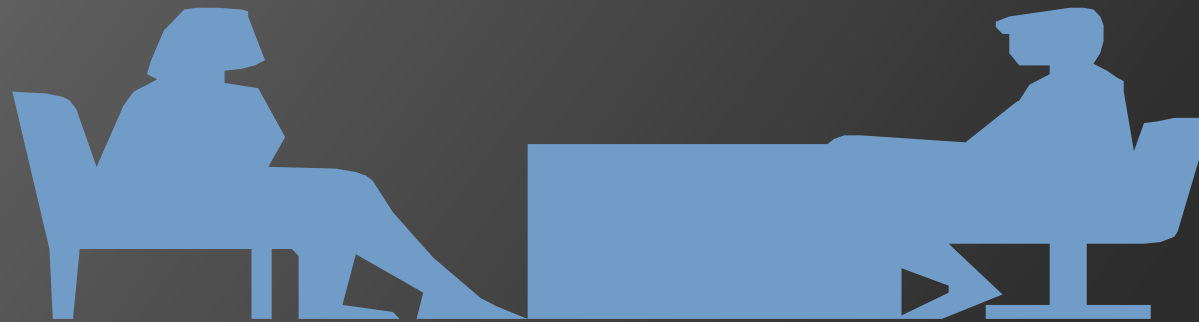


INTERVIEWING TIPS



Julie Greene

Director of MCC Career & Veteran's Services
860.512.3372 or jgreene@manchestercc.edu

Employer's Expectations

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Job-related skills
- Experience
- Training
- Education
- Successes
- Life experiences



Employer's Expectations (Cont.)



CAN YOU BE COUNTED ON?

- To have good attendance
- To be a team player
- To adapt quickly and be productive
- To complete tasks on time (dependable)
- To stay for a reasonable time

Employer's Expectations (Cont.)

ARE YOU THE RIGHT "FIT"?

- Personable
- Good verbal skills
- Paperwork (well-done resume)
- Interview behavior
- Personal appearance



How to Prepare



KNOW YOURSELF

Identify your...

- functional skills (organization, leadership, analytical, communication)
- adaptive skills (dependability, flexibility, creativity, sense of humor)
- weaknesses (and what have you done to overcome)
- relevant work experience (volunteer / internship)
- special interests or activities (clubs / associations)

Skills Employers Want Most

- ◉ WRITING ABILITY
- ◉ INTERPERSONAL / SOCIAL
- ◉ ARTICULATE
- ◉ NEGOTIATION SKILLS
- ◉ PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY
- ◉ GLOBAL AWARENESS
- ◉ ABILITY TO SYNTHESIZE
- ◉ MULTICULTURAL SKILLS
- ◉ BILINGUAL ABILITY
- ◉ CREATIVITY
- ◉ ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS
- ◉ SELF-STARTER
- ◉ TEAMWORK ABILITY
- ◉ PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS
- ◉ FLEXIBILITY
- ◉ LEADERSHIP SKILLS
- ◉ PRESENTATION SKILLS
- ◉ COMPUTER SKILLS
- ◉ CRITICAL THINKER
- ◉ ANALYTICAL
- ◉ CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
- ◉ TIME MANAGEMENT

ABOVE ALL... BE PASSIONATE AND POSITIVE!

How to Prepare (Cont'd)

KNOW THE EMPLOYER

Spend 3-5 hours researching employer and be able to identify...

- What Do They Do / Products & Services
- What Are Their Current / Projected Needs
- Organizational structure, training opportunities
- Who you will be speaking with and their position



How to Prepare (Cont'd)

KNOW THE POSITION

- Be prepared to expound on your skills and how you can contribute
- Review / memorize your resume
- Review job posting and match up your skills / experience with listed requirements



Dress for the Interview

- It takes 15 seconds to make a first impression
- Research and observe what is appropriate dress for the industry
- When in doubt, go conservative
- Top 12" is most important for initial impression – hair, face, collar, shirt, etc.
- Whatever you choose – be confident!

Stages of an Interview Session

- Introduction/ice breaking/rapport building
- Questions by employer to determine if skills match needs
- Questions by candidate about the position and organization
- Closing –employer next steps and tentative timeline
- Don't leave without expressing how much you want the job!



TRADITIONAL STYLE QUESTIONS



- Uses broad-based questions such as, “why do you want to work for this company,” and “tell me about your strengths and weaknesses.”
- Success or failure of interview is more often based on ability of job seeker to communicate than on the truthfulness or content of answers.

Employers typically want to answer 3 questions:

- Do you have the skills and abilities to perform the job?
- Do you possess the enthusiasm and work ethic that is expected?
- Will you be a team player and “fit in”?

