Interviewing Skills Preparation Workshop

Bren School Career Development Program
Winter 2014
Key Things to Think About Now

Even before you have an interview scheduled, you should begin identifying:

- your top strengths
- your key accomplishments
- those things that will set you apart from 90% of the other applicants
Have You Effectively Prepared?

What are 2-3 things have we suggested you do to get ready for an interview?

What do you bring to the interview and how early should you arrive?

What are a couple things that are important to do when you arrive at the company before the interview?

What are most employers looking for?
Miscellaneous Tips

Stick to your routine

Mint, not gum

Know where you’re going

Have their phone number

Portfolio and 2 pens

Turn your phone off

Everyone is interviewing you

If they offer you a drink, accept their offer

Be at your best
This section will include some practice interview questions to get you thinking about how you might respond should you be asked these questions during your interviews.
“Tell us a little bit about yourself.”
Suggestions for Question #1

Be strategic when deciding a starting point, but ultimately it needs to lead to why you’re interviewing with the company.

If possible, use examples to bring your response to life.
“Why do you want to work for this organization/company?”
Suggestion for Question #2

It’s important to show that you’ve done your research about the organization!

One key hint to answering this question successfully is to try and bring it back to you/your fit with the organization and the job description.
“Tell me about a time when you had more to do than you could possibly handle. What did you do in this situation?”
You’ve probably had ample opportunity to develop time management skills while at Bren, so you can bring in some examples from your experiences from here (or from previous jobs/positions you’ve held).
“Like everyone, I’m sure at some point you have made a mistake. Give me an example of a time when this happened to you. How did you deal with the situation?”
Suggestion for Question #4

Make sure that the “mistake” example you use didn’t cost money and didn’t hurt anyone!

- How did you fix the mistake?
- Dave’s workshop example
“What three words would people use to describe you?”

(or)

“Name three strengths you would bring to this position.”
“What attributes of yourself do you think could be improved?”

(Also often worded as...)

“What is your biggest weakness?”
Suggestions for Question #6

This is asked because believe it or not, many interviewees will provide honest responses.

Interviewee example (“Jumping into things…”)

Okay to side-step it as long as you are authentic.

Assistant Dean interview example

Have two weaknesses in mind just in case they assume your first response is a canned response.

Sample responses online
“What did you dislike about your last job?”

(Similar to...)

“Why are you leaving your current position?”
What did you dislike about your last job?

- Try not to draw on office politics or culture because you don’t want to appear negative.
- Don’t focus on a function that might be a responsibility in this new position.

Why are you leaving your job?

- Focus on the positive! What does this new position offer?
“What are your specific goals for the next 5 years? 10 years?”
You need to use your best judgment with this question.

- Sometimes its in your best interest to be vague; other times if you know the company’s promotional structure, you can be more specific.

- Problem with being too specific is you can run the risk of coming off as either too ambitious or not ambitious enough.
“Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. What made the situation difficult, and how did you deal with it?”
Don’t focus on the other person, as you don’t want to come off as someone who doesn’t get along well with others. Instead, focus on S.O.A.R-ing!

Remember, past behavior is often an indicator of future behavior.
“What salary are you hoping to make?”
“Why should we hire you?”
Suggestion for Question #11

Take the focus off of you; it is about what you can do for the company!

Sell yourself by touching on those skills, experiences, or traits that you have that align with the job description/company’s mission/needs.
“Do you have any questions for us?”
Suggestion for Question #12

- It is always impressive if your questions can somehow relate to something that came up in the interview.

- Consider holding off on asking any questions that make you seem like less of a “low maintenance” employee or vague questions that can be interpreted in different ways.
Common Types of Interviews

Phone
Skype
Standard
Resume
Behavioral
Case/Scenario/Test
Brain teasers
Sequential
Have You Effectively Followed Up?

What is a good close for the interview?

How do you follow-up afterwards to stand out?

When should you check in with the company?
Resources and Things to Remember

Terminology

“Homework” vs. “Assignment” or “Project”

Responses magnified

Both ends of the spectrum (good or bad)
How to Relax

How do you relax?

See mistakes as opportunities

Make it fun

Prepare, prepare, prepare!

Know what to expect

Develop a routine - what works for you?

Exercise (yoga, music, meditation)

Break the ice early

Simplify things

Take the focus off of you
MOST IMPORTANTLY:

Know that there are many opportunities and you are very qualified for a number of jobs.

Any questions?