

Moving Forward

Interviewing

You and the company/organization want to determine if you:

1. are a good fit
2. have the knowledge/skills needed
3. can make a contribution
4. will proceed in the hiring process
5. can agree upon salary

Cautions

- Everyone believes they are a great interviewer.
- Hardly anyone believes they need training or can improve with training.
- Therefore, interviewer may ask appropriate and informative questions and know how to evaluate candidates or ask inappropriate and poor questions and base their decisions solely on their intuition.
- And don't believe that the company wants to hire you for the least amount of money, i.e., they don't want you to have regrets

Types of Interview Questions and Examples of Replies

Questions	Examples of Replies
Opening: Tell me about yourself.	For the past 2 years, I managed the marketing department and we increased sales by 30%.
Opening: What are your strengths and weaknesses?	<p>My strengths are my team skills. One team I participated on completed new software installation on time and 10% below budget. We had a user satisfaction rating of 4.5 out of 5. I also have strong job skills, receiving a 10% award for developing a new process that saved us \$20,000 a year. My last company often had me train and coach new hires.</p> <p>Areas where I can improve my skills are: report writing and performance reviews. I recently attended a class to improve my writing and that has also helped me to prepare better written reviews. Before choosing to look for a new position, I planned to take our HR class on reviews.</p>
Opening: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why are you leaving this job?• Why have you been out of a job?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I'm looking for more growth opportunities.• I was downsized.• Our project was terminated.• I want to get back into a job.
Hypothetical questions: Here is a situation about...how would you handle it?	This is what success looks like...Here are the steps I would take to get there. This is the way I would monitor and evaluate my progress...

Questions	Examples of Replies
Performance questions (behavioral interviewing): Think back to a situation when you had to make a difficult decision. What did you do and what options did you have?	Last month, we had a breakdown in a critical component. The decision was to repair this component or purchase a new one, only available in Germany. I had to consider the cost, length of time to make the fix, and the consequences if it didn't work. I gathered more information from QA, manufacturing, and purchasing. I spoke with Finance and they ran an ROI or repair vs. buy. I presented the information to my boss and we decided to pay extra to expedite shipping and purchase the product. We wanted to make sure there wasn't a product failure to get the product to the customer on time.
Probing: Several organizations were involved, each with their own agenda. Tell me what you did to move the conversations forward.	I met with each one individually to clarify the problem and get their perspective on the solutions. We decided that after making this fix, we needed to check out this component in other products to make sure they weren't going to fail. That's what they wanted. In trade, we agreed to move forward on this one. I got them all together and bought pizza, and worked through the issues. Terrific meeting.
Confirming question (yes/no): So, you got their individual input and then pulled them together to get agreement?	Yes, and it really moved us forward because everyone was committed to the solution.
Clarifying question: Tell me how Finance was involved.	I got help from our controller who ran the ROI.
Closing question: What other information do you want to tell us?	I have strong analytical skills and an ability to form a team and move forward rapidly to get a result.
Closing question: What other questions do you have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm interested in knowing how work gets assigned in our group? • What are your expectations for success? or If I received a high rating on my performance review, what did I do to earn it? • What happens my first few days on the job? • What did you hear in the interview that could benefit your department? (<i>a little risky but could validate what you've said</i>)

Interview process:

- introductions and hiring process
- resume review: look for fit and accomplishments
- opening question/your answer
- questions/your answers/your questions
- closing question/your answer/your questions
- interview closing – what happens next in the process

Tips for Preparing for the Interview

Do	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about what you want • Learn what you can about the company/organization • Write down your questions • Study examples of accomplishments, rehearse the “stories” • Write down and memorize your responses to “Tell me about yourself” and “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” • Select what you want to wear, make it appropriate to the job • Polish your shoes • Get plenty of sleep and eat well, drink a lot of water • Print multiple copies of your resume • Take a pad of paper and pen for notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking that you can just wing it • Going out drinking the night before • Eating meat, fish, greasy food or garlic the night before or the day of the interview • Staying out late and partying

Tips for Interviewing

Do	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the intention of the questions asked • Ask for clarity if needed • Ask for more time to think about a good reply • Ask for water to make yourself more comfortable • Answer the questions asked • Relax • Breathe • Take notes about the company, organization or job as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling that they need you more than you need them (that happens for very few of us) • Asking for money, asking for anything • Swearing • Rambling • Trying to take control of the interview • Avoiding questions • Telling off color jokes or any jokes • Sarcasm • Answering what wasn't ask • Getting personal, e.g., I need this job for college money for my kids

The money question: How much money do you want?

(Note: it's often used to screen people out)

- Avoid answering this question if asked early – want to learn more about the job
- Try to have the employer give the amount first
- Consider what else you can negotiate for: more vacation time, education reimbursement and time away from job, special projects, office/cubicle location, work schedule, work location, job title, stock/stock options, 90 day performance review with possible promotion or salary increase
- Get the highest job title you can, eventually translates into more money

What are your toughest questions that you've had to answer?

Question	Better Replies

Tips for Closing the Interview or After the Interview

Do	Avoid
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you say, "Thank you" for the opportunity to interview with them. Sounds strange but sometimes were too tense to remember. • If interested in the position, make sure that you tell them how it's a good fit and the contributions you can make. • Remember that in the presence of someone from the company/organization you are always being scrutinized. For higher or certain positions, typical to invite you and spouse to a meal or for a drink. You are still "on stage" so be on your best behavior. • Send a handwritten "Thank You" to each of the interviewers, keep it brief, identify 1 or 2 ways you can contribute to the company/ organization. Email if you have to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making negative comments to the interviewer about the interview • Sending gifts or flowers • Calling too soon • Getting defensive, blaming yourself or the interviewers, or imagining the worst things ("Worry is the misuse of imagination" Dan Zadra) • Sending a "Thank You" email • Calling others in the company to find out how the interview went