




Interview

Survival

Guide

SOME KEY POINTS

- You are being interviewed more often than you think.
 - Practice, practice, practice. At least a full day for one interview.
 - Employers are looking for competency, chemistry, and compensation. In one word: value.
 - Approach the interview as a business meeting with a department head – collaborate.
 - Know yourself – functional skills, preferred industry, specific interests, what fulfills you, your values (things that matter).
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SUCCESS STORIES

- A success story is an account that gives evidence that you have the knowledge, skills and motivation to excel in the job.
- The employer wants to: make money, save money, save time, make work easier, solve a specific problem, be more competitive, build a brand or image, expand the business, attract new customers, retain customers.
- Your success stories have to link to the wants above, and demonstrate a return on investment.
- Emphasize benefits, not features.

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU WRITE SUCCESS STORIES

- What are you most proud of in your career?
- Tell me about a time when you displayed integrity.
- Describe how you increased productivity at a previous job.
- Tell me about a challenging situation with a coworker and how you handled it.
- When was the last time you were able to persuade someone using your verbal ability?
- Describe your approach when you had a tough decision in a pressured situation.

START FORMAT

- **Situation/Task, Action, Result, Tie-in**
- Situation: where, when, who else, task, challenge
- Action: thought process, steps taken, decisions,
- Results: use numbers
- Tie-in: bring it back to the question, to the job, to the employer's wants
- It's about *them*, not about you
- Fact-based, avoid personal opinion
- Cover all of your previous jobs
- 2 – 3 minutes long

BRANDING

- Present an authentic image
- Present your benefits
- Three sound bites:
 - TSM – Thirty Second Message
 - BC – Your Oral Business Card
 - MB – Mini-Bio

THIRTY SECOND MESSAGE

- It's the response to "Tell me about yourself."
- It's good for wrap ups.
- Customized for each interview: it's about *them*.
- It includes an introductory phrase + 3 strengths
 - My background is unique because...
 - Throughout my career I've been drawn to...
 - As a _____, I'm known for _____
 - In all of my positions, I've cared about...
 - My strengths as a _____ are in _____
 - I consistently get praise for...



ORAL BUSINESS CARD

- First, review the employer wants
- Second, brainstorm how you can achieve them
- Third, connect it to your industry or function

I'm a drug research professional targeting leadership opportunities in the pharmaceutical sector, where I can create and conduct clinical data management plans that beat the expected target dates.



MINI-BIO

- Start with your Thirty Second Message
- Then talk about:
 - years of experience
 - prestigious employers
 - functional areas
 - scope of responsibility
- Then your Oral Business Card
 - elaborate on more key strengths
 - key accomplishments
 - education
- Give a START story and close



TIPS FOR ANY INTERVIEW

- Know-remember-convey your value.
- Have the end in mind. Your goals?
 - good interaction, a follow up, a job offer
- Be focused – prepared and practiced
- Know the company – trends, opportunities, projects and problems
- Props: notes, notepad, questions, extra resumes, work samples
- Image: appearance, clothes, be early, thank yous
- Enhance the chemistry – precise, pertinent, positive
- Make it a planning meeting



COMMON MISTAKES

- Not prepared
- Not focused, purely reactive
- Not dressed appropriately
- Incorrect body language
- Poor knowledge of your own resume
- Not punctual
- Not professional
- Not succinct
- Poor listening, listen “for” not just “to”




PRESCREENS


- In advance, know your preferences for salary, location etc.
- Have your resume handy
- Web: use X's to move ahead, print the pages, don't click “Submit”, do research and come back
- Give broad answers without lying
- You may have to complete cognitive, personality assessments
- Don't try to fake a psychometric assessment
- Focus on your value and positive attributes
- Be rested, stay relaxed, it's about *them*



PHONE INTERVIEWS – PREPARATION OF YOUR DESK

- Resume
 - Your message, business card, mini-bio
 - START stories
 - Company research
 - Questions to ask
 - Answers to anticipated questions
 - Computer, notepad, pen, calculator, appointment calendar, clock, bottle of water
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PHONE INTERVIEWS – QUESTIONS TO EXPECT

- What are the most important duties you perform?
 - What kinds of decisions do you make?
 - What's the most important project you've initiated?
 - What's your ideal work environment?
 - Why are you leaving your current employer?
 - What do you know about the position?
 - What do you know about our company?
 - What contribution do you think you'll make?
 - Where do you see yourself in 5 to 10 years?
 - Why are you the best candidate?
 - How soon would you be available?
 - Is the salary range acceptable?
 - What questions do you have?
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PHONE INTERVIEWS – QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN THERE'S VERY LITTLE TIME

- How would you describe the ideal candidate?
- What are the most important problems this position must solve?
- How does this position fit into the company's long term plans?




PHONE INTERVIEWS – IMPERATIVES


- Ask for contact info of the interviewer for a later thank you
- Avoid background noise
- User verbal nods – “I see”, “I understand”
- Monitor your talking, keep it shorter
- Smile while talking. Stand up. Use gestures. If possible, walk around
- Expect surprises – repeat the request to give you time
- Take notes.
- Close with a thank you. Send a thank you.



