

Interviews

A Workshop in Interview Preparation and Skills



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Key Concepts



Pre-interview & Facebook

Cover letter/résumé

Finding an opening

Preparation

Reviewing/Understanding
Job Requirements

Dress to Impress and
What to Bring

Research

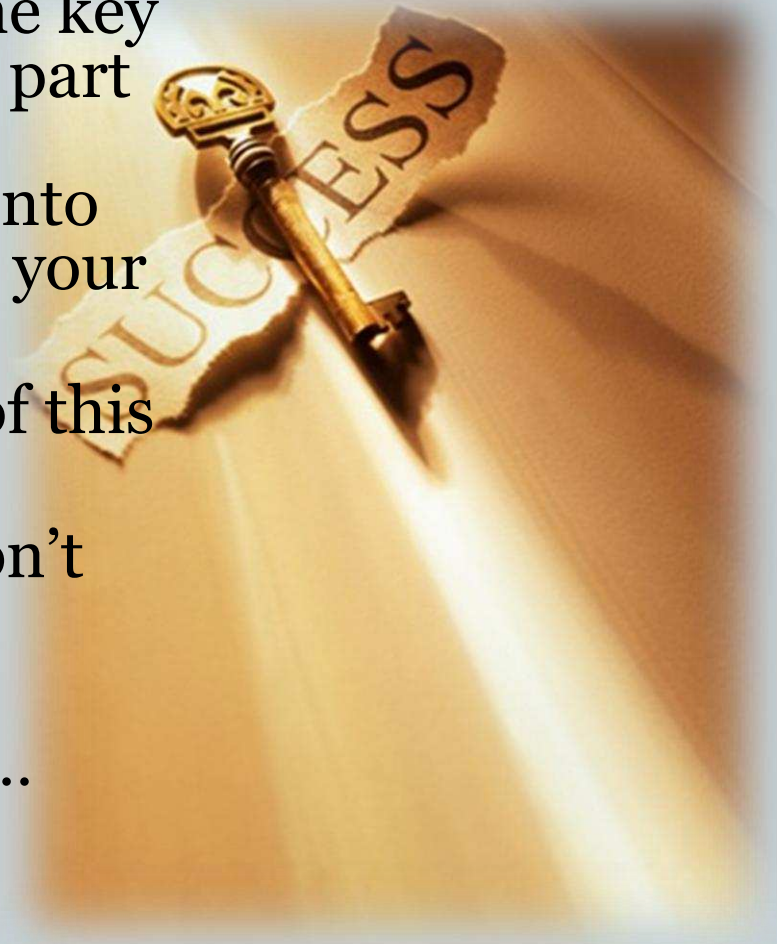
The Interview

Post-interview

Pre-interview Basics



- Preparing for an interview is the key to success; the most important part of the interview process. The amount of time and effort put into preparation directly influences your success in the interview itself.
- Give 100 percent to each step of this process.
- “If your heart isn’t in it, you won’t succeed” – an old adage, but applicable for interviews.
- You’re one of many applicants... stand out!



Facebook



- An emerging issue in hiring/auditing employee professionalism is Facebook and other social networking tools.
- **CLEAN IT UP!** Get rid of any posts, pictures, videos, comments, etc. that you wouldn't want your boss to see; make your profile professional.
- Recent studies suggest “**78 percent** of hiring companies have Facebook profile searches as a mandatory step in the hiring process... this occurs before the applicant's cover letter is even examined” (Bovee & Thill, 2010).

Facebook



- Even if your profile is “cleaned up,” beware what you write about your job, co-workers, and supervisor. You never know who may be reading!



Yvonne [redacted] Cant wait till monday! My olny day off inbetween working 18 days.

August 7 at 5:22pm · Comment · Like



Cheryl [redacted] You asked to work both weekends in a row so you could have the following off. I find it funny that a girl who asks if we are going to get more hours, complains when she actually does!!

August 8 at 6:59am

Write a comment...

