

# 8 Steps to Interview Success

## 1) Research

Review the organization/employer website and check-out their profile on LinkedIn . Review the job description and be prepared to highlight your skills and experiences for anything listed in the description. Educate yourself on industry trends and recent events. If you have conducted informational conversations with individuals in the field or working for the employer, review those notes and talk to mentors and professionals in your network. Review the application you submitted.

## 2) Practice Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
  - *Focus on your professional life and be brief. What have you studied/worked on that led you here?*
- Describe your key accomplishments.
  - *Highlight accomplishments that relate to the position.*
- What are your key strengths?
  - *Choose strengths that specifically relate to the qualifications of the position and develop examples to demonstrate those strengths.*
- What is an example of a weakness/challenge/growth opportunity?
  - *Acknowledge a challenge and be sure to explain how you have learned/improved/changed.*
- Why are you interested in this position?
  - *Show enthusiasm and share highlights from your research on the employer.*
- What do you know about our organization?
  - *Share what you know about their mission, vision, and strategic plan.*
- What are your short- and long-term career goals?
  - *Ensure your short- and long-term goals are related to the position.*
- What would your goals be the first 90 days on the job?
  - *Try to identify the most urgent needs of the position and how you would approach them first.*
- What are your salary expectations?
  - *Don't feel pressured to state an exact amount until you receive the job offer.*
- Why should we hire you?
  - *Reiterate your strengths and accomplishments.*

## 3) Get Ready for Behavioral Questions

Most behavioral questions start with a phrase like:

*"Tell me about a time when..." "Give me an example of..." or "Describe..."*

To respond, use the **SAR** strategy:

- S** Describe the situation or the task
- A** Talk about the actions you took, and be sure to mention skills you used
- R** Explain the result or outcome quantifying when possible (percentage change, lessons learned, time saved)

Example Behavioral Questions:

- Describe a situation in which you used persuasion to successfully convince someone about your ideas.
- Summarize a situation where you took the initiative to get others going on an important issue.
- What was the most complex assignment you have had? What was your role?
- Describe a creative/innovative idea that you implemented which led to a significant contribution to the success of an activity or project.
- Give an example of a time when you used good judgment in solving a problem.
- Describe a situation that required a number of things to be done at the same time.
- Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you approach that person?



#### 4) Prepare Questions for the Interviewer

- What do you enjoy most about your job?
- How would you describe your work culture?
- What are some of the common challenges in this position?
- What type of training is provided?
- Why is this position open?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?
- What qualities would an ideal candidate for this position have?
- What do you think is the best thing about working here?
- What kind of person would you most like to see fill this position?

Bring a folder or padfolio (available at the DU bookstore or an office supply store). Use the notepad to write down your questions for the interviewer and for taking notes. You can also include copies of your resume and business cards (if you have them) to your folder.

#### 5) Interview Attire

Review this blog article on [Professional Attire Basics: Understanding Dress Expectations for the Interview and at Work](#). If you are unsure of what is expected by the organization, ask the person who scheduled your interview. Some organizations may have a casual dress code, but still expect candidates to dress in interview attire. If you need professional clothing, please visit the [Career Closet](#) in the Burwell Center for Career Achievement where you can select up to 4 items for free!

#### 6) Close the Interview

When it gets to the end of the interview don't just say thank you! Let them know that you are excited about the opportunity and review why you are a good fit. For example:

"Before we close, I would like to thank you and let you know that I am very excited about this opportunity! My major and previous internship in marketing make me a good fit and I look forward to hearing from you!"

#### 7) After the Interview

Email and/or hand write a targeted thank you within 24 hours of the interview. Follow-up with the interviewer by using respectful persistence. Sample:

*Dear Mr. Nagle:*

*I want to thank you for the opportunity to interview for the Project Analyst position. I enjoyed meeting with you and learning more about Casey Corporation's involvement in the renewable energy sector.*

*The information that you provided about the current trends in your industry increased my enthusiasm for working with your organization. My degree in Environmental Science and my internship at Great Greens fit well with the job requirements. I would also be a strong contributor to your team.*

*I would like to reiterate my interest in working for Casey Corporation as you provide the kind of opportunity that fits with my career goals. Again, thank you for interviewing me and I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Regards,*

*Your Name, BS Environmental Science 20xx | 303-555-1234 | name@du.edu*

#### 8) Practice!

You can use [Big Interview](#) to practice your skills. Consider sharing your practice video with a Career Advisor to review together. Use [PCO](#) to schedule an appointment.

