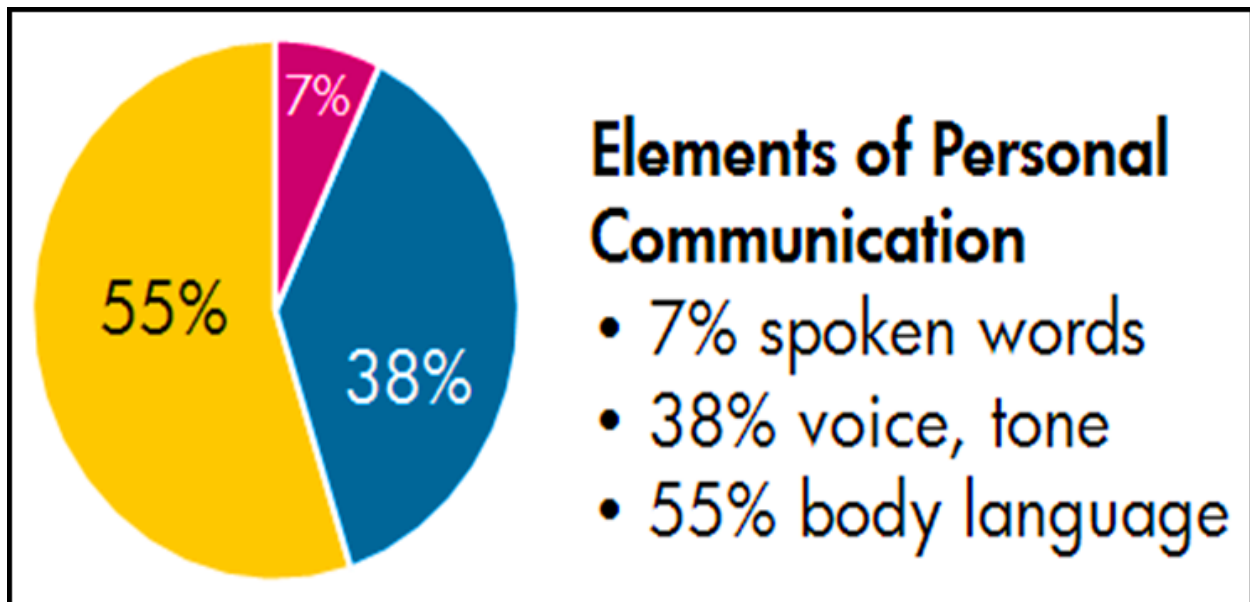


INTERVIEW BASICS



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How Do You Prepare for an Interview?



Check Out Amy Cuddy – Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are

How to Research a Company

- Company Website
- Google Search
- LinkedIn
- Twitter/Facebook
- Glassdoor
- Business, Industry, and Professional Journals
- Informational Interview

Types of Interviews to Anticipate

- Phone Screenings and Phone Interviews
- One-on-One Interviews
- Panel Interviews
- Skype/Facetime/Google Hangouts/Zoom Interviews
- Video Interviews
- Assessments

Tell Me About Yourself...

As it relates to this position:

Things to avoid:

-
-
-

What's Behind the Question?

Employers carefully select the questions they ask. They're trying to determine crucial information. It's important for you to know why they're asking the question...

Activity: Write down why an employer would ask each of the following questions.

1. Why do you want to work here?
2. What do you know about us?
3. Why should I hire you?
4. Why did you leave your last job?
5. If you could turn back time and do it all differently, what would you change?
6. Describe the ideal work environment for you.
7. Tell me about the worst boss you ever had.
8. If you could change one thing about your last job, what would it be?
9. How do you think your coworkers would describe you, both good and bad?

