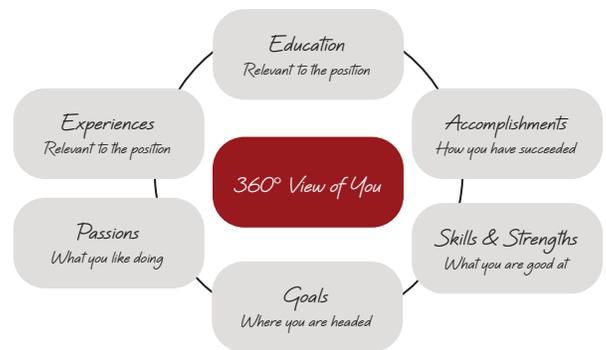




PERFORM...Interviews

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

Companies and job candidates have the same goal: to get the right person in the right job. That is why an interview is a two-way conversation. The company tries to find out if you can do the job and if you will fit into their culture. You, on the other hand, discover if this job and company is a good match for your personality and ambitions. Before you interview, put in the time to set yourself up for success. Follow these four steps to get ready to talk about yourself, address what matters to the employer, and discover if this is the right job for you.



STEP 1 - KNOW YOURSELF

Employers prefer candidates who know what they want. Therefore, it is worth your while to figure this out, even at the broadest level. “I need a job,” “I need the money,” and “my parents want me to” do not qualify. The employer assumes that already. They want to know specifics, like what motivates you, what your goals are, and what you like doing. They want to know what matters to you.

STEP 2 - EXPLAIN YOURSELF

In an interview, the employer is seeking reassurance that (1) you will fit into their environment; (2) you will be able to do the job; and (3) you are trustworthy, dependable, and reliable. All they know about you at this point is what you have put on your resume. The interview is your opportunity to fill in these gaps and make a strong connection.

What to Talk About

Keep in mind that an interview is a professional conversation. Therefore, when you are talking about yourself, it makes sense to stick to what is relevant to the position. You might be asked about your hobbies and interests; feel free to answer, but do not make it a focal point of your preparation. There are many angles you can take to present yourself professionally, as shown in the diagram. Choose the categories that are appropriate for you and that best illustrate your suitability for the position.

How to Talk About Yourself

Employers like to know what you do best. Specifically they are most interested in your skills and strengths that are relevant to their job and their environment as described in the job description. Furthermore, almost every entry-level job requires you to be adaptable and collaborative (easy to get along with) and to have good communication skills (able to express yourself well verbally and in writing).

Prioritize Your Relevant Skills and Strengths

Candidates who articulate their top two to three skills and strengths that are relevant to the job gain a significant advantage over those who do not. To make yourself even more memorable, provide examples of when you used those skills. Prioritizing your top skills and strengths will help you clarify your value.

Connect the Dots

Once you know what you want to say about yourself, make it easy for the interviewer to envision how you will fit into their environment. Drawing parallels between their requirements and your experiences is a powerful technique that gets the employer's favorable attention and will help you stand out from other candidates.

What they need ———> Your past experiences
 Their culture ———> How you fit in

EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

Interview Question: Why are you interested in this job?

What they need → Your past experiences

“You are looking for someone with a passion for marketing and strong written communication skills. My strong suit is written communications. I have always enjoyed writing, and I majored in Marketing because I’m intrigued by the intersection of strategy, creativity, and analysis in marketing. I think few other disciplines can offer that kind of reach. As Chairman of the Philanthropy Committee of my fraternity I wrote the marketing copy for our outreach efforts. Last summer I interned at XYZ Corp in the MarCom Dept where I worked on branding projects.”

Their culture → How you fit in

“I read on your website that you pursue an innovative marketing approach. That is attractive to me because I do my best writing when I am finding creative ways to promote ideas. I’m looking for an opportunity to put my creative writing skills into practice for a consumer product company with a passion for innovation, like yours.”

Show Your Enthusiasm

Employers routinely say they want to see that you are excited about what you can do for them. Tell them what it is that interests you about the position/company! Tell them that you are good at it! Tell them that you like doing it!

Putting it All Together

There is no way to predict everything that will transpire in a job interview, but you can count on being asked, “Tell me about yourself.” Employers are not looking for a play by play of your resume or your life story. They

are most interested in why you want to work for them, how you will fit in, and what you can do.

In your response, incorporate your relevant skills and strengths, connect the dots between what they want and what you have to offer, explain why you are interested in the job, and convey your enthusiasm. You will set the tone for a more empowering conversation if the interviewer takes a genuine interest in you.

Your response should be long enough to get your important messages out and short enough to inspire the interviewer to want to know more. A good guideline is two to three minutes.