PHONE INTERVIEWS – CLOSURE

- Three possibilities: invited, postponed, declined
 - Invited: say thanks, ask questions about who, what, when, where
 - Postponed: say thanks, express desire to contribute, ask if there's anything else you can do
 - Declined: say thanks, express continued interest in the company, ask for a meeting or a contact to discuss other opportunities
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BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS

- Tell me about an instance when you...
 - Describe a time when you...
 - Give me an example of a situation where you...
 - How have you handled.... in your experience?
 - When did you ever have to...
 - Follow ups:
 - What was your role? Who else played a part?
 - What decisions did you have to make?
 - Would you have done anything differently?
 - What did you learn from it?
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BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS: WHAT ARE THEY LOOKING FOR?

- Demonstration of competencies
 - analysis
 - communication
 - adaptability
 - initiative
 - leadership
 - planning
 - problem-solving
 - teamwork
 - technical knowledge
 - time management, organization
- Search the job description for the competencies


CHEMISTRY

- Initial smile and firm handshake
- A full hello with additional info (Research!)
- Active listening, listening “for” and not just “to”
- Note the nonverbals
- Focus on them, focus on value
- Balance proof and evidence with short statements
- Maintain a win-win perspective - positive


CLARIFY

- Have a job description before the interview
 - Questions – Position
 - What are the goals of this position?
 - How will you measure success?
 - What are the priority tasks for this position?
 - What are the traits of the ideal person?
 - Who does this position report to?
 - Questions – Company
 - Strengths, milestones, products/services
 - Size of staff, locations
 - Where the department and position fit in
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COLLABORATE

- Make the interview a planning session
 - Questions
 - What is currently going well?
 - What hasn't been going well?
 - Have you considered a strategy like...
 - Some companies... Would that work here?
 - Ask for a tour of the facility
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CLOSING – GAIN AGREEMENT

- Be respectful
 - “Based on our discussion, where do you think I would make the biggest contribution?”
 - “Based on what we’ve said, do you think I would be a good match for the position?”
 - “Looking back on what we’ve discussed, do you think my strengths are relevant to the job?”
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CLOSING – FILL THE GAPS

- “Is there anything else I can do to assure you I’m a strong candidate?”
 - “Do you see any other ways I could increase or improve my benefit?”
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CLOSING – UNDERSTANDING NEXT STEPS

- “What’s next in the interview process?”
- “What are the next steps? Can we set that up?”




CLOSING – EXPRESS DESIRE FOR THE JOB


- “I’m very interested.”
- “I think I could make a major contribution.”
- “I would bring a lot of commitment and enthusiasm to the position.”



ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

- National origin, citizenship
 - “What is your native language?”
 - Marital/Family Status
 - “Does your spouse support your working?”
 - Age
 - “When did you graduate?”
 - Affiliations
 - “What clubs do you belong to?”
 - Religion
 - “Would your faith pose a problem with the schedule?”
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ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

- Disabilities
 - “We’d like you to complete a medical history.”
 - Arrest Record
 - “Have you ever been in trouble with the law?”
 - Military
 - “Were you honorably discharged?”
 - Credit
 - “Have you ever had any credit problems?”
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HOW TO ANSWER ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

- Avoid a direct response
- Respond to the “hidden” concern
- Emphasize the positive
- Talk about reinforcement of value

- “Are you married?”
- “I’m in a solid relationship with someone who fully supports my career.”
- “Have you ever been in trouble with the law?”
- “In my youth I did some foolish things. But I learned character lessons that still benefit me now.”

SALARY NEGOTIATION – PREPARATION

- Research: web sites, associations, networking
- Summarize in a table:
 - reality – the lowest you will accept
 - comfort – realistic and reasonable
 - dream – for top performers
- Also consider what you might be giving up in your current job

SALARY NEGOTIATION

- Deflect questions until the offer
- You can:
 - ignore
 - deflect, delay
 - respond without revealing “my requirements are open”
- Never share a single figure, always a range



SALARY NEGOTIATION - DEFLECTING

- How you say it is as important as what you say
- “Salary is important, but my first consideration is the position. How can I make a contribution?”
- “I want to be fairly compensated. I can be of value to you. What challenges would I face?”
- “I’m looking for a performance-based compensation package that will motivate me.”



SALARY NEGOTIATION – YOU GET AN OFFER

- “We’d like to make you an offer. What salary are you looking for?”
- Deflect to avoid being too low or putting the offer at risk
- “Thank you! In what salary range do you see me?”
- “That’s great to hear! What salary figure did you have in mind?”



SALARY NEGOTIATION – THEY OFFER

- Take a silent pause. Mentally review your research.
- Ask any questions left unanswered.
- Leave benefits, bonus etc. for a later discussion.



SALARY NEGOTIATION – COUNTER OFFER

- Express appreciation
- Clarify the job attributes
- Repeat your value and contribution
- Then state a range that would be more appropriate



SALARY NEGOTIATION – EMPLOYER RESPONDS

- Stands – rely on benefits, bonus to make it satisfactory
- Improves, but not enough – reiterate your benefits and value
- Meets your goal – move on to other compensation



SALARY NEGOTIATION – OTHER COMPENSATION

- Benefits
- Bonus
- Raises
- Training and Development
- Career Advancement



GET THE OFFER IN WRITING

- Ask for it in writing, if not offered
- Note your questions and discuss on the phone or in person (not email)
- Ask for the Employee Handbook
- Be positive, professional
- When it's final, send an acceptance letter expressing thanks and excitement



REFERENCE

- Interview Magic, Susan Whitcomb, 2005, published by JIST Works.

