

# Types of Job Interviews

You may experience many different types of job interviews. Understanding what could happen, and being prepared, will help you successfully navigate any interview situation.

## Phone Interview

The phone interview is a screening device meant to eliminate candidates and narrow the pool of applicants for personal interviews. It is useful to have notes nearby. You will sound more prepared if you don't have to search for information. Make sure you also have paper and a pen so that you can take notes and write down any questions you might have. Be prepared to think on your feet. Pauses to think seem longer when the interviewer is not physically in your presence. Since you cannot use body language, it is important to use vocal inflections as a substitute.

## One-to-One Interview

In a one-to-one interview session, one interviewer is speaking with one candidate. This is the most common type of interview. It has already been established that you have the skills and education necessary for the position. The interviewer wants to see if you will fit in with the company and how your skills will complement the rest of the department or unit. Your goal in a one-to-one interview is to establish rapport with the interviewer and show how your qualifications will benefit the company.

## Behavioral Interview

A behavioral interview is designed to provide the employer with another glimpse of your abilities. Sometimes you can fudge your way through an interview; this is more difficult to do in a behavioral interview situation. Here, employers are asking for specific examples of how you did things, or handled certain situations. The thought process behind these questions is, past performance is a good predictor of future actions.

## Committee Interview

In a committee interview you will face several members of the organization who will be actively involved in the hiring decision. When answering questions from several people, speak directly to the person asking the question. It is not always necessary to answer to the entire group. In some committee interviews, you may be asked to demonstrate your problem-solving skills. The committee might outline a situation and ask you to formulate a plan that deals with the problem. You need not develop the ultimate solution, the interviewers are simply evaluating how you apply your knowledge and skills to a real-life situation.

## Group Interview

The group interview is usually designed to illustrate the leadership potential of prospective managers and employees, who will be dealing with the public. Final candidates are gathered together in an informal, discussion-type interview. A subject is introduced and the interviewer will start a discussion. The goal of the group interview is to see how you interact with others and how you use your knowledge and reasoning skills

to win over others. If you perform well in the group interview, it is usually followed later by a more extensive interview.

### **Second Interview - Site Visit**

In a second interview, you will be invited to visit the actual location of the organization. One purpose of this interview is to provide you with an opportunity to meet other staff members. A second reason is to allow more people to interview you at greater depth to determine whether you are a good match. The visit may take part of a day, an entire day, or perhaps even longer. When an organization offers to pay your expenses to travel to the interview, be prudent in submitting costs. Your choice of moderate rather than luxurious accommodations, food, and transportation will reflect your good judgment.

### **Lunch Interview**

The same guidelines apply in lunch interviews as those for typical site interviews. This type of interview may appear to be more casual, but remember it is a business lunch and you are being evaluated carefully. Use this type of interview to develop common ground with the interviewer. Follow the interviewer's lead in both selection of food and in etiquette. It is best not to order alcoholic drinks or smoke, even if offered by the interviewer.

### **Structured Interview**

In a structured interview, all candidates are asked the same questions for the interviewer's ease in evaluating applicants. If there is important information that you have not conveyed by the end of the interview, present your additional qualifications when asked if you have any questions or anything to add. Usually the interviewer will make written notes of your answers.

### **Video Conferencing**

Video conferencing is often used as a more personalized version of the telephone interview. Recruiters conduct live, face-to-face interviews with applicants via personal computers equipped with cameras and speakers. You would use the same strategies as if you were meeting in person. Clothing, body language, and dialogue typically should not differ. Your goal is still an invitation to meet personally for a second interview at the organization's location.