STEP 3 - FIND OUT WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Interviewing is a two-way conversation. The employer will ask you appropriate questions to uncover what is important to them. Your task is to evaluate them as a suitable employer for you.

Research the Company

Make your interest in the job obvious by showing up for the interview well versed about the company, industry, and competition. Look at its mission, values, organizational structure, and stock history. Become familiar with its products and services at a high level. Find out who its competitors are. Check out recent news articles about the company.

Your best resource, however, is the people who work there. Reach out to alumni, parents of friends, and prior employers, and ask for introductions to their friends or colleagues who work at the company. Ask them what it is like to work for the company – the good and the not so good – and about their

career at the firm. Ask questions about the department you will be hiring into.

*Tip: As your knowledge of the company builds, start asking yourself what you like or do not like about it and why. Write it down.

Due Diligence

Employers are drawn to candidates who evaluate them during the interview. They know these candidates have initiative and want to excel. Ask questions that determine whether you will be able to do your best work and thrive in their environment. You will gain the respect of the interviewer and set yourself up for success!

Company: Find out how this company measures up to your ideal company. Asking a question about the company is a good way to show that you have done your homework. Ask them to define the culture and management style within the company, department, and team. Ask about the impact of recent changes.

Opportunity: Is this job a good fit for your skills and aptitudes? Will you be able to do this job and do it well? Are the expectations reasonable? Will you fit in on the team? Will you be able to help your manager with their challenges? Will you be excited going to work there every day? Is it a good fit for your short- and long-term goals?

Manager: Find out if you will be able to thrive under this manager’s leadership. What is this manager’s management style? Will they inspire you to do your best work? Will they be invested in your success? Would you be willing to go the extra mile for this person?



Other Questions to Consider Asking Employers

- What are the key issues facing the employer/industry?
- What will be expected of me as a new employee?
- What kind of training program and supervision is given to a new employee?
- What has been the interviewer's experience with the company?
- What kind of career path can I expect if I do outstanding work?
- What qualities do you value most in those who work for you?
- What are some of the company's future plans?
- What challenges is your department currently facing?
- What do you like the most about working at this company?
- How would you describe the management style at this company?
- What objectives do you have defined for this position in the foreseeable future?
- How would you describe your corporate culture?
- What does your company offer employees that your competition does not?
- How is the company dealing with current issues and trends? (mention a specific issue or trend you have read about)

Any question dealing with salary is inappropriate to ask at this stage. Once you receive an offer, then there will be time to discuss salary and benefits.

STEP 4 - BRING THE AUTHENTIC YOU TO THE INTERVIEW

What does this mean? It means you do not have to say "yes" to everything. Be honest about your abilities. There is no perfect candidate who meets all the stated requirements and has the right personality fit. Personality traits like adaptability, flexibility, effective communicating, collaborative nature, can-do attitude, level-headedness, etc., are often more important to employers than meeting all of the qualifications.

When necessary, admit what you do not know, without an apology. Explain that you are eager to learn and, if possible, move the conversation to what you CAN do for them.

Employers want to know the real you. Being authentic means being genuine about what matters to you and letting your best shine!

EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

- Tailor your preparation and company research for each individual interview.*
- Review the UCS Interview Policy and Procedures.*
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early to all interviews and have all of the necessary documents needed for the interview (e.g., copies of your resume and application materials).*
- Send a thank-you message after each interview. The goal is to leave the interviewer with the impression that you are the right candidate for the job.*

INTERVIEW TYPES & TIPS

Behavioral Interviews

Companies use several types of interviews to get a holistic sense of who you are as a potential employee. Ultimately, both parties are looking for the best fit and the hiring process should be mutual. Learning about the company and its culture prior to the interview and preparing for various types of interviews and questions will help you to stand out.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS

This is the most common type of interview and is based on the premise that an individual's past performance is the best predictor of future behavior. A behavioral interview assesses your job-related technical skills, past performance compared to future needs of the company, and work habits or personal characteristics. One of the easiest ways to prepare for a behavioral interview is to review the job description and think about your past experiences. Think of specific examples where you have demonstrated the skills identified in the job description and create a story. Then schedule time at the UCS for a mock interview.

STAR Method

During a behavioral interview, always listen carefully to the question and make sure you answer it completely. Prepare for your interview by identifying situations from your resume where you have demonstrated the behaviors a given company seeks. Use examples from past internships, classes, activities, team involvements, community service, and work experiences that prove your ability with the desired behaviors. When answering behavioral questions use the STAR Method and convey specific situations, tasks, actions, and results. The STAR answer validates what you are saying about yourself.