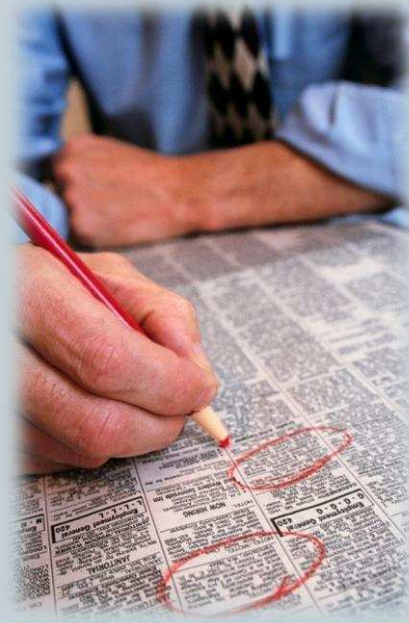
lamebook.com

Finding a Job Opening



- Sometimes finding a job opening can be the most tedious part of the interview process. There are several avenues of searching for a job. The prevalent methods are:

1. Internet
2. Word of mouth
3. Newspaper



Finding a Job on the Internet



- “Searching [for a job] on the internet is convenient and allows access to more than 1,000 job-search resources such as Monster.com and Jobserv.com” (Britt, 2009).
- When jobs open at your current place of work, the establishment’s online database/website will have postings of these positions.

Word of Mouth/Networking for a Job



- Hearing about a position from someone else is another effective means of finding a job.
- Friends may know of an opening in their company that you would “be perfect for.”
- A colleague/co-worker might have a friend who is looking for someone with your precise skill set. You never know what connections you’re making when you network.
- Knowing someone who already works for a company or has influence over the hirers can help you “get a foot in the door.”

Finding a Job in the Newspaper



- Though internet has taken over the “need” for referencing a newspaper anymore, job descriptions and points of contact can be found in the business section of almost any newspaper.
- Because there’s no way to filter your job search results, a lot of help wanted ads might be irrelevant or you might be overqualified for the majority.
- “Using a newspaper is not recommended for people searching for professional positions” (Britt, 2009).

Reviewing and Understanding Job Requirements



- Read job requirements thoroughly and make sure you understand what they mean.
- Some examples:
 1. Advanced understanding of Associated Press guidelines
 2. Proficient to advanced understanding of Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint
 3. Conflict management and resolution skills
 4. Associates/Bachelors/Masters/Ph.D
 5. Two (2) letters of recommendation from previous supervisors and one (1) letter of recommendation from a previous colleague/co-worker
 6. Three years experience in law enforcement

Reviewing and Understanding Job Requirements



- Don't apply for a job if you don't meet the specified requirements – you won't even get an interview.
- If the requirements for the job seem objective, then it is your responsibility to address the issues in the interview and bring ample evidence to show that you are capable of conflict management or have an advanced understanding of Associated Press guidelines.

Reviewing and Understanding Job Requirements



- “You need to be able to do what is being required of you in order to succeed in any given task; the same applies for understanding job requirements– either you have the experience and know-how, or you don’t” (A. Shelby & N. Reinsch, 1995).



JOB REQUIREMENTS:

- 3+ yrs experience
- BS/BA, MBA preferred
- Must be able/willing to violate ethical standards in exchange for pathetically small check

Research



- Researching the job and company you're interested in is integral in being hired for a job. If you don't understand what you're "getting yourself into," they're not going to care about you, either.

- Memorize the company/organization mission statement; *know* what they're known for.

i.e. At UCCS, the Office of Student Activities' (OSA) mission statement is: "Leading and Learning Together... Creating Community through Entertainment, Enrichment, and Inclusion." The OSA is "known" for their week-long event series' and co-sponsorships with several UCCS clubs and organizations.

Research

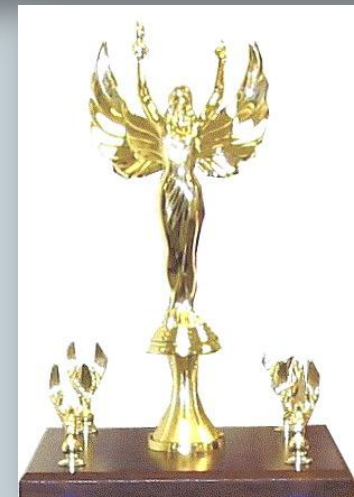
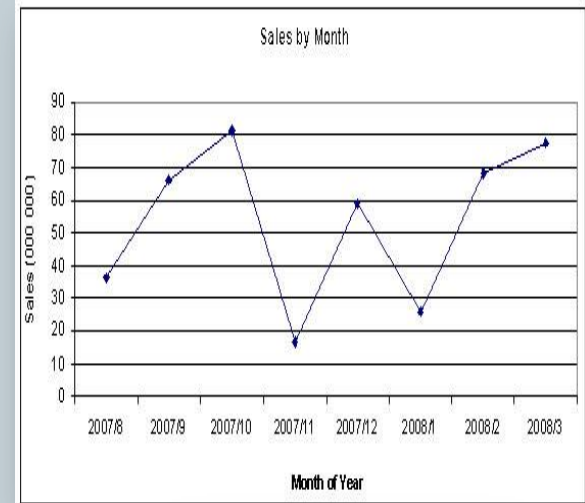


