INTERVIEWING 101: BE THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB

Interviewing is one of life’s stressful situations. Yet what is an interview but a conversation between you and one or more people who may want to hire you to solve their problems? It is also your opportunity to figure out if this is a good role with a solid company that will move you further towards your goals.

**Before**

- Prepare: Know your value proposition/differentiators and how you will solve the specific organization’s problems.
- Review the job description and note not only what it takes to do the job but who will fit the environment. Match their needs with your strengths and prepare specific examples of you using your strongest skills.
- Review the website and Google the organization; with the wealth of online information, there’s no excuse not to know key financial performance figures, products, and some information about employee culture (see www.glassdoor.com).
- Plan the particulars depending on whether it is a phone, virtual/video, or an in-person interview.
  - For video or in-person, plan how you will dress professionally; see guidelines in the Career Office.
  - For a virtual or phone format, you may prepare a script or notes. When setting up for a video interview, be aware of the camera angle and what will be seen, including you and the background. Practice using the Interview Stream tool.
- Who is the interviewer? Find out the person’s role; search on LinkedIn or Google. If it is a group interview, find out the roles and look up bios; many organizations list their leaders on the website.
- Logistics: if virtual, make sure you have the correct dial-in information. If in-person, know where you are going and how long it takes to get there. Have a printed back-up set of directions if your GPS satellite goes out of range. Arrive ten minutes early!
- Bring extra copies of your resume in case you have a group interview or are treated to a “meet and greet” in the office.

**During**

The skill of the interviewer varies; you don’t know what they will ask. The best preparation is to answer questions with specific examples and be sure to include results.

- The first question might be “Tell me about yourself.” Your response should be current highlights and not a chronological history. Example: “I’m a Paul College student graduating in 2017 with an Option in Management. In my internship at XX, I used my strengths in Y and Z. I look forward to talking with you about how I can use this skill at your firm.”
- Tell concise stories to illustrate your strengths. You may be asked “Tell me about a time when…” Have an example ready for each key qualification listed by the company that includes the challenge you faced, the action you took, and the result (C.A.R).
- Prepare substantive questions to ask the interviewer based on your research. Avoid asking about benefits, work schedule and location, etc. Also, don’t ask about data like revenues when you can research that information. Do ask about the role and its interaction with other groups, future plans for innovation, and criteria for success in the role.
- Manage nervousness by breathing, pausing briefly to reflect on your response (it’s OK!), and taking notes (something to do…).
- Be positive in your language; e.g., never bad mouth a current or former employer.

**After**

The interview is over but your interaction with the interviewer/organization is not. Thank you notes or emails are a differentiator and allow you to emphasize your strengths for the job and interest in pursuing the job.

- Before the interview closes, ask about next steps such as when you will hear back. If you want the job, tell this to the interviewer.
- A hand written thank you note to the hiring manager or HR Recruiter differentiates you. For groups, emailing each person is fine.