

# Interview Strategies

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# Agenda:

- Interview Purpose/Hiring Process
- Before the Interview – Preparation
- During the Interview
- After the Interview
- Job Offer – Salary Negotiation, Compensation
- Make an Appointment: LWTech Career Services

# What is the purpose of an interview?

An interview is a meeting to exchange information. Both parties ask & answer questions to see if the position is a good fit for both you and for the employer. The purpose is:

- To answer the employer's question: "How can you be valuable to me?"
- To discuss whether your skills and experience match what the employer is looking for.
- Learn more about the position to see if it's what you're looking for.
- Explain how your skills apply and get the job!

# Steps of the Hiring Process

- Apply for position
- Obtain interview (phone or in-person or virtual)
- Understand types of interviews
- Prepare for interview
- Complete interview (one or more)
- Post-interview follow-up (send thank you)
- Salary negotiation (once job offered)
- Start job!

# Types of Interviews

Interviews can be onsite, on video, by phone, or in-person.

- **Screening Interview**
  - Usually with Human Resources, on the phone, short, you answer a few questions. If it goes well, you get invited to an onsite interview.
- **Skills Test Interview**
  - You are given a “test” as part of the interview.
- **One-on-one Interview**
  - You meet with one person and ask/answer questions.
- **Panel Interview**
  - You meet with a group of people at different levels in the company (manager/team members/human resources)
- **Progressive Interview**
  - You meet with a series of people, but one at a time. If it goes well, you continue to meet with people of various levels until the interview is over. These interviews can take several hours, can include lunch.
- **Second Interview**
  - You return to meet people higher up at the company, or to continue the interview process. Different questions might be asked to confirm you are the best candidate for a job. Can be a “tie-breaker” interview.

# Ask Questions if needed!

- When the employer calls or emails to schedule the interview, you can ask questions, if you are unsure:
  - Can you tell me who I will be meeting with?
  - Do you know if it's a panel interview or one-on-one?
  - Can you email the interview questions in advance?
  - What is the suggested attire for interviews at your company?
  - Is there anything else I need to bring with me?
  - Will I be given a skills test as part of the interview?
  - Is there a specific place you'd like me to park?

## Preparing for the Interview

Now, that you have landed an interview, the next step is to prepare, practice, and present yourself.



# Preparing for the Interview

- Prepare for the Interview
  - Thoroughly research the company.
  - Be familiar with the position requirements – study the job description.
  - If it's a virtual interview, make sure your equipment works and the lighting looks good.
  - Practice answering interview questions and asking the employer questions when it's your turn.
  - Select a professional outfit for the interview.



# Research the Company



- LinkedIn (Company)
- LinkedIn (People)
- Glassdoor.com  
(Reviews, Interviews)
- Company Website  
(About Us, Mission,  
Values)
- YouTube & Instagram

# Bring These to the Interview

## Your Interview Kit:

- Copies of your resume, cover letter, job description
- Pen and paper for notes
- Portfolio and “show and tell” project if applicable
- Mints and water bottle
- A good attitude and enthusiasm!

## Have with you, but only provide if asked:

- List of references (name, title, email, phone number)
- Salary research ([Salary.com](http://Salary.com), [Payscale.com](http://Payscale.com), [Glassdoor.com](http://Glassdoor.com))
- Something that ID's who you are (driver's license, picture ID card)

# Reference List

- Ask to use them as a reference.
- Tell them **in advance** an employer might contact them.
- Give them talking points about you.

Your Name  
Your Phone number  
Your Email

Reference Name #1, Title, Email, Phone  
Reference Name #2, Title, Email, Phone  
Reference Name #3, Title, Email, Phone

# Research Pay

Just have this data going into the interview in case THE EMPLOYER brings it up. Wait for the employer to bring up pay and company benefits (total compensation package) first. If you have this information, you will be ready to respond.

- [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com) (Salaries)
- [Payscale.com](https://www.payscale.com) (Input info, get a range)
- [Salary.com](https://www.salary.com) (Salaries)
  
- Get the range for your geographic area (example: lowest: \$25 – highest: \$35)

# Practice answering “Tell me About Yourself”

- *When an employer asks this question during a job interview, what they really mean is, “Tell me about your qualifications for the job and how your skills/education/experience match the job description.”*
  - Career Spots Video [The Elevator Pitch](#)
  - YouTube JobSpeaker [Tell Me About Yourself](#)

# What “Tell Me About Yourself” really means

## Talk about this:

- Your professional background and experience
- Your strengths and skills
- Your college education/classes/projects
- How you match the job description
- Why you want to work for the company
- Achievements and awards

## Not that:

- Don't talk about your kids, divorce, death, medical issues, age, overly personal subjects, where you were born, money/financial problems, where you live, your favorite food

# Let's Practice!

**“My skills include \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m interested in making \_\_\_\_\_. I’m looking for opportunities where I can use my experience in \_\_\_\_\_ to contribute to your company. I’m currently completing my associate degree in \_\_\_\_\_ at LWTech. A recent project I completed involved \_\_\_\_\_. I was awarded \_\_\_\_\_ at my last job for my strong work ethic and for working closely with my team to complete the work on time. I was recognized by my past supervisor for my \_\_\_\_\_. I’m interested in working for your company because \_\_\_\_\_.”**

# Answering Behavioral Interview Questions

- Many employers ask “behavioral” interview questions. These start with, “Tell me about a time when...” They want to know what you did to solve a specific problem in the past, so they can predict your future behavior. They also want to know how you handle and navigate the workplace.
- Tell me about a time when:
  - You had a disagreement with a co-worker
  - You had a conflict with your supervisor
  - You had to complete a project with a tight deadline
  - You felt proud about a project you worked on
  - You resolved a problem at work
  - You learned new technology or a new process
  - You provided excellent customer service
  - You experienced stress due to multiple priorities



# The STAR method

To answer behavioral interview questions, you can use the S.T.A.R. method:

- **Situation** (Where did this happen/what was the challenge?)
- **Task** (What were you doing/what was **your** role?)
- **Action** (What did **you** do to fix it? How did you fix it?)
- **Result** (What was the outcome of the situation?)