# Frequently Asked Traditional Interview Questions

1. Why are you interested in this job?
2. Why are you interested in this organization?
3. What do you know about this company?
4. What do you know about this job?
5. What do you think it takes to be successful in our company?
6. What experience, skills and abilities relate to/qualify you for this job?
7. What elements of this job would be new to you?
8. What additional training would you need?
9. Why should we hire you? (skills, qualities and anticipated contributions)
10. Tell me about yourself?
11. What did you like about your last job?
12. What is important to you in a job?
13. What two or three things are most important to you in your job?
14. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work for?
15. What did you not like about your last job?
16. What would you like to avoid in a job?
17. What activities did you enjoy most at your last job?
18. What were the critical elements for success in your last job?
19. Why did you leave your last job?
20. To what extent has your job progress kept pace with your abilities?

21. What are your long range and short range goals? What are you doing to achieve them?
22. What do you expect to be doing in 5 years?
23. What goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established?
24. What do you really want to do in life?
25. What are the most important rewards you expect in a career?
26. What motivates you?
27. What do you feel you do best? Why?
28. How do you determine or evaluate success?
29. What values guide your work?
30. What are your standards for success at your last job? What have you done to meet those standards?
31. What were your objectives last year?
32. What are your weaknesses?
33. In what areas would you most like to improve?
34. What would your employers/references say about you?
35. Why did you select this field?
36. What motivated you to get your degree/training?
37. What did you like about the program?
38. What did you not like about the program?
39. Describe the relationship that should exist between manager and subordinate?
40. What's your management style?
41. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
42. What was your greatest contribution to your last job?

43. What accomplishment are you most proud of?
44. If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you look for?
45. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
46. How do you work under pressure?
47. How would describe your ideal job?
48. What major problems have your encountered in your work and how have you dealt with them?
49. How have your previous jobs prepared you for more responsibility?
50. How would you describe your supervisor? Strengths? Weaknesses?
51. Describe a situation where you didn't get along with your supervisor?
52. In what ways has your supervisor supported you?
53. For what kinds of things have you been praised?
54. For what kinds of things have you been criticized?
55. How would you describe your coworkers?
56. What disagreements have you had with coworkers?
57. How would you describe your relationship with other departments?
58. What kind of people do you enjoy working with?
59. What kind of people do you find difficult to work with?
60. Describe an example of interacting with someone who was very difficult to work with? How did you handle it?
61. What are some of the best ideas you sold to your supervisor?
62. Define teamwork.
63. What committees/teams have you worked on?

64. How many hours a week do you normally work?
65. Why pay do you expect to receive?
66. Have you ever recognized a problem before your boss or others? Explain.
67. Describe significant project ideas you initiated or thought of in the past year. What prompted you to begin them? How did you know they were needed and would work? Where they used? Did they work?
68. What were the most difficult decisions you made in the last six months? How did you formulate these decisions? (decision framework).
69. Describe some example of job conditions, tasks, or assignments that have been dissatisfying to you?
70. What kind of pressures did you feel at your last job? How did you deal with them?
71. Describe an example of when something 'slipped through the cracks.'
72. Describe an example of when you had to bend your standards? To succeed?
73. What do you do to manage stress?
74. Who is the greatest influence in your self-development?
75. How do you schedule your time?
76. How do you set priorities?
77. Describe a situation where you had to make a decision without all of the information you required?
78. Tell me about the most stressful situation you've ever been involved with?

# Preparing for Behavioral Interview Questions: The STAR Method

Remember that many behavioral questions try to get at how you responded to *negative* situations; you'll need to have examples of negative experiences ready, but try to choose negative experiences that you made the best of or -- better yet, those that had positive outcomes.

Here's a good way to prepare for behavior-based interviews:

- Identify six to eight examples from your past experience where you demonstrated top behaviors and skills that employers typically seek. Think in terms of examples that will exploit your top selling points.
- Half your examples should be totally positive, such as accomplishments or meeting goals.
- The other half should be situations that started out negatively but either ended positively or you made the best of the outcome.
- Vary your examples; don't take them all from just one area of your life.
- Use fairly recent examples.
- Use the STAR Method to answer your questions

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<b>Situation or Task</b>	Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand. This situation can be from a previous job, from a volunteer experience, or any relevant event.
<b>Action you took</b>	Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.
<b>Results you achieved</b>	What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

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# Fifty Frequently Asked Behavior Based Interview Questions

Are you looking for behavior based interviewing questions? While the questions and behavior characteristics listed below are by no means comprehensive, it might be just the jump-start you're looking for. Try these...