- Another, larger-scale example is Old Navy of Gap, Inc. If you're interested in an upper-managerial position, it would be prudent to know that Old Navy sells more jeans than the other top three denim retailers combined.
- On top of this, it would be relevant to know the rough sale count on denim for Old Navy of Gap, Inc. for the past five to ten years, and reference that in your interview.
- Knowing company policy also helps when answering questions about why you want to get involved with their organization.

Research



- Statistics are another key to getting a full understanding of a company's success. You're not expected to be a research methodologist, but knowing monetary trends and rates of surplus is important.
- Also, documenting your interviewing company's recent organizational accomplishments helps load your interview answers with a display of detailed knowledge and acumen.



Cover letter & Résumé



- Your cover letter and résumé are your own personal advertisement.
- Pristine grammatical correctness and spelling are expected in all applicants.
- Apply your skill set into language that reflects the job description; “feed them what they want.”
- Always keep your résumé updated, and have extra copies on-hand.



Cover letter & Résumé

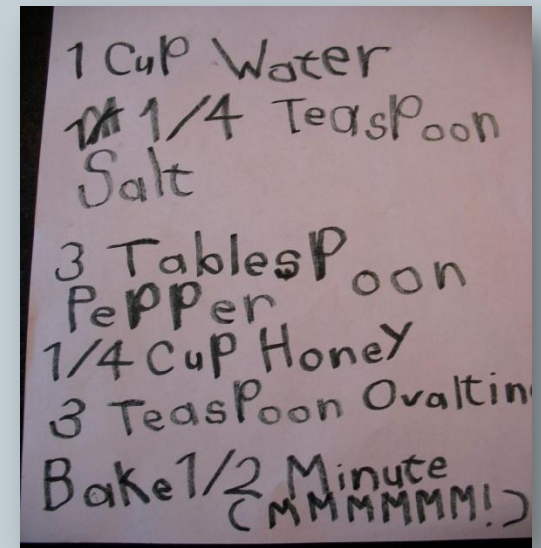


- Remember, this is what gets you the interview – you can't strut your stuff until your credentials pass.
- Be weary of “buzz words/terms” the company uses often. These can be found on their website or in the job description itself.
- Common “buzz words/terms” include: implement, coordinate, time-management, budget, allocation, successfully, professionally, and conflict management.
- **Look forward to another workshop focusing solely on cover letters and résumés.**

Preparation – Gather Your Ingredients



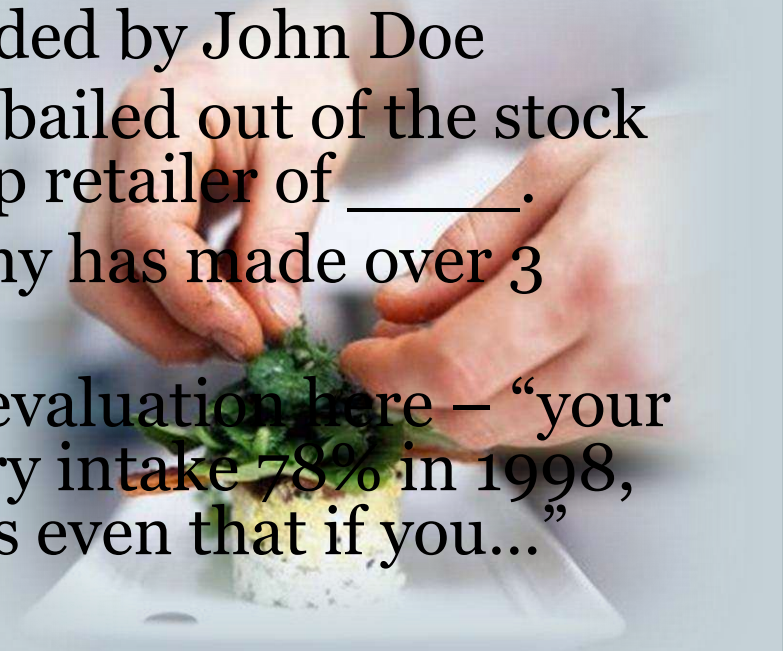
- Get all of your material together and organize what you know about the company/organization that is going to interview you.
- Make sure you have a full grasp of the company/organization's data and how it can apply to your expertise – this is preparing you for the next step.



