy cologne or perfume at home. Check out the total "package" with a quick stop at the restroom before the interview. Leave any rain gear in the reception area.

6. Enter the office with confidence. Body language is 50% of your communications package. Remember the "Halo Effect" (the first 10 to 20 seconds sets the tone for the rest of the contact experience). You only get one first impression. Quickly scan the office for items of interest for small talk.

7. Shake hands firmly, but don't overdo it. (Note: If your hands get cold when you're nervous, stop by the restroom and run hot water over them before entering the office.)

8. Wait to be offered a seat. If you have a choice, choose the one with the least "boundary" between you and the interviewer.

9. Maintain good eye contact much as you would when talking with a friend, but, don't overdo it. Break eye contact occasionally by looking up or to the side. Avoid looking down.

10. Don't make negative comments about your former boss or company or dwell excessively on the past.

11. Be truthful in your resume and in your answers to questions.

12. Watch your posture. Sit comfortably with a slight lean toward the interviewer.

13. It's OK to bring a portfolio notebook (no briefcases, however, unless you're doing a presentation requiring materials). Include information you may need in the interview, but don't prepare scripts or overuse notes.

14. Bring extra copies of your resume or reference sheet. Bring information needed to complete an application including, company names and addresses, phone numbers, supervisors' names, salary history, and job titles.

15. Use accomplishments to strengthen your answers and to illustrate skills. Keep responses to questions under 60 seconds unless encouraged to elaborate.

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16. Be as prepared to ask questions as you are to answer them. Know your objective for your questions.

17. Never argue with the interviewer. Handle challenges positively and non-defensively.

18. If you don’t know the answer to a question, say so. Don’t try to bluff your way through it. Show interest in learning more about the topic. If you have related knowledge or experience, make the connection. Demonstrate the ability to adapt or learn new skills quickly.

19. If interviewing over a meal, avoid alcoholic drinks. Choose foods, that can be easily chewed and take small bites.

20. Avoid mentioning personal, domestic or financial problems.

21. Determine the next steps in the process before leaving including when and how you will be contacted. Ask for a business card to get the address and correct spelling of your interviewer.

22. Send a follow-up letter within 48 hours.

Remember: The primary purpose of an interview is to demonstrate your value to the company and to discover enough information about the position and the company to make a confident and informed decision if you get an offer.

POST-INTERVIEW EVALUATION CHECKLIST

1. Interview skills can improve significantly if you take a few minutes to evaluate each interview experience. The more quickly you do this following the interview, the fresher the information and experience will be. You may want to add your own items to the following list to accommodate individual circumstances.

2. How well did I prepare including researching the company and/or division? Did I think of questions specific to the position and practice potential responses? Which ones need improvement?

3. What was my objective for this interview? Did I achieve it?

4. Did I arrive on time? What was my demeanor from the time I parked my car?

5. Did I scan the office to find something personal or of interest with which to open the interview or to use during small talk?

6. How would I describe my “Halo Effect” (the first 15-30 seconds of contact)? What image did my non-verbal communication project? What impact did it have on the interview?

7. Did I use the interviewer’s name in my responses? Was it used too frequently or not enough? Did I pronounce it correctly? Did I get a business card so I can spell it correctly?

8. How many and what types of questions did I ask? How can these be improved?

9. Did I use examples of accomplishments in my responses? Was the benefit of my skills and experiences apparent?

10. Did I effectively handle any objections or challenges? Were my responses defensive or did they provide clarification or additional useful information?

11. How was my general presentation? Were my responses less than 2 minutes (unless otherwise encouraged to elaborate further?)

12. Was I actively involved in the interview or did I come across as passive?

13. Did I bring extra copies of my resume and references? Was I prepared with the necessary information to complete an application?

14. Am I clear on the commitment for the next step in the interview process?

15. How did I look? Was my outfit and appearance, from head to toe, neat and clean and appropriate for the company culture?

16. Did I actively listen to the interviewer or was I wandering or running ahead to my next response?

17. Did I follow up on the interview appropriately and in a timely fashion? What was the purpose of the follow up?

18. If offered the position, will I accept it?

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