



INTERVIEW & NETWORKING EVENT PREPARATION GUIDE

Provided by

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KEY STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PREPARATION

BE PREPARED & POLISHED! BELOW ARE IMPORTANT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW OR NETWORKING EVENT WITH ANY EMPLOYER.

- 1. Gather as much information as you can about the organization.** The information you should research can be found on the organization's website or annual report if the company is publicly traded. Learn the following:
 - What products or services do they offer?
 - Where do they distribute their products and/or services?
 - Who are their primary customers?
 - Who are their primary competitors?
 - What is their mission? Vision? What do you know about their culture?
 - Google the company; look for news updates that might not be on their website.
- 2. Research if there are any internships or job opportunities currently being offered by the organization.** Specific facts you should learn:
 - Review the internship or job description thoroughly
 - Know what role this position plays in the hiring manager's department.
 - Apply for the position electronically if possible.
 - Determine who will be at the event representing the organization?
 - Try to find and connect with those the individuals via LinkedIn.
 - Learn their names carefully.
- 3. Identify how your academic courses can benefit the company.**
 - For instance, if this is an Accounting internship and you have just completed a major project in your Audit class, learn how you can "transfer" what you learned in the project to the internship.
 - If you have work samples from a previous internship, take them with you.
 - If other students have interned there before, contact them for information and input - be resourceful!

4. Google yourself — what will they learn about you?

- If you are not on LinkedIn, develop a well-written profile and join!
- You will need a professional “headshot,” no “Facebook” style photos.
- Post your resume on your profile.
- Consider updating security settings on your Facebook account so that previous photos posted by friends will not be visible.
- Manage your social media well to avoid any unfavorable images.
- There are numerous resources to help you build a great profile! [Review this article on LinkedIn Profiles.](#)

5. Prepare for the interview or networking event.

- Have multiple copies of your resumes, suggest 15 – 20 for a large event so that you can distribute to those you meet as appropriate.
- Purchase a portfolio/padfolio to carry the extra copies of your résumé. (approx. \$15)
- Prepare and practice your “elevator or personal branding speech” so that you can introduce yourself easily.
- Be cordial and pleasant to everyone you meet.
- Turn off your cell phone! Do not text or answer calls during the interview or event!
- Practice the STAR method
- Develop 5 – 10 questions that you want to ask the interviewer. Review the job description carefully to help you draft your questions. They don’t have to be tough or complex, but it shows you did your homework and want to engage with the interviewer.
 - What have you liked most about working at ____ [insert company name]
 - Will this position allow me to work on projects involving _____ [insert details from job posting/description]
 - What do you think the next 6 – 12 months will bring to the company?
 - What projects have other interns completed successfully in the past

6. Identify what you will wear

- Have it ready by being clean and wrinkle free.
- Shoes should be polished and appropriate.
- If the event or interview is at the end of the day and you have class or work, prepare and plan adequate time to change / freshen up before arriving at the event.
- Wear the correct “professional dress” even if the event states that it is business casual. Err on the side of being overdressed, not underdressed.

7. Get the logistics down!

- Review the invitation and be sure you know where you are going.
- Take a trial run the day before and drive by so you’re sure where it is located.
- Research parking options.
- Arrive 5 – 10 minutes before the event. If you are on time, you are late!

8. Post Interview or Networking Event

When the event or interview is over, that day, send a well-written and proofed thank you email to your interviewer (s) / individuals that you met at the event.

- If possible, follow-up with a handwritten note.
- Be sure to spell all names correctly—even if you must call and ask the receptionist to help you!
- Use courtesy titles until they indicate you can use first names.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NETWORKING EVENTS

- Employers use networking events to get a more informal perspective of candidates. Often, this type of event is a way for them to “advance candidates” in their recruiting process.
- They will be observing how you:
 - Interact with others—are you confident?
 - Present yourself—are you comfortable as you introduce yourself?
 - Answer questions about your skills, your classes, and their organization.
 - Do you know the company’s products?
 - Do you know where they operate? Are they global? If so, what countries do they operate in currently?
- Don’t expect that “winging it” will get you the results you want.
- Make the most of this opportunity to present your talents and skills to your advantage!
- Be prepared, be polished, and be professional and you will feel good about your time at the event!