Assembly– Compose Your Entrée



- Put the “ingredients” in a logical order so you know what you’ll need to focus on and when will be relevant to know in your actual interview.
- After this step, you are ready to practice and deliver.
- Example:
 1. Company started in 1934, founded by John Doe
 2. Company boomed when it was bailed out of the stock market crash and is now the top retailer of _____.
 3. In the past decade, this company has made over 3 million sales in _____.
 4. Apply knowledge of statistical evaluation here – “your company increased its monetary intake 78% in 1998, and has the potential to surpass even that if you...”



Assembly– Compose Your Entrée



- Remember, your ingredients and logical order aren't what you're going to be stating to your interviewer(s); this is a way of organizing your thoughts into a rational and persuasive outline you can mentally reference in your interview.
- This is used as a tool – much like a speech outline – to help you deliver effective answers during your interview.
- “A mapped out, logical progression [in writing] is one of the most effective ways of organizing thoughts... no matter what kind of learner you are” (Crawford & Marshall, 1999).

Delivery – Serve Your Entrée: Mock Interviews



- Find a friend, family member, or colleague to sit down and pretend to interview you.
- It is important to treat this like your actual interview: Answer questions, communicate (verbally and non-verbally), address concerns/issues as if this was the real deal.
- “Preparing for positive exchanges in communication is best done whilst exchanging communication” (A. Shelby & N. Reinsch, 1995).



Delivery – Serve Your Entrée: Mock Interviews



- Sometimes, it's effective to film yourself during this mock interview so you can watch it later.
- Visit the Oral Communication Center to record yourself during a mock interview any time!
- This allows YOU, the interviewee, to give a personal critique of yourself as opposed to listening to areas of improvement solely from others.



Delivery – Serve Your Entrée



- While you go over all your compiled information, remember that your delivery is imperative to your speech.
- Pay attention to inflections, pitch, and vocal rates in your voice as you speak – this is an important part of displaying your enthusiasm for this position.
- Serve with confidence! You've worked hard – don't over-think it – be natural and yourself in your mock interviews and see how confident you become.



Delivery – Serve Your Entrée



- One final tip: Practice positive visualization.
- Positive visualization is mentally picturing yourself succeeding in any endeavor. For interviews, it's walking through each step of the interview process (even if you don't know what they are, make something tangible up), and imagining positive outcomes throughout.
- “Imagine every stroke – every flip-turn – every breath from the moment you dive off the block to finishing the race in first.”
- Marc Mintzverell, U.S.A. Olympic Swimming Coach



Dress to Impress



- Studies in communication indicate that people “sum us up” by what we’re wearing within the first three seconds – from there, either the effect is good or you’ve permanently damaged your chances of being considered for a job.
- This is the only time you get a chance to sell yourself physically – this means putting as much effort as you can into looking professional and well-kempt.
- Dressing well establishes your credibility as a candidate for a job.

