

Interviewing Tips

During and after college, you'll find yourself needing to interview for a number of opportunities like scholarships, internships, jobs, or graduate school. Here are a few tips that will help you succeed:

First Impressions Matter

Get a good night's sleep and dress neatly for the interview. Your attire doesn't have to be fancy, but you should choose something conservative and appropriate for business. Demonstrate confidence with a firm handshake and by making eye contact when you meet your interviewer.

Know Your Audience

Know the interviewer and/or the organization. Do some homework on the background of your interviewer through LinkedIn and other professional networks. Read the organization's web site. You might even review the prolog in the company's annual report if it's publicly traded.

Be ready to ask meaningful questions that will demonstrate you've researched the company and are serious about your potential future as a part of it. Here are some examples:

- What is the training program for new employees?
- What would be my responsibilities? What future roles in the company might this job lead to?
- How long have you been with the company and what is it about the company that makes you stay?
- What do you see as the company's biggest market opportunities in the next 3-5 years?
- How would you describe the culture at your company?
- What are the next steps in the [hiring] process?
- What are typical career paths at the company and what career development opportunities (like leadership or skills training) are offered?

Know Yourself

Make sure you can communicate how well you've prepared and what you have to offer. Think through how your life and college experiences demonstrate your character and/or fit with your desired career. What stories will you use to convey your drive, enthusiasm and/or leadership qualities? Rehearse your answers to "typical" questions, like those listed below. Use your experiences to provide emphasis for your answers through story-telling.

- How has your college experience prepared you for this opportunity?
- What are your career goals in the next 5 years?
- Why did you choose your major?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Describe a challenge you've faced and how you handled it? Would you do anything differently?
- Describe a risk you've taken and talk about why it was risky and what you gained (or lost) by taking the risk.
- What makes a great leader and why?
- Who do you most admire and why?

Practice

Have an experienced interview (an advisor, professor, etc) conduct a mock interview with you from start to finish and use their feedback to improve your skills.

Follow-up!

Make sure you have contact information for all of your interviewers before you leave, including email and physical addresses. Follow-up right away with a thank you e-mail or letter. A hand-written note will make you stand out from a crowded field of emails. In your note, you can reaffirm your interest in the position (or scholarship) and mention the qualities you have that make you a good fit.