VIRTUAL INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

Many companies today perform virtual interviews. Preparation for this type of interview is just as important as preparing for face-to-face interviews

- Check your surroundings – neat, clean and professional
- Do not have any distracting visuals in the background – TV, music, conversations or pets
- Do a test run with a family member or friend to make sure your camera and volume work properly.
- Dress just as if you were going in for a face-to-face interview.
- Make sure you are alone.
- Turn off all electronics – email, cell phone, TV, music, etc.
- Look directly at the camera so that you have a positive view from the receiver’s side

INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP CHECKLIST

- Send follow-up thank you email within 24 hours. Be concise, courteous and proof carefully
- Check spelling and titles of all names
- Make sure you are sending notes to the correct company/representative
- If you have not heard from the employer within one week to ten (10) days, a follow up phone call is appropriate
 - Practice your phone message carefully before you place the call – you may have to leave a voicemail, so be prepared.
- Keep a journal of the employers you interviewed with and your correspondences with them. This may help you in the future
- Maintain an electronic file of all your correspondence with your employers. A hard copy file can be helpful as well for quick reference.

THE STAR METHOD

[The STAR method](#) is an interview technique that gives you a straightforward format you can use to answer [behavioral interview questions](#) or any other kinds of questions where you need to tell a story

- **Situation:** Set the scene and give the necessary details of your example.
- **Task:** Describe what your responsibility was in that situation.
- **Action:** Explain exactly what steps you took to address it.
- **Result:** Share what outcomes your actions achieved.

COMMON BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS YOU CAN ANSWER USING STAR

Here are some of the most common behavioral questions you might get in an interview and can use the STAR method for:

- [Give me an example of a time you had a conflict with a coworker.](#)
- [Tell me about a time you made a mistake.](#)
- [How do you handle pressure at work or school?](#)
- [Tell me about your proudest professional accomplishment.](#)
- [Describe a time you failed and how you dealt with it.](#)
- [Tell me about a time you went above and beyond.](#)

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Strong interview results are based on strong interview preparation!

PERSONAL & WORK EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Were in a leadership role or had a project you were most proud of.
- What are your career goals and where do you see yourself in the next five years?
- Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult individual such as a supervisor, co-worker, or peer.
- Describe how you solved a problem at your current job or internship. What were the outcomes?
- Tell me about your teamwork skills and how you use them in your current internship.
- Tell me about a mistake that you made in your current job.
 - At the end of your answer on this one, always include “*What I learned from this was we all make mistakes and it's what we learn from them that matters*”
- What is your best quality? What is your worst quality? Be honest but positive for example:
 - *My best quality is that I can multi-task well when I'm working on a big project.*
 - *My worst quality is that I'm a perfectionist at times. I've learned that sometimes time or budgets may not allow that type of detail, so I try to be sure to review the project carefully at the beginning and plan carefully now.*
- Can we go over your resume?

ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL INTEREST QUESTIONS

- Why did you choose your major or area of work?
- What activities are you involved in outside of school/work?
- What were your favorite/least favorite classes? Why?
- What did you enjoy most about your last job?
- How would your professor or past supervisors describe you?
- Describe your research experience.
- What has had the most impact on your academic or professional interests?
- Have you ever resigned from a job or project? Why
- Have you ever worked while attending school?
- What was the most challenging part of your educational/work?

INTERNSHIP & JOB-RELATED QUESTIONS

- Why are you interested in this job/interview?
- What do you know about our organization?
- What is our mission statement?
- Why do you think you are qualified for this position?
- What do you know about the issues faced by our organization/constituents/members?
- Do you have any ideas on how to solve or address some of the issues our organization may face?
- What type of work environment do you prefer?
- What makes you unique from the other candidates?

INTERVIEW & NETWORKING EVENT WORKSHEET

PREPARE FOR YOUR INTERVIEW OR NETWORKING EVENT BY COMPLETING THE FOLLOWING WORKSHEET ON EACH COMPANY YOU ARE INTERVIEWING WITH OR MIGHT MEET AT THE NETWORKING EVENT.

Company: _____

Division: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Location: _____

Mission & Vision Statement: _____

Products & Services: _____

Primary Customer: _____

Primary Competitor: _____

Recent News Articles: _____

Names of Hiring Manager(s) or Interviewer(s) + Notes on their background or from their LinkedIn profile

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

INTERVIEW QUESTION PREPARATION WORKSHEET

USE THE QUESTIONS BELOW TO PREPARE YOUR ANSWERS FOR COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

Tell me about yourself.	Examples of innovation/thinking “outside the box”
Why are you interested in this company?	A time when your work was criticized
Strengths	Qualities you look for in a supervisor
Weaknesses	Examples of ability to multitask deadlines
Short Term Goals	Experience working with Diverse Populations
Long Term Goals	Examples where you took the lead
Examples of working in a team environment	Why should we hire you?