Dress to Impress – Men, Do's



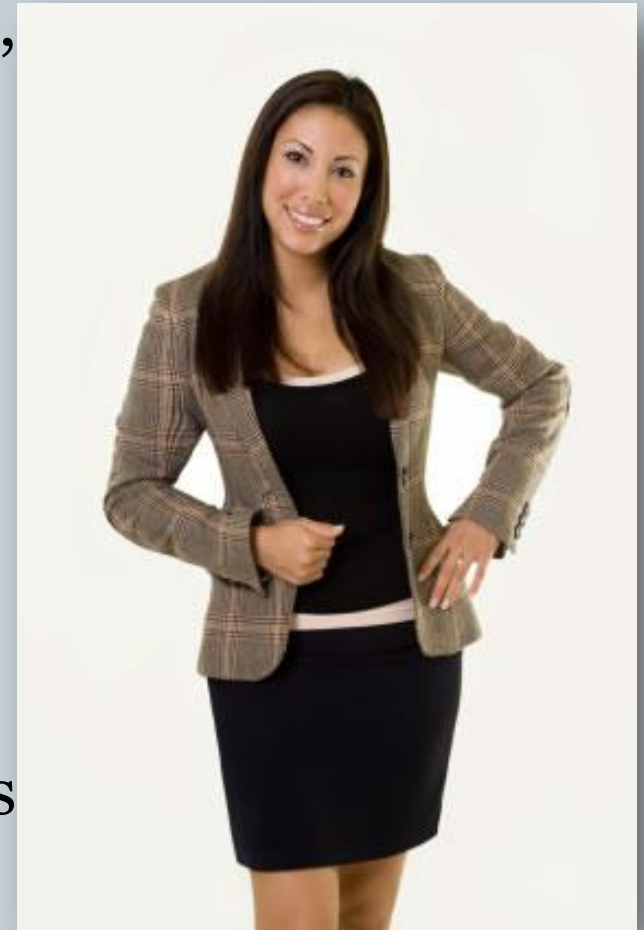
- Shave, style hair to look slick and clean, wear black slacks or khakis, button-down, pressed shirts with a tie, and wear a suit jacket in for an extra professional effect.
- Color on shirts and ties is fine, just make sure it's not eye-watering or overwhelming in design. Wear nice, clean dress shoes and black socks.



Dress to Impress – Women, Do's



- Wear a dignified amount of makeup, style hair tamely and cleanly, wear black slacks, khakis, long skirts or blouses of neutral color, and a nice, conservative top.
- Suit jackets are also a nice touch, with clean, quiet shoes.
- **Both sexes:** Carry a briefcase or purse in with you, and make sure it's clean and well cared for.



Dress to Impress – Men, Don'ts



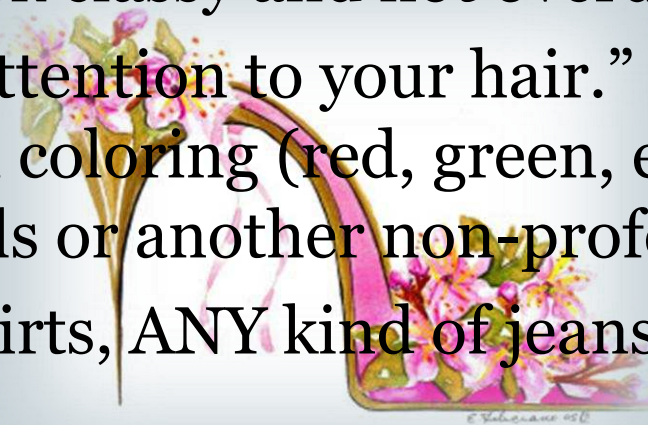
- Be unshaven or have a five o'clock shadow – no matter how sexy you think it looks, it's not professional.
- Have “hat hair.” Make sure your hair is clean and styled or unobtrusive if it's long.
- Wear jeans of ANY kind, shorts, and especially sweats or gym shorts.
- Wear T-shirts of ANY kind, even if they're collared, or wear wrinkled button-downs.
- Wear a bow-tie or tuxedo: This isn't prom, it's an interview. You need to look like a businessman.



Dress to Impress – Women, Don'ts



- Overdo the makeup: The heavy eyes that look so good on you for a night on the town won't look professional in an interview. Look classy and not overdone.
- “Don't draw attention to your hair.” This includes having any unnatural coloring (red, green, etc.), and having your hair in pig-tails or another non-professional style.
- Wear short skirts, ANY kind of jeans, or T-shirts and low-cut shirts.
- Wear tall, “clacking” stilettos: Distractingly tall or loud shoes detracts from your overall appearance.



What to Bring



- **Extra copies of your résumé:** Most of the time, your interviewer(s) will bring your cover letter and résumé to your interview to go over it with you, but it doesn't hurt to have extras on hand, especially if there's more than one person interviewing you – it displays preparedness.
- **Additional materials to sell yourself:** If you have any other materials (published works, advertisements you've made in the past, etc.) that can help emphasize your competence, bring them and show them to your interviewer(s). This helps sell yourself more effectively and also demonstrates preparedness.