Sample Behavioral Interview Question: Tell me about a time when you had to persuade others of your point of view.

Before:

- **SITUATION:** During my internship, I had to deliver a presentation for a new product launch.
- **TASK:** My goal was to provide a useful presentation to the leaders.
- **ACTION:** I convinced my team we needed to add marketing and sales sections to the presentation and then I presented to a group of high-level finance executives.
- **RESULT:** The finance leaders liked the presentation.

Were all elements of STAR reflected? **Technically...YES!**
Do the actions reflect persuasion? **NO!**

After:

- **SITUATION:** During my internship at Intel this summer, I worked with a team of four undergraduate finance interns and two MBAs to pitch a new 3D hardware to our financial leaders.
- **TASK:** My goal was to present the information to our financial leaders so that they could determine the feasibility of the new product launch.
- **ACTION:** I felt our team was on the same page (we were all finance majors) with the financial projections, income statement, balance sheet, cash flow forecast, and breakeven analysis. I was concerned our financial leaders needed a quick marketing pitch to understand the new product sales plan. I decided to put a few marketing slides together based on what I learned from my I-Core semester and presented it to our team. By using my past experience and knowledge of marketing, I was able to convince my team to include this missing piece of the presentation and I also presented this section to the leaders.
- **RESULT:** Not only did my finance team appreciate the slides, so did the finance executive team. I was offered a full-time job after my internship while none of the MBAs on my team received an offer.

Before the interview process, identify two or three of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points during the interview. Whenever you can, quantify your results. Numbers illustrate your level of authority and responsibility. For example: "I was a shift supervisor" could be "As shift supervisor, I trained and evaluated four employees."

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers these five skill sets are desired for all positions. Practice by writing STARs for these five skills:

Teamwork

Communication

Leadership

Problem Solving

Organization & Planning

INTERVIEW TYPES & TIPS

Case Interviews

CASE INTERVIEWS

Case interviews focus on your ability to solve a business problem, which might even be a problem that the company has faced before. Your job is to identify the important issues, develop a logical approach to the problem, and offer a solution. Firms use case interviews to test a candidate's communication, critical thinking, and analytical skills. Interviewers will want to see that you can listen well, respond quickly to issues, ask good questions, and summarize your results clearly. There is actually no correct answer for the case; what is essential is using logic in generating recommendations for the problem. While case interviews are popular with consulting, financial, and retail firms, everyone should be prepared to be effective at solving case problems.

Frameworks

"Case Interview Frameworks" is one of the most searched phrases in case interview preparation. Simply put, case interview frameworks are like standard templates, used to structure and break down common business problems. Since it is a template it is usually very well organized and written. However, as you know, a template will not fit every situation. You have to choose templates for different purposes and sometimes even customize them. Learn which frameworks to use and how to use them. Understanding these frameworks will make it much easier for you to handle the interview. Below are frameworks that you should be very familiar with when preparing for case interviews.

Basic Frameworks:

- Cost-benefit analysis
- Internal vs. external market factors
- Fixed vs. variable costs

More Advanced Frameworks:

- Net Present Value
- Porter's Five Forces
- The Four Ps (Price, Product, Position/Place, Promotion)
- The Four Cs (Customers, Competition, Cost, Capabilities)
- The Five Cs (Character, Capacity, Capital, Conditions, Competitive Advantage)
- Value Chain Analysis

Types of Case Questions

There are three basic types of case questions that you may encounter in a case interview:

1. Brainteasers are riddles or puzzles that will showcase your ability to think logically.
2. Guesstimates/Market Sizing questions require you to answer "how many" or "how much" of something.
3. Business Scenario questions may be based on real or hypothetical situations.

Case Interview Preparation

Through preparation and practice, you will become confident in your interviewing and presentation skills. The UCS offers several opportunities to learn about case interviewing which can help you be successful.

- Case Interview Preparation coaching appointments with a UCS Career Coach
- Mock Case Interviews conducted by a current Kelley MBA student
- Case Preparation Workshops facilitated by case interviewing experts
- CaseQuestions.com, which can be found on Kelley Connect under Resources

It is important to know that you cannot prepare for a case interview overnight!

**Typical for Consulting/Advisory and Strategic Marketing Positions*

"Case interviews are broad, two-way discussions, rather than one-way tests and there is no perfect answer. You will be assessed more on how you go about dealing with the problem, rather than specific answers you come up with."

Source: McKinsey & Company Website





INTERVIEW TYPES & TIPS

TECHNICAL INTERVIEWS

Technical interviews are an assessment of your specialized knowledge.