BEHAVIORAL / SITUATIONAL STYLE QUESTIONS

- Based on theory that past behavior predicts future performance, interviewers probe for examples that demonstrate skills or characteristics.
- Uses questions such as: “tell me about a time when you were confronted with an unexpected problem,” “tell me about an experience when you failed to achieve a goal,” and “give me a specific example of a time when you managed several projects.”
- Hobbies, volunteer work and class assignments & projects all provide examples that can be used.

Job seekers should frame their answers in 4 parts:

- 1) describe the situation
- 2) discuss the actions taken
- 3) relate the outcomes, and
- 4) specify what was learned.

How to Answer Problem Questions



- ⦿ Understand what is really being asked.
 - Ask for clarification when/if needed
 - Pause to digest question and formulate your thoughts
- ⦿ Answer question briefly/directly.
 - Use three prong answer (1,2 and 3)
 - Do not go off track or on tangent
- ⦿ Get to meat of matter; present skills in organized way.

Remember: Good communication skills include listening and letting the person know you heard what they said (paraphrase).

Observe your interviewer's style and pace and do your best to adjust your style and pace to match theirs.

Your Turn

"Do you have any questions for us?"

Always ask questions because this demonstrates your prior research and interest in the job.

Your questions might be...

- ⦿ direct, logistical questions such as, "When can I expect to hear from you?" (if not already covered)
- ⦿ one to clarify information employer has presented
- ⦿ a question regarding the employer's use of new technology or practices related to the career field
- ⦿ a question to assess the culture and direction of the organization such as "Where is this organization headed in the next five years?" or "Why do you like working for this organization?"

Your Turn



- You can use this opportunity to thank the employer for the interview, summarize your qualifications and reiterate your interest in the position.
- If you want to add information or emphasize a point made earlier, you can do that, too.
- This last impression is almost as important as the first impression and will add to the substance discussed during the information exchange.

Follow Up Rules

- ⦿ Find out about the decision-process before you leave.
- ⦿ Always send a follow up regarding any concerns, or questions you may have come up with since the interview.
- ⦿ After you've waited for a reasonable period of time, call and inquire as to the status of the position and whether you are still in the running.
- ⦿ If you are told you are no longer under consideration, try asking for feedback (most of the time they won't give you any, but still worth a try).
- ⦿ If you leave a message inquiring about the status of the job, and no one calls you back after a couple of attempts - move on and forget about it. Don't call back more than a couple of times. There's a fine line between being persistent and being a pest.

Post-Interview Assessment



- Did I properly prepare for this interview?
- Did I call to confirm the interview & arrive on time?
- How could I have more effectively opened the interview?
- Was my presentation effective?
- Did I actively listen and participate in the interview?
- Did I use eye communication, and how can I improve it?
- Did I obtain all the information I wanted? Did it meet your expectations?
- Have I seen or heard enough to make a decision?
- Will I be able to grow my career in this job/with this company?
- How should I follow up on this interview?
- What is the commitment for the next step?
- Would I accept this position if offered to me?
- If I don't accept, when can you expect another offer?

Biggest Interview Mistakes

Poor non-verbal communication

- ⦿ Exude confidence
- ⦿ Stand straight
- ⦿ Make direct eye contact
- ⦿ Connect with a strong, firm handshake
- ⦿ Sit erect and lean forward in the chair to appear interested and attentive. Slumping denotes laziness and a poor attitude.



Use of inappropriate language.

- ⦿ Beware of using slang words or references to age, race, religion, politics, or sexual preferences. These topics could get the door slammed very quickly.

More Faux-Pas

Giving Too Much Information (TMI)

- Telling the interviewer more than they need to know can be a fatal mistake. Too much information – particularly personal information - could get into some areas that are best not discussed in an interview.

Not Asking Questions

By asking questions, you

- show your interest
- find out what goes on in the company
- find out if this is the right place for you

Note: The best questions come from listening to what is said and asked during the interview. You can then dig for more info.

Salary Negotiation Strategies

- ⦿ Never talk money
 - Until they decide they want you
- ⦿ Know market worth in advance
 - For similar jobs in similar situations
- ⦿ Bracket your salary in range
 - Begin with probable offer and end above what you will settle for
- ⦿ Never say YES or NO to an offer right away
 - Within 24 hours after



Final Thoughts

- ⦿ Don't rely on one job interview. No matter what was said in the interview – continue your search.
- ⦿ If you don't get the job, don't take it personally! There are about a thousand reasons that could have affected your chances.
- ⦿ Accept the fact that not all companies are right for you. Just like blind dates - they are checking you out and you are checking them out. Sometimes it's chemistry – and sometimes it wasn't right for you – for whatever reason.
- ⦿ Try not to get discouraged by the rejects. It's a numbers game and your turn will come if you hang in there.

Handouts

- Interview Checklist
- Tough but Typical Questions
- Behavioral/Competency Questions
- Questions to Ask Interviewer
- Thank you Letter Samples
- Post Interview Checklist