What to Bring



- Extra questions for *them*.
- This is an imperative thing to prepare and bring to your interview, “In an interview, you’re responsible for questioning and interviewing *them* just as much as they’re interviewing you... This is a chance for you to see if these are people you want to work for” (Pollock, 2005).
- Some examples of questions:
 1. What are you looking for in this position?
 2. What is your management style?
 3. What is *your* definition of customer service and satisfaction?

Now that you've...



... spent hours and hours preparing for this one exchange; this one chance to prove to others that you're worthy of entering a company or organization and changing them for the better. This one chance to show your future bosses that you're worth the time, money, and faith. It's time to understand the fundamentals and methods of effective communication during...

The Interview

[Back](#)

The Interview



- There are **two** kinds of face-to-face interviews: one-on-one interpersonal interviews (rare for the business world) and committee based interviews (common).
- There are benefits and consequences for each style, and the type of interview you come into will dictate the way you should act toward your interviewer(s).



The Interview – One-on-One Interpersonal



- In these kinds of interviews, the one person writing down all your responses to questions is typically the one who decides whether or not you will be hired to fill the desired position.
- Practice expert interpersonal communication skills:
 1. Maintain eye contact
 2. Face them, and don't cross your legs away from their body
 3. Keep hands on the table in a relaxed position

The Interview – Committee Based



- These are more common for higher level positions.
- In these interviews, there's usually a diverse committee of people who work at that organization/establishment who are all able to interpret your answers in a different way.
- The benefit to this is that it allows for input from many individuals to ensure strict objectivity in their selection process.
- Committees can range from two to sometimes close to ten people, and most times questions will come from all participating individuals.

The Interview



- ***Be confident, not arrogant***
 - Present yourself as a formidable candidate, and make sure you come off as capable and open. Discuss past triumphs and areas for improvement, but don't brag.
 - Confidence: belief in oneself and one's powers or abilities.
 - Arrogance: offensive display of superiority or self-importance; overbearing pride.



The Interview



- ***Be personal, but don't get too personable***
 - Being relatable and giving/receptive of courtesy is important during an interview because it shows that you'd be a good match with other employees, and will add to the unique dynamic of the workplace.
 - Being too personable can throw off your interviewer(s) easily; don't overstep your bounds non-verbally or verbally.



VS.



The Interview



- ***Keep private matters to yourself, but don't deceive.***
- Don't expose too much about yourself in an interview—talking about how you like to go to bars, how much fun you have at concerts, or how irritated you sometimes get at your children isn't going to help you succeed.
- Talk about the positives in your personality and some personal stories of how you relate to others – this presents you as a caring, genuine person. They won't want someone who is *too* perfect. Display humanity.
- Don't deceive: Lying is unethical and won't secure you a job (or can get you fired). Be honest, be yourself, but don't be too revealing.

The Interview - Hints



- ***Always refer to your skills set.***
 - By referencing your skills throughout the interview, you constantly reiterate what you're good at, and why it will be beneficial for the company.
 - Your interviewer(s) will achieve a thorough understanding of what you're capable of and will have a good mental picture of what you can do.
 - Your skills set is what you're good at— so make it known!

The Interview - Hints



- ***Answer the question you're being asked; don't digress or ramble.***
- Time is of the essence; answer each question succinctly and accurately– don't give your interviewer(s) an excuse to cut you off mid-sentence.
- If you're asked a specific question, answer that question thoroughly and completely.
- Example: Describe a time you were faced with a serious conflict between two employees in your last position? What steps did you take to solve the problem? How do you stay calm in high-stress situations?
- In this question, you must be sure to answer all three aspects before you're done with your answer. Doing this shows your interviewer(s) that you pay strong attention to detail and are an active listener.

The Interview - Hints



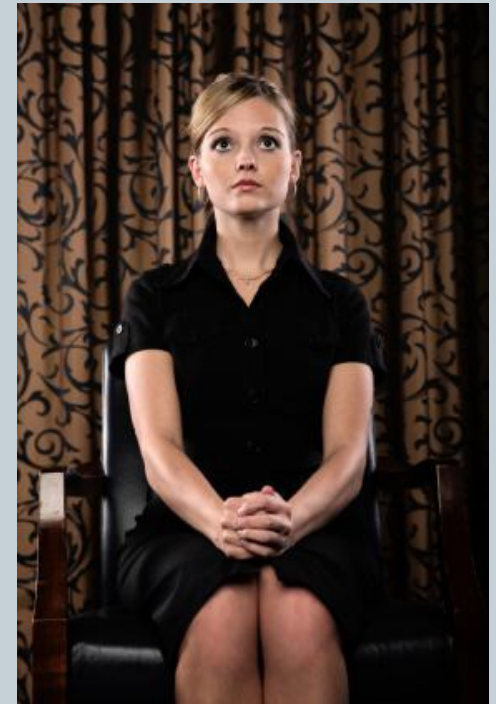
- ***Be honest when you answer questions.***
- Though this was touched on earlier, the importance of being honest and truthful in your answers is paramount.
- Never add in any false stories or situations – all of your information is verifiable, and, if you lie, you will not be asked to fill the position.
- This includes lying on your cover letter or résumé.



