

# Preparing for An Interview

## Behavioral Interviewing

Many employers use behavioral interviewing for screening candidates. Behavioral interview questions ask you to describe situations you have experienced, explain how you handled the situation, and share the results you achieved.

The theory behind behavioral interviewing is that the best indicator of future behavior is past performance.

An effective method to use in answering behavioral questions is the **S-T-A-R** statement, where you “tell your story” by using this outline:

**1. Situation/Task (S/T)** – Describe the situation you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. Be specific.

**2. Action (A)** – Describe the actions you took to resolve the situation or to accomplish the task.

**3. Result/outcome (R)** – Share the results of your efforts--what you accomplished or learned. Quantify your results if possible.

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Interviewing will be less stressful if you are prepared. Here are some tips to make sure you are ready before you walk into the interview.

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

### Know Yourself

This is your chance to tell the employer why you are a great person for the internship or job. You have to know yourself to sell yourself!

You need to be ready to discuss your:

#### Related Skills

Know the specific job requirements and be prepared to talk about your ability to meet them. Practice talking about your abilities in areas all employers look for such as interpersonal skills, teamwork, communications and analytical skills, and leadership ability.

#### Related Experience

Again, look at the specific position and explain how your experience, whether paid or unpaid, fits with the job for which you are interviewing.

#### Academic Experience

Target relevant courses and projects and be ready to show

how they relate to the position.

#### Resume

Many questions can come directly from your resume, so know it inside and out.

#### Interest

Employers hire people who **want** to do the job and who **want** to work in their organization. Your task is to show them that you want the job.

#### Know About the Employer

Recruiters say that the major downfall in most interviews is the lack of knowledge about the potential employer's organization.

You should know all you can about the organization.

Some things to be sure you are familiar with:

- Interviewer's name and title
- Demographics of organization
- Present and future financial status
- Recent press coverage
- Organization's goals, structure, culture and values
- Product lines or services
- Customers and competitors
- How products are marketed

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- Potential new markets, products or services
- Programs that support the community

A good resource for information is the company website. We also have links under web resources on the Career Center website that can help.

## Practice, Practice, Practice!

The more you practice, the better you will be. A videotaped mock interview at the Elon Career Center is the best way to identify areas where you need to improve.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

### What to Wear on the Interview

#### General Guidelines:

- Dress Conservatively: It is better to be overdressed than underdressed.
- Wear subdued colors, especially in a corporate environment. Some fields may allow for a less conservative look; do your research so you are dressed appropriately.
- Go lightly on or without cologne.
- Wear a neat haircut, polish your shoes, and be impeccably clean.

#### Guidelines for Men:

- Wear a two-piece suit, dress shirt and tie with wingtip or plain shoes in a dark color with over-the-calf socks.
- Keep jewelry simple -- watch, class or signet ring; no earrings, necklaces or bracelets.
- Maintain a well-groomed look.

#### Guidelines for Women:

- Wear a classic suit, blazer and skirt, pantsuit, or dress jacket with closed toe pumps in a subdued color with conservative hosiery.
- Keep jewelry simple - suit pin, strand of pearls or gold necklace, one pair of small earrings, watch, and ring.
- Maintain a natural, well-groomed look with minimum makeup - use neutral colors on nails and eyes.

### Interviewing Tips and Techniques

- Take copies of your resume, a list of references, and questions you would like answered, placed in a professional binder.
- Arrive a few minutes early and find a restroom for a last minute check on your appearance.

- Be polite to everyone you meet.
- Use good body language: firm handshake, good eye contact, erect posture. Smile!
- Speak clearly and use proper grammar.
- Answer questions with examples and stories.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Evaluate the interview to help you prepare for future interviews.
- Send a thank you letter or email to the interviewer within 24 hours.
- Complete any requested follow-up from the employer in a timely manner.

For additional assistance, contact the Career Center and set up an appointment. We are here to help!