Financial firms often use technical questions to determine your ability to read financial statements and apply formulas to value companies and predict industry growth.

Read the job description to discern the skills required to do the job successfully. In preparing for the interview, focus your study on questions related to those skills.

Problem solving is more important than memorizing information, and your ability to explain your thought process is just as important as arriving at the correct answer.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS (PHONE SCREENS)

Telephone interviews are a relatively efficient way of qualifying job applicants and are often a preliminary screening tool to determine whether you will secure an in-person interview. Interviews usually last between 20 and 30 minutes and are often part of the early stages of the recruitment process.

Prepare for the Interview

Agree upon a date and time when you will have access to a quiet location and can minimize distractions. If you are conducting your interview at home, eliminate background noise like television, music, pets, or roommates. When possible use a landline phone instead of a cell phone. This will increase the quality of the connection.

You can call, email, or come into the UCS to reserve a room in which to conduct your interview. Please contact the UCS as soon as possible to ensure space is available, particularly during recruiting seasons when the office is most full. Do not rely on cell phones in the UCS as reception is not stable. If you are instructed to call a toll-free number and are provided with an access code, we can assist you in how to make that call.

During the Interview

The way in which you speak on the phone can reflect your effectiveness. Volume, tone, and inflection are important. Slow your speech down, even if it feels a bit unnatural. Speaking slowly and clearly is imperative. Try to avoid speaking in a monotone voice, and be sure to inject enthusiasm. You want to speak in a way that will keep your listener engaged, even when they cannot see your face.

- **Know who you are speaking with.** Phone interviews may be with HR representatives or managers. If you are being interviewed by a team, write down names as people introduce themselves.
- **Understand their goal.** Their goal is to expand on resume details while probing your skills and career goals.
- **Be ready.** Have copies of your resume and calendar, a pen, and a notepad in front of you. In advance, write notes about how you match the job description to use if you lose focus.
- **Eliminate background noise.** Avoid rattling paper or making noises that indicate you are flipping through materials to search for answers.
- **Treat it like an in-person interview.** Dress in your interview attire. Sit up straight at a desk or table to remain alert and focused.
- **Take a deep breath.** Do this before picking up the phone so that you do not hyperventilate or quicken the pace of your answers.
- **Listen carefully.** Try to avoid interrupting the interviewer. Be patient and wait until the interviewer has fully asked a question or provided a comment before you respond.
- **Give verbal cues.** Remember that you cannot be seen. If you need time to think of an answer, let the interviewer know by stating that you need to take a moment to reflect on the question.
- **Thank the interviewer.** Restate your interest in the company, and request the opportunity for a face-to-face interview. *“Thank you for talking with me. I’m intrigued by what you’ve shared and would like to meet with you and others in the company.”*
- **Follow-up with the interviewer.** As with all other types of interviews, follow up with a personalized thank-you note within 24-48 hours of the interview.

VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

- The UCS has virtual capabilities. If an employer seeks to interview you using that technology, contact the UCS well in advance to make arrangements.
- Prepare for these interviews just as you would a formal, in-person interview.
- Avoid wearing busy patterns that may be distracting on camera.
- Begin setting up the technology well before your interview to avoid delays or frustrations.
- If you experience difficulty with the technology, stay calm. If you have sound, make small talk. If you have video, let them see you stay professional through it all.
- Allow a second or two before speaking, as there is often a slight sound delay.
- Maintain eye contact with the camera and speak clearly, just as if the interviewer were sitting in the room with you.
- Set a backup plan at the onset of your call.

SECOND-ROUND INTERVIEWS

An invitation to a second-round interview means the company is interested in you and sees potential in you joining the organization. It is also an opportunity for both you and the company to get to know one another better and directly evaluate the fit.

If your second-round interview is an on-site interview, you have the opportunity for a firsthand look at the culture of a company. During this interview, you may meet with multiple employees and the length of the interview can range from one hour to a full day.

Keep in mind that you are being interviewed and observed throughout the time that you are visiting the organization, not only during the formal office interview. Remain professional at all times, even when you think you are no longer being interviewed, such as when greeting the receptionist and sharing meals with employees.

Confirm the Logistics of Your Day

- Get the name, phone number, and job title of the person arranging the interview and the agenda for the day.
- Ask for the schedule and names and titles of the people you will be meeting.
- Dress for the interview.
- Confirm the interview format.
- Review travel details.

What to Expect

- A meal may be included. Consider this a continuation of the interview. They are assessing how you fit into their group. Concentrate on the conversation instead of the food, and exercise good eating etiquette.
- Expect to meet with a full range of your potential co-workers, peers, superiors, and junior employees. In turn, you should keep in mind that these are the individuals that you likely will work with on a daily basis. Therefore, as you proceed through the interview process, you should evaluate not only your own performance but also what impression your potential co-workers make on you.