The Interview – Non-Verbals



- Pay close attention to your non-verbals!
- Non-verbals account for up to 80 percent of our communication.
- This includes body posture, facial expression, body movement, eye contact, and mouth and tongue movement.
- Some examples: Sitting rigidly gives the sense that you're entirely too nervous or take yourself too seriously.



The Interview – Non-Verbals



- Yawning during an interview gives the obvious indication that you're bored or could be doing something else with your time.
- Blunt yawning is extremely offensive, and can result in an early-ending interview or questions about your commitment to getting this job.



The Interview – Non-Verbals



- Be aware of what your face is “saying.”
- In your mock interview(s), ask your interviewer to watch your facial expressions and give you feedback.
- It’s important to ensure that your facial expression reflects what you’re describing.
- If you’re being asked a question, look attentive and interested– not annoyed or bored.
- If you’re responding to a question about conflict, it’s best to look concerned and stern, as opposed to light-hearted and carefree.



The Interview – More Tips



- Always shake hands with every person who interviews you – before and after. Try and remember their names so you can say, “Nice to meet you, _____” and “Thank you for this opportunity, _____, I look forward to hearing from you.”
- When you are answering questions, it’s important to acknowledge each interviewer (if applicable). This is done by making eye contact with each person as you answer questions, and directing your questions to the group at-large, not just toward one person.
- **THANK** them verbally for their time and consideration; this is a privilege they’re giving you.

The Interview – Activity



Find a partner (or group) and consider the following:

You're about to enter your interview for a job as the Executive Director of Advertising at Condé Nast Publications, a world-renowned corporation that published GQ magazine, Vogue, Vanity Fair, and Details magazine (high-end fashion and celebrity).

Now, ask each other the following general questions:

1. How would you prepare?
2. What would you wear?
3. What would you bring with you?

The Interview – Activity



Answer these questions as if you were in the interview. Listen to how each other answer the following questions, and give feedback.

1. Why do you want to work in this industry?
2. Tell us about yourself.
3. What do you think of your previous boss?
4. Why are you leaving your current role?
5. What motivates you?
6. What salary/hourly pay are you looking for?
7. Why should I hire *you*?

The Interview – Activity



Follow-up:

1. Was there a moment where you didn't know what to say?
2. How did you cope with that situation?
3. What did you reference as you answered?
4. Was this exercise difficult? Why or why not?



