“How to Nail Any Type of Interview”

Summer Seminar Series for McCormick Graduate Students
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Objectives

- To better understand the interview process: the before, during, and after
- To be aware of the appropriate interviewing behaviors
- To learn about different interview strategies
- To practice interviewing skills
Goals of the Interview

Goals of the Candidate (you):

- To obtain information about the job/organization.
- To communicate important information about yourself.
- To make a positive impression upon the employer.

Goals of the Interviewer:

- To promote the organization and attract the best candidate.
- To assess if qualifications match the job requirements.
- To determine candidate fit with the organization and staff.
Skills/Qualities Sought

- Ability to learn
- Technical Skills
- Communication skills
- Critical thinking
- Personal management
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Organization Skills
- Motivation
- Problem Solving
- Maturity
- Professional Judgment

NOTE: Know the specific technical skills for your areas of interest!
Before the Interview

• **Research** the industry/company

• **Identify** reasons for wanting to work or having **interest** in that industry/company

• **Recall situations** that show favorable behaviors/actions

• **Analyze** the skills the employer is seeking

• **Practice** answering common interview questions

• **Prepare questions** to ask the employer

• **Obtain the appropriate attire** for the interview
Company/Industry Research

Learn more about the industry
- Wetfeet.com
- Vault.com
- Factiva.com
- Informational Interviews & Networking

Learn about the company
- Crain’s Business
- Glassdoor.com
- Company Website
- Job Description
Types of Interviews

Traditional
• Interviewer ask open ended questions that often come from your resume.

Behavioral
• Based upon skills and competencies.

Technical
• Used to assess candidates for technical or specialist positions (Jobs in IT, Engineering / Science)

Case
• Commonly asked in consulting interviews. Interviewer will ask you a case and ask you to solve the problem.
Traditional Interviews

- Less common now due to popularity of behavioral and case interviews
- Tend to focus on hypothetical situations, management style
Tell me about yourself...

A common traditional question.

**Importance:**
- First Impression still malleable
- Tone of interview
- Provide depth to resume
- Insight into who you are

Share information the employer may not already know and present it in a way that connects to the position you are seeking.
Behavioral Interviewing

“The best predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations.”

*Use the STAR technique*

- **S**ituation, or
- **T**ask, leading to the
- **A**ctions taken or not taken by the applicant, and the
- **R**esults or changes caused by these actions.
Behavioral Based Questions

• Tell me about a time that you worked on a team based project?

• Tell me about a time in which you received constructive feedback and how did you handle it.

• Tell me about a project that you initiated.
Technical Interviewing

• Questions asked about specific technical activities related to one’s work

• May require candidates to solve actual technical problems they face in the workplace
Technical Question

Write a function to print all the possible permutations of a string. Now, modify the algorithm to discard duplicates.

Below is a sample implementation that prints all possible permutations of a string:

```c
#include <iostream.h>
#include <string.h>

const int MAX_STR = 20;

void CopyStr(char *s2, char *s1, int i)
{
    for (int j = 0, k = 0, len = strlen(s2); j < len; j++) {
        if (i != j) {
            s1[k++] = s2[j];
        }
    }
}

Source: Jeeve Technologies LLC
```
Case Interviewing

It is a simulation, or role-play, where the interviewer is the client who has all the information

Analytics

• Provide structure to unstructured problems.
• Break problems into components.
• Apply transparent, logical thinking to each component.
• Synthesize discussion into solution.

Poise

• Appear excited by the kinds of issues consultants face.
• Are not intimidated by process or problems.
• Assimilate information quickly and effectively.
• Ask insightful questions.

Source: Goizueta Business School / BCG
Think like a consultant

1. The team has been asked to look at a number of issues that the client is considering, including whether or not to start a customer loyalty programme. In helping the client decide on this issue, which two of the following arguments, if true, would you favour introducing such a loyalty programme?
   A. The client has increased sales by 15% in the last year.
   B. It will lead to an increase in revenues with no significant cost increase.
   C. Loyalty programmes have successfully been introduced at retail electronics chains.
   D. It will allow customer behaviour data to be collected.
   E. It will benefit the partner companies of the loyalty programme.

Correct answers:

1. B and D
   B. It will lead to an increase in revenues with no significant cost increase.
   D. It will allow customer behaviour data to be collected.

Source: McKinsey
Potential Case Question

Q. How many razor-blades are sold in the United States every year?

• Where to start?
  • Population of USA = 300 million
• Break population down
  • Males = 50% of 300 million = 150 million
  • Assume only males 18+ use blades = 75% of 150 million = 110 million
• Determine Usage
  • Assuming that, 70% use shaving blades (others go to barber, don’t shave etc), users = 80 million
  • Assuming users shave once in 2 days on average = 40 million shaves/ day
  • Assuming one blade is good for 2 shaves on average = 20 million blades/ day
  • Blades sold per year = 365 x 20 million = 7.3 billion
Asking Good Questions

- Prepare questions before the interview
- They should be thoughtful and relevant
- Address the position, skills, qualifications, etc…
- Avoid salary benefits and/or personal topics
Additional Tips

- Practice (mock interviewing)
- Pre-Interview & Greeting
- About Your Body Language
5 Common Pitfalls in Interviews

• Not able to articulate why you are a good candidate for the position.
• Candidate doesn’t know why he/she wants the job.
• Candidate doesn’t know anything about the company.
• Candidate doesn’t have any questions to ask.
• The interviewee is not personable, enthusiastic, or conversational.

Source: Vault.com
Follow-Up

• Send a thank you letter/email
• Maintain appropriate communication
• Understand recruiting timeline
Q & A