Sample Questions

- 1. Who is your role model?**
 - a. Almost anyone is fair game here, from parents to mentors to famous leaders. Pick someone you truly respect so it is easier to talk at length about them.
- 2. Would you consider yourself more of a team player or an individual contributor?**
 - a. In almost every case, it is important to stress the ability to work with a team over individual contributions, but both are important. While you can certainly function fine on your own, emphasize that you are more of a team player than an individual contributor but can function independently.
- 3. Would you say that your co-workers really liked you?**
 - a. Hopefully your co-workers did like you, in which case elaborate and talk about the positive environment at your workplace. If you had problems with co-workers, avoid or discuss those problems cautiously and focus on whatever positives there were.
- 4. Would you rather be well liked or well respected?**
 - a. There is not a right or wrong answer to this question, although the normal answer may vary based on the position you are applying for. For example, if you are applying for a management position, you may want to emphasize a preference to be well respected, whereas being well like is a crucial trait on the sales side of business.
- 5. What is the most important characteristic of a company that you would want to work for?**
 - a. There is no right or wrong answer to this and you want to keep your answer open ended so that you do not close yourself out to any option. The pre-interview research you have done will help you focus your answer around attributes within the scope of the company you are interviewing with. General characteristics may be reputation, innovation, leadership, growth opportunities and market standing.
- 6. Why did you quit your last job?**
 - a. The interviewer wants to understand the circumstances under which you left your past job. Be honest. If circumstances were less than ideal, avoid getting into a great level of detail. Your prior job simply may not have been a good fit for you.
- 7. Did you have a good relationship with your prior boss?**
 - a. If your answer to this question is yes, then elaborate. A direct “no” is never a good approach to this question. Instead, stay as diplomatic as possible on the issue by stressing what you liked about your prior boss, and do not elaborate on where you had differences. Stay positive.
- 8. Do you consider yourself a risk taker?**
 - a. Being a risk taker can be both good and bad, and deciding how much to emphasize often depends on the position you are going for. Many companies look for risk takers, but you must always know how to take smart risks and not simply gambles. Someone who takes few to no risks may be alright for some positions, but in the business world accepting at least some risk is often a part of the job.

S.T.A.R. Interview Techniques

One of the most popular interview types employers are currently using is called a “Behavioral Interview”. The belief behind the behavioral interview is that your past behavior will predict your future performance at the company you are interviewing with.

One of the best ways to answer behavioral interview questions is to use the STAR technique. Behavioral interview questions usually (but not always) start with one of the following phrases:

1. Give an example...
2. Tell me about a time...
3. Describe to me...
4. When have you demonstrated...

In order to accurately represent your skills, talents and ability to handle different situations while answer interview questions, use the following guide:

S-Situation: Describe the context of the situation

T- Task: What was required of you?

A- Action: What did you actually do?

R- Result: How was the situation resolved?

Why is the STAR system a good interviewing skill?

1. Interviewing is almost like telling many small stories. The STAR technique helps you tell your story in a concise and organized manner.
2. The STAR technique helps you organize your thoughts and explain situations in a way that the interviewer can fully understand the situation you were in and how you handled it.
3. The STAR technique gives you a pathway to express yourself in a clear manner.

STAR Interviewing Practice Example

Question:

Tell me about a time when you have worked with a difficult customer or client.

Situation: When I was working at XYZ organization, there was a customer who was upset with an item they had purchased and they wanted to return it, but had purchased it over 6 months ago and didn't have the original receipt. They were upset because a different store (same company) wouldn't accept it, even though it had not been used and the tags were still on.

Task: I knew that I would need manager approval to return an item that was purchased 6 months ago, so I called up a manager to the front while I started to work on the return process.

Action: I apologized to the customer and told them that I would be glad to see what I could do to get their item returned. I let them know that because they didn't have the original receipt, we wouldn't be able to give them cash back for the product. After calling up the manager for assistance, I asked the customer if they remembered how they purchased the item. They believed it was on their VISA. I was able to assist the customer by looking up the product through their VISA and then refund the proper amount.

Result: As a result of apologizing and speaking in a calm voice, the customer left the store satisfied and thanked me for my customer service.

STAR Practice Form

Practice Question:

S-

T-

A-

R

Common Behavioral Interview Questions

- 1. What is the best job you have ever had in your life?**
 - a. This ideally should be something that relates to the industry or position being sought. Try to talk about things that the interviewer can translate to the job that you are interviewing for. For instance, the paper route that you had as a kid may have contributed to your time management skills because you had to get up at 5 am, perform the job and get to school by 8:00.
- 2. Can you give an example of your problem-solving ability?**
 - a. This is a straight-forward question investigating your problem-solving skills. Give a colorful and specific example of where you used creative thinking and problem solving to find an innovative way to work out an issue.
- 3. Give an example of an obstacle or major problem that you have overcome in your career.**
 - a. Go over an event or a change in direction in your career that you initially had trouble with but that turned into a positive developmental experience.
- 4. Did you ever have to confront someone to get something done?**
 - a. Confronting someone in a positive yet forceful way shows interpersonal and leadership skills. Tell about a time you had to compel employees or fellow team members to carry their share of the weight.
- 5. Can you cite an example where you made a significant contribution to an employer?**
 - a. This question is very relevant because it is asking, in effect, what you can do for the company you are interviewing for. Pick an example in which your employer called on you to complete a project and you went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the job was done well.
- 6. Describe one of your failures and how you handled it?**
 - a. The interviewer does not want to hear the story of some spectacular failure. Rather, describe a minor failure but then turn the question into a positive by showing how you recovered and learned from the experience.
- 7. Have you ever been in a situation where you struggled with another employee?**
 - a. Always remain positive when discussing former bosses or co-workers. Think about a time you had a disagreement with a co-worker and describe how you negotiated and came to a mutually satisfactory resolution.
- 8. Have you ever lost your temper with a co-worker?**
 - a. Unless you truly have anger-management problems and feel compelled to share them, state that you normally get along with your co-workers but that as in any workplace, there are times that you have been frustrated by them. Tell how you dealt with the situation in a positive manner.