This is also known as the C.A.R. method (Challenge, Action, Result)

Example: Q: Tell me about a time when you made a mistake.

A: When I worked at Amazon in the shipping department, I was in a **situation** where I accidentally switched the packing labels of two packages I sent to customers. **My task** was to correct the problem without angering the customers. **The action I took** was to call them to explain and email them shipping labels with the correct addresses. I was able to give each of them a small gift certificate to use on a future order. **The result** was that the customers not only helped me fix my mistake, but they were both satisfied and said they'd return and shop again as per a follow-up satisfaction survey I sent.

# Positive Word Choices

- When answering interview questions, try to keep it positive. You can say the same thing, but use positive words instead of negative words, to make a better impression. What is one thing you would change about your job or the company if you could?

**No: I don't like to be micromanaged.**

Yes: I enjoy working independently and I'm good at prioritizing my workload. For example...

**No: I hand off work when I get overloaded.**

Yes: I delegate work and find ways to automate processes when I needed so our team can meet our deadlines.

**No: I didn't get along with my co-worker.**

Yes: I wanted to have a better relationship with my co-worker.

**No: I quit my job.**

Yes: I'm looking for new opportunities.

# “What Questions Do You Have For Me?”

- When the employer asks if you have questions at the interview, you need to ask at least three questions. Prepare a list in advance:
  - What is one thing you would change about your job or the company if you could?
  - How do you promote an inclusive workplace?
  - What departments do you frequently interact with and what is that relationship like?
  - What kind of professional development opportunities are available?
  - How does the company support equity and diversity?
  - What are the next steps in the hiring process?

# Wear This, Not That

## No

- Revealing clothing
- Too tight clothing
- Sandals or flip flops that show toes (too casual)
- Perfume/cologne/incense
- Tank tops or shorts
- Athletic wear/stretch pants/leggings
- Skirt or dress above the knee

## Yes

- Consider the industry
- Dark colors: Blue, gray, black are safe/conservative
- Ironed, clean clothing
- Well-fitted, polished
- Consider layers on top
- It's easier to “dress down” once you arrive than to “dress up”
- You feel confident

# What To Wear Dress for Your Specific Industry



# Business Casual

- Professional, but not overly formal
- One step down from suit and tie
- Button-up shirts
- Dark slacks or tailored skirt right below the knee
- Dress shoes, but with a more casual appearance



# At the Interview

# Interview – The Arrival

- Arrive early so you can relax
- Check-in about 10 minutes before interview starts
- Observe the workplace and be present (no cell phone, no distractions)
- Be friendly to everyone you come into contact with (smile, say hello)
- While waiting: deep belly breathing (smell the soup, cool the soup technique)
- Sip water to help you relax



# Body Language

- Be aware of your body language
  - Hands can sit in your lap or on the table
  - Assume an open posture (arms are not crossed at your chest)
  - Look interested by leaning in at times, without invading the interviewer's personal space
  - Focus on the interviewer, listen, and be engaged (you're not checking your watch, your phone, the clock)
  - Be aware of habits you have that are distracting (don't play with your hair, bite your nails, etc.)

# Interview – During

- Stages: Introduction, Employer questions, candidate questions, closing statement
- Smile, make eye contact, be positive
- Explain why you are a good match for the job
- Talk about hands-on experiences/projects so they get to know you and your strengths
- Give examples of what you've learned

# Asking and Answering Questions

- Take about 2-3 minutes to answer each question. If you have more to say, ask, “Do you want me to tell you more about that?”
- Get stuck? Try this:
  - “I’m not sure I understand the question. Can you rephrase that?”
  - “That’s a great question!” and take a sip of water.
  - The Pivot: “I can’t think of an example of a difficult supervisor, but I remember having a situation with a difficult team member. Can I tell you about that?”

# During the Interview

## DO THIS

- Ask questions about the job/company that you can't find online
- Use your resume for talking points – it should be filled with achievements/skills!
- Sip water to help feel relaxed.

## NOT THAT

- Don't talk about your kids, divorce, death, medical issues, age, overly personal subjects, money/financial problems, personal relationships, politics, religion – unless directly related to the job.

# The Second Interview

Some jobs require a second or even a third interview before they make a hiring decision. If this happens:

- Research *more* – you will most likely be interviewing with people higher up in the organization.
- Get their names in advance from the interview scheduler – look them up on LinkedIn.
- Keep your positive energy UP!
- Don't say, "As I said in the first interview."

# After the Interview

Send a thank you email or thank you card right away. It can be short:

*“Thank you for your time. It was nice meeting you! I’m excited about this opportunity now that I’ve learned more and met the team. Let me know if I can answer any other questions.”*

Be happy! Focus on what you did well. Practice opportunities for growth for your next interview.



# LWTech Career Services (W201E)

- 1:1 appointment with a career specialist (virtual or in-person)
- Resume and Cover Letter development
- Job Search help & LinkedIn Profile development
- Mock Interviews and referrals for free interview clothing
- Access to employment events (employer panels, guest speakers, internship/externship opportunities, and job fairs.)
- Visit our webpage: [LWTech.edu/CareerServices](https://LWTech.edu/CareerServices)
  - Career Spot Videos
  - Hire Lions Powered by Handshake online job board
  - Follow us on LinkedIn – LWTech Career Services
  - Self-enroll for free in LWTech Career Strategies Canvas Course

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