INTERVIEW TYPES & TIPS

- You are sure to incur expenses during your trip. Most employers will pay for your travel. Some will make the arrangements directly, while others will expect you to make the arrangements and will reimburse you after the visit. Confirm early about travel specifics and expense reimbursements to avoid confusion later.

Follow Up

- After the interview, send a thank-you message to each person you interviewed with.
- Take the time to make notes about all of your conversations and interactions so that you are able to personalize your thank-you letters after you leave.
- Also thank the individual who arranged your interview and travel, even if you did not interview directly with that person during your visit.

Second-Round Interview Sample Itinerary

Below is an example of a sample itinerary for a second-round interview:

Thursday, October 15	
6:45 - 7:30 p.m.	Arrive and check into hotel
8:00 p.m.	Dinner with Management Team
Friday, October 16	
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast with CEO
9:00 - 10:30 a.m.	Meet with Search Committee
10:45 - 11:45 a.m.	Meet with Human Resources
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch with Department Staff
1:00 - 1:30 p.m.	Tour of Facility
1:45 - 2:45 p.m.	Candidate Presentation
2:45 - 3:00 p.m.	Wrap-up with CEO
3:00 - 5:00 p.m.	Check out of hotel

**If you receive an invitation for a second-round interview for a position you have already decided not to proceed with, respond immediately to decline.*



CLOSING THE INTERVIEW

The final stage of the job interview is critical. The goal is to leave the interviewer with the impression that you are the right candidate for the job. How you choose to close will depend on your personal style and that of the interviewer. The best ways to end the interview all follow these basic closing guidelines:

Ask Questions Make sure you have asked the interviewer all your questions about the job, company, and management. Ask any questions resulting from the information exchanged during the interview. This is your prime opportunity to get answers.

Address all of the Interviewer's Concerns You want to be sure that all issues have been addressed. Try an approach such as, "I believe I have the qualities you are looking for in this position. Are there additional examples I can provide that will help you make a decision?" Ask if there is anything else you should provide to support your application, such as references, work samples, etc. Make time to deliver these personally if required.

Reinforce the Positive Once you have an opportunity to ask your final questions, the interviewer likely will say, "If you have nothing else, that will be all. Thank you for your time." **This is an important opportunity to make a positive closing statement by highlighting why you are the best candidate.** Refer to your strengths and how they make you a good fit for the position. Restate the skills and experience you bring to the position. Use your knowledge about the company to offer up insightful reasons for your suitability. When preparing this statement, think of several reasons why you should get the job. An example is:

"This certainly is an exciting opportunity, and I believe I am the right candidate for this position. My experience as a team member will add value to the creation of this new sales team, my knowledge of the customer base and the area will help grow your business, and my academic and internship performance shows my commitment to achieving targets."

Express Your Enthusiasm for the Position End your job interview on an enthusiastic but not aggressive note. Emphasize your interest in the position and company but avoid sounding desperate or over the top. State how exciting and challenging the position sounds. You can use your background research and the information you collected during the interview to prepare a few comments about the company. "I am very excited about the opportunity and would like to be considered for the role."

Next Steps Unless it is clearly stated, you need to understand what happens next in the hiring process – a second interview, assessments, etc. Try to establish the timeframe for when a hiring decision will be made and who you should get in touch with to follow up on the status of your application. Should you phone or email? We suggest this approach, "I would like to know what the next step is and when you will be making a final decision so I can follow up." Clarifying this information not only lets you know what is happening but also shows the interviewer you are professional and organized.

Thank the Interviewer Thank the interviewer graciously and sincerely for the time spent with you. Give a firm handshake and make good eye contact.

Dealing with Job Rejection

- **Do not take it personally.** Even great candidates get rejected. There are a limited number of openings but many qualified candidates.
- **Keep it in perspective.** The rejection does not define your worth as an individual.
- **Reflect on your interview.** Think about your interview and determine what you could do next time to improve.
- **The recruiter may be right.** Consider that you and the job position were just not the right fit. If the opportunity exists, ask the recruiter for feedback.
- **Build a support network.** Career coaches at the UCS, family, friends, and mentors are all people who can give insight, support, and suggestions for the next opportunity.
- **Continue the job search.** Though discouraging, a rejection is a step in the process. Take action to strengthen your skills for the next interview by meeting with a UCS career coach.

"Be prepared to answer the question, 'Why should we hire YOU?'"