- 9. Can you give me an example of when you went above and beyond the call of duty?**
- a. Your greatest accomplishments and measurable achievements are important. Ideally, this example should be something specific and translates to a quality needed to succeed in this position.
- 10. Describe an improvement to something you personally initiated?**
- a. Go into detail about one of your greatest accomplishments, making sure it was something you yourself initiated. Show that you can recognize issues and identify where there is room for improvement.
- 11. Have you ever been reprimanded for something that you did wrong on the job?**
- a. Even if you truly have not been reprimanded at work, discuss a time in which your boss was less than satisfied with the work you had done or directed you to alter and improve an already completed project. A good response would be “while I have never been severely reprimanded for errors on the job, I certainly have gotten criticism and suggestions for improvement. I always appreciate feedback as long as its intention is to help me do my job better.

Strengths & Weaknesses

What are your strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

Formula:

List a Strength



Explain how your Strength becomes a weakness when overused.



Share the strategies you employ to balance out that weakness

What Questions Should You Ask?

Make sure you've prepared questions ahead of time. Only plan to ask 2-3 questions but prepare a list of 5-7. A good interviewer will answer a lot of your questions during the interview.

Your questions should demonstrate that you've researched the company. Never ask questions that can be answered by reading the job description of company webpage.

Note: Don't ask about money or time off until a job offer has been extended!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Interview Checklist

Here is a reminder list for your next interview.

- Do your homework! Research the company, the field and the people you will be interviewing with. Be prepared!
- Dress professionally for the job
- Use the interviewer's name at least once during the interview
- Give a firm handshake, smile, and make eye contact
- Use good volume and a pleasant voice tone and be sure facial expressions, mannerisms, and movements are appropriate
- Maintain good posture
- Exhibit self-confidence (as in well prepared and practiced)
- Be prepared to give short and specific examples of when you used any of the skills listed in the job description
- Give skill statements using the STAR technique (think story)
- Give appropriate responses
- Have several questions ready about the job or company to ask the interviewer
- Thank the interviewer and express an interest in the job
- Ask for the next step – “When do you expect you’ll be making a decision?”
- Ask for a business card
- Give a handshake at the end
- Follow up with a thank you
- DO NOT ask about salary or benefits until you been offered the job

Additional Tough Interview Questions

1. In prior performance reviews, what were your opportunities for improvement?
2. What are your greatest accomplishments so far?
3. Describe yourself in three words.
4. Are you interested in managing or leading others? Why or why not?
5. How do you define success?
6. Have you ever been fired (laid off, outplaced, etc.)? Explain the circumstances.
7. If you gave your last boss a performance review, what would he or she need to change?
8. Do you prefer to work alone or with others? Why?
9. Describe a difficult situation or task that you had to deal with, and how you did so.
10. How do you feel about travel or relocation?
11. Is there anything that would physically or mentally prevent you from performing this job?
12. What other organizations are you pursuing, or are pursuing you?
13. How would you describe your personality?
14. How do you feel about drug tests?
15. What are your goals for five years and ten years out?
16. Do you prefer a job with clearly defined tasks, or one that is more self-directed?
17. Do you prefer to work for a man or a woman? Why?
18. If you could change three things about yourself, what would they be?
19. What motivates you?
20. Do you think that people are basically lazy and need to be pushed to perform?
21. Have you ever had to fire someone? Explain why and how you did it.

22. If you could start your own business, what business would it be?
23. Do you consider yourself to be more of a people person or a taskmaster?
24. What qualities do you think are necessary to be a leader?
25. How long do you anticipate being in this job, or with our organization?
26. Do you believe that success depends more on what you know or on whom you know?
27. How do you perform under stress?
28. How do you keep current in your field?
29. What more would you like to know about the job, or about this organization?
30. How do you think your bosses would describe you, both good and bad?

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