Post-Interview



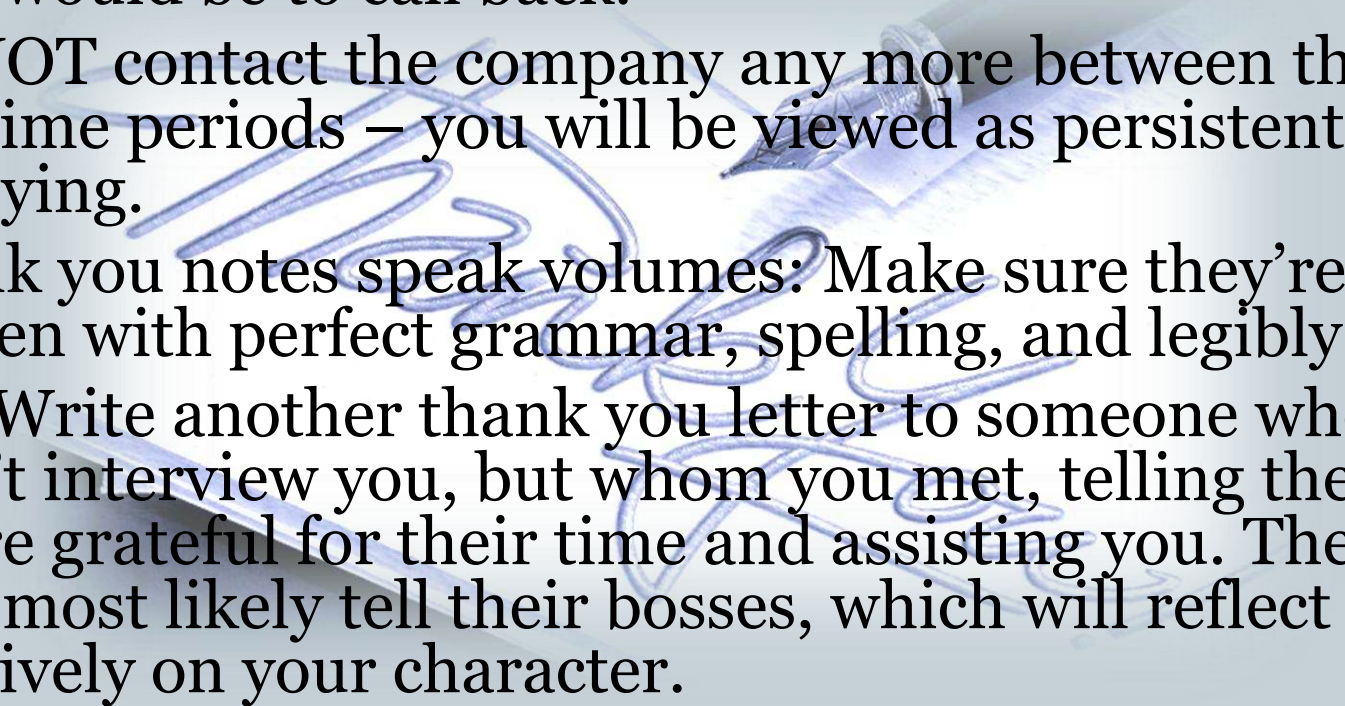
- Thank you letters are the final important step you need to take while waiting to hear about the job.
- The best way is to hand-write each letter, addressed to each member of the interview committee or sole interviewer. They should say that you're grateful for being considered for this position, how much of a pleasure it was to meet people in the business, and a follow-up date:

“I will contact you via telephone on Friday, October 10 at 11:00am to follow-up with you about my interview.”

- This shows your interviewer(s) that you are gracious for their time and are diligent (but not overly-persistent) about getting a position in their company/organization.

Post-Interview

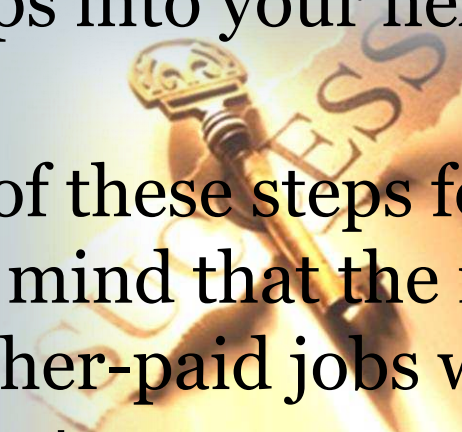


- If the company hasn't come to a decision by the time you call them for your follow-up, ask what a good date and time would be to call back.
 - Do NOT contact the company any more between these two time periods – you will be viewed as persistent and annoying.
 - Thank you notes speak volumes: Make sure they're written with perfect grammar, spelling, and legibly.
 - Tip: Write another thank you letter to someone who didn't interview you, but whom you met, telling them you're grateful for their time and assisting you. They will then most likely tell their bosses, which will reflect positively on your character.
- 

Good Luck!



- Implement these skills and tips into your next interview.
- You won't necessarily use all of these steps for every job you apply for, but keep in mind that the more demanding, powerful and higher-paid jobs will require adherence to all these steps.
- ***Be confident in yourself and be yourself – that's your ultimate key to success!***



Concepts Covered



Pre-interview & Facebook

Cover letter/résumé

Finding an opening

Preparation

Reviewing/Understanding
Job Requirements

Dress to Impress and
What to Bring

Research

The Interview

Post-interview

Need More Help?



- Do you need more help or want to set up a mock-interview? Contact the [Oral Communication Center](#): Located in Columbine Hall, room 312; call 255-4770; e-mail Todd at twaters@uccs.edu.



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