Interview Strategies

Knowlton Student Services
February 24, 2016
Goals and Expectations

• Different types of interviews

• Preparation and tips

• How to answer standard questions

• Best practices, experiences and lessons learned

• Ask questions. If you need me to clarify, just ask!
Types of Interviews

- Traditional: face to face
- On the phone
- Skype
Pre-Interview Prep

• Identify the needs of the employer - Do your research!
  - field of practice/trends, position requirements, organization goals/history, people you might meet

• Practice common interview questions with someone

• Use your resources! Career Connection

• Write down your answers, but don’t try to memorize

• Record yourself so you can see your mannerisms and note if you say “um” a lot

• Practice your introduction and handshake
Pre-Interview Prep

• If in close proximity, do a dry run to the location of the interview so you know exactly where to go

• Being 15 minutes early = BEING ON TIME!

• Get a good night’s sleep!

• Bring 5 copies of your resume, a list of references, other required materials; invest in a nice pad folio and thank you cards(to send later).

• Make sure your clothes are clean, pressed and ready to go.
  – Men: bring an extra tie;
  – Women: extra pair of pantyhose if you wear a skirt/dress.
  – Both: leave a lint brush in your car and have mints ready
Pre-Interview Prep

Standard Questions

• Tell me about yourself.

• What are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?

• Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

• Why do you want this position?

• Tell me about a time when you...
  – Worked as part of a group – what was your role?
  – Were in charge of a project – how did you lead?
  – Faced an obstacle – how did you overcome it?
  – Had difficulty working with someone – how did you work together?
  – Had to perform multiple duties at once – how did you multitask?
Tips for Phone Interviews

• Purpose: usually for first cut or because of distance

• Preparation: Practice on the phone with a friend

• Find a quiet space with no distractions

• Set up your space like it’s a face-to-face interview

• Dress up to get you in the mindset of an interview

• Speak clearly

• Pause and ask for clarification or to repeat a question

• Take notes
Tips for Skype Interviews

• Purpose: interviewing for jobs out of town

• Practice with someone to familiarize yourself with the technology and make sure it’s working ok

• Dress for an interview

• Turn off your phone

• Look into the camera and not at yourself

• Speak clearly

• Be aware of your mannerisms and surroundings....people can see you

• Take notes

Forbes Magazine, 2011
CNN, 2011
General Tips for Interviews

- Mind Your Manners
- Your interview starts when you check in!
- SMILE when introducing yourself
- Be YOURSELF
- Be CONFIDENT
- Show that you are passionate about what you do, the position and the company, but be genuine - don’t be fake or dishonest
- Multitask: engage, take notes and ask questions
- Maintain eye contact
General Tips cont.

- Address your answers directly to the speaker, but engage all participants with your gaze
- Questions the employer will ask will address your skills, accomplishments, management and leadership – Be prepared for these standard questions!
- Try to turn every answer into a positive
- Don’t speak negatively about anyone
- Come prepared with questions
- Don’t ask about salary until you have an offer
- Remember that you are interviewing them too

NYU Wagner, 2012
Harvard Kennedy School, 2011
Post-Interview

• Thank everyone in the room

• Your interview is not over till you have left the building, ended the call, etc.

• Send a follow up thank you card or email ASAP

• You can contact the employer for updates after a reasonable time (ask their timeline at the interview)

• If you don’t get an offer, you can follow up to ask what you could improve on and show you are still interested in future opportunities
Do’s and Don’ts of Interviewing

Do:

• Sit up straight
• Be confident in your abilities, but not arrogant
• Be polite to all those you encounter—especially administrative/program assistants
• Have well thought out answers—it is okay if you need a few minutes to formulate your thoughts
Do’s and Don’ts Continued

Don’t:

• Fidget with jewelry, pens or watches
• Limit talking with your hands—place them on the table or your lap if you are a hand talker
• Slouch in your chair
• Say “Um” or “Like”
• LIE about your past or current experiences
Best Practices

• Keep the focus on what you can offer the organization

• Be Engaged. “Most candidates feel the need to fill every quiet moment with facts about themselves and this can lead to offering too much information”

• Try not to say anything offensive. “This happens all the times and it’s shocking, Avoid talking about controversial issues: gender, race, sexual preference, politics and religion.”

• Try to make connections with the interviewers
Questions/Comments?

• Do you have any experiences/advice you’d like to share with the group?
• Questions?
Announcements & Reminders

Career Day Crash Course | Monday, February 29 Kn 178

Knowlton Career Day | Thursday, March 3

Undergraduate Professional Development Plan - TBD

Transitions: Life After College – TBD

Resume Review Appointments – Ongoing

*Other needs for workshops/career services?