## **If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Leadership:**

1. Tell me about a time when you accomplished something significant that wouldn't have happened if you had not been there to make it happen.
2. Tell me about a time when you were able to step into a situation, take charge, muster support and achieve good results.
3. Describe for me a time when you may have been disappointed in your behavior.
4. Tell me about a time when you had to discipline or fire a friend.
5. Tell me about a time when you've had to develop leaders under you.
6. If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Initiative and Follow-through:
7. Give me an example of a situation where you had to overcome major obstacles to achieve your objectives.
8. Tell me about a goal that you set that took a long time to achieve or that you are still working towards.
9. Tell me about a time when you won (or lost) an important contract.
10. Tell me about a time when you used your political savvy to push a program through that you really believed in.
11. Tell me about a situation that you had significant impact on because of your follow-through.

## **If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Thinking and Problem Solving:**

1. Tell me about a time when you had to analyze facts quickly, define key issues, and respond immediately or develop a plan that produced good results.
2. If you had to do that activity over again, how would you do it differently?
3. Describe for me a situation where you may have missed an obvious solution to a problem.
4. Tell me about a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventative measures.
5. Tell me about a time when you surmounted a major obstacle.

## **If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Communication:**

1. Tell me about a time when you had to present a proposal to a person in authority and were able to do this successfully.
2. Tell me about a situation where you had to be persuasive and sell your idea to someone else.
3. Describe for me a situation where you persuaded team members to do things your way. What was the effect?
4. Tell me about a time when you were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.

**If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Working Effectively with Others:**

1. Give me an example that would show that you've been able to develop and maintain productive relations with others, though there were differing points of view.
2. Tell me about a time when you were able to motivate others to get the desired results.
3. Tell me about a difficult situation with a co-worker, and how you handled it.
4. Tell me about a time when you played an integral role in getting a team (or work group) back on track.

**If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Work Quality:**

1. Tell me about a time when you wrote a report that was well received. What do you attribute that to?
2. Tell me about a time when you wrote a report that was not well received. What do you attribute that to?
3. Tell me about a specific project or program that you were involved with that resulted in improvement in a major work area.
4. Tell me about a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).

**If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Creativity and Innovation:**

1. Tell me about a situation in which you were able to find a new and better way of doing something significant.
2. Tell me about a time when you were creative in solving a problem.
3. Describe a time when you were able to come up with new ideas that were key to the success of some activity or project.
4. Tell me about a time when you had to bring out the creativity in others.

**If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Priority Setting:**

1. Tell me about a time when you had to balance competing priorities and did so successfully.
2. Tell me about a time when you had to pick out the most important things in some activity and make sure those got done.
3. Tell me about a time that you prioritized the elements of a complicated project.
4. Tell me about a time when you got bogged down in the details of a project.

**If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Decision Making:**

1. Describe for me a time when you had to make an important decision with limited facts.
2. Tell me about a time when you were forced to make an unpopular decision.
3. Describe for me a time when you had to adapt to a difficult situation. What did you do?
4. Tell me about a time when you made a bad decision
5. Tell me about a time when you hired (or fired) the wrong person.

**If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Ability to Work in Varying Work Conditions (stress, changing deadlines, etc.):**

1. Tell me about a time when you worked effectively under pressure.
2. Tell me about a time when you were unable to complete a project on time.
3. Tell me about a time when you had to change work mid-stream because of changing organizational priorities.
4. Describe for me what you do to handle stressful situations.

