INTERVIEW PREPARATION STRATEGIES

Congratulations—you’ve been selected to interview, which means you met the job qualifications, and the employer wants to get to know you better! Interviews are conversations which answer for employers whether or not you can do the job, how much you will enjoy the job, and will they enjoy working with you. At the same time, candidates are interviewing the employer to understand the same. Employers utilize several settings and types of interviews to evaluate candidates. Most hiring managers have the philosophy to hire for attitude and to train for skill; therefore, self-confidence, genuine interest, and motivation are key traits employers look for in candidates. Follow this guide which is designed to offer best practices and strategies to ace the interview!

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Research employer & review the job description
- Analyze the job description to understand the key skills and qualifications needed to accomplish the job. Once you know what the employer seeks and why, you can best develop interview question responses.
- Review the employer website to discover the mission, core values, product, and service offerings. Consider how you “fit” into the company culture and determine how your values and skills are aligned to the job.
- Look up and scan through the LinkedIn profiles of the hiring manager(s) and individuals with whom you will interview. If you do not have this information, ask the recruiter.
- Use online resources, such as Glassdoor and Vault, for insider information, candidate feedback, and industry insights.
- Read through the CMC’s Salary Negotiations guide to assess salary information. Also review Bureau of Labor Statistics, College Measures Economics Success Metrics, Vault, Glassdoor, Payscale, and/or Salary.com.
- Read the company’s current events, news articles and industry information because interviewers will ask questions around these topics.

Prepare elevator speech & stories AND practice out loud

Prepare thoughtful questions

Dress for success
Don’t settle on a job – Launch a CAREER!

Prepare elevator speech & stories AND practice out loud
- Review the Interview Strategies guide to prepare for and respond to commonly asked interview questions and interview types.
- Practice your elevator speech and interview response stories out loud so your responses sound natural and concise. Schedule a mock interview to receive interview skills feedback.

Prepare thoughtful questions
- Prepare a minimum of 5 questions to ask the employer based on your research. Your questions should help you learn more about the organization’s goals, expectations, and current/future projects. Review the Interview Strategies guide for more details.

Dress for success
- Invest in a professional suit. Standard black and navy are considered the most professional.
- Wear the suit and shoes prior to the interview to break them in and help you feel more comfortable.
- Limit your use of perfumes and wear minimal jewelry.

Before the Interview
- Invest in resume paper to print resume and other application materials
- Prepare copies of application materials such as cover letter, writing samples, references/letters of recommendation, and/or examples of your work
- Utilize a portfolio to store resume, pen, business card(s), paper for note taking, and other application materials
- Ensure a good night’s sleep to be at your best and energetic for the interview

THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW
- Eat a healthy breakfast/lunch in advance of your interview.
- Arrive 15 minutes early and turn off cell phone.
- During the greeting process, smile and provide a strong handshake. Maintain eye contact and posture throughout the interview.
- Provide detailed examples of your experiences. Utilize the PARL method for structuring your stories.
- Ask questions to demonstrate interest and to learn more about the organization and the position. Ask for the next steps in the interview process so you are aware of when they will contact you again.
- Ask for business cards for follow-up correspondence.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW
- Email a thank you note within 24 hours of your interview. Recent studies demonstrate that over 80% of applicants send thank you notes after each interview round. Affirm your interest in the position and reference the topics discussed in the email. Let the interviewer know when you will contact them again to check on the status of your interview.
- Maintain a journal and reflect on the experience. Consider areas you performed well and where you could improve. It is very likely you may be asked similar interview questions in the future.