**If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Delegation:**

1. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
2. Tell me about a time when you did a poor job of delegating.
3. Describe for me a time when you had to delegate to a person with a full workload, and how you went about doing it.

**If You're Looking For Behaviors that Revolve Around Customer Service:**

1. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer.
2. Tell me about one or two customer-service related programs that you've done that you're particularly proud of.
3. Tell me about a time when you made a lasting, positive impression on a customer.

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# Interview Preparation Worksheets

Fill this out before **every** interview – if possible, go over the questions and answers with a friend (at the very least in the mirror!), and practice your answers until they sound polished and confident (but not rehearsed!).

## **Ten reasons why you're the perfect person for the job**

*These are the key facts from your experience, skills, accomplishments and/or personality that make you a good match for the job. Try to work one of them into every answer you give – and if at the end of the interview you realize one or more of them hasn't come up, then bring it up!*

1.

2.

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4.

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10.

**Ten things to avoid doing/saying during the interview**

*What mistakes have you made in past interviews? What bad habits do you want to avoid displaying, or issues you want to avoid disclosing?*

1.

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**Ten questions to ask them about the job or company**

*Show that you're interested! Pretend you're a reporter and you're going to write a story about the company and/or job – what would you want to know?*

1.

2.

3.

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# Pre-Interview Checklist

## Research/Practice

- Have you researched this company/organization thoroughly?
- Have you reviewed the job description for this position?
- Have you prepared and practiced answers to a variety of interview questions/types?
- Do you have a list of relevant and smart questions to ask them?
- Which of your skills and experiences are most relevant for this position? Can you provide examples of these?
- What concerns might the interviewer have about your background and experience? How you will address these?

## Appearance

- Do you know how you will dress/what you will wear?
- Are your clothes and jewelry appropriate for the job/company/location?
- Are they clean, ironed, and well-fitting (not too tight, not too loose)?
- Are your teeth, hands & fingernails clean?
- Is your hair clean, neat and well-groomed?
- Are your shoes polished?
- Were you careful in applying aftershave or perfume?
- Did you get enough sleep last night?
- If you smoke or chew gum, can you keep from doing so for this occasion?

## Logistics

- Do you have clear directions and know how long it will take to get there?
- Do you have a back-up plan for transportation in case the bus is late or your ride falls through?
- Have you arranged for reliable child care?
- Did you make extra copies of your resume? Do you know how you will carry them?
- Do you know what you will bring with you?
- Do you know with whom you will be meeting?

## Attitude

- Are you walking tall and ready to make a great impression?
- Have you practiced your smile?
- Is your body language positive and alert?
- Do you have a firm handshake?
- Do you want to work?
- Are you friendly, positive, and enthusiastic?
- Can you make eye contact to demonstrate that you are honest and trustworthy?
- And finally, have you taken a deep breath and relaxed? It's normal to be nervous, but try to see this as a learning experience!

# The 4 C's of Good Communication

## **Clear:**

Make sure your statements are clear, and that they can't be interpreted in different ways.

## **Concise:**

Be brief. There's no need to elaborate with tons of details except when it is appropriate/necessary, or unless you are asked to be more specific.

## **Coherent:**

Make sure your statements "flow" together in a natural order.

## **Complete:**

Tell the entire story. Don't leave out essential pieces of information!

# Thank You Note Template

Your Name  
Street Address *(optional)*  
City, State, Zip Code  
Telephone number and Email address

Specific name of person  
Employer's Address

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

First paragraph: Thank the interviewer for meeting with you. Express your enthusiasm about gaining employment in the organization.

Second paragraph: Reiterate your qualification for and continuing interest in the position. Include any personal skills you forgot to mention during your interview. Emphasize a particular skill or accomplishment that would make you an asset as an employee.

Closing paragraph: Briefly thank the interviewer again for consideration. Express confidence in your ability to perform well in the organization. State that you look forward to hearing from the interviewer.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Your name