

STEP 5 SORTING



Two-Way Interviews

Interviewing is a 2-way street. While potential employers and customers are learning about you, you are learning about them. You are both gathering and sorting information about one another – looking for a match of what you do and like best and what they need most.

Successfully sorting through interviewing depends on your being prepared with both questions and answers. Do your homework on the employer/customer as well as the work that needs to be done. Think in advance about what you will say, and also what you will ask. Let your listening and hearing guide your responses. Remember, God gave you 2 ears and only 1 mouth, therefore...

...everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak... James 1:19

To help you get ready for interviewing, we will share with you about:

- 8 Types of interviews
- 4 Steps to engaging interviews
- How to practice interviews before the interview
- Understanding compensation and benefits
- Prepare for testing and get ready for referencing

8 TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

1. *Behavioral Interviews*

Because increasing numbers of employers are using behavior-based methods to evaluate candidates, understanding how to excel in this interview is a critical skill. The idea behind behavioral interviewing is that the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in similar situations.

The interviewer identifies work-related experiences, behaviors, knowledge, skills and abilities that are desirable for a particular assignment. The employer then structures pointed questions to elicit detailed responses aimed at determining if the candidate possesses the desired characteristics. Questions (often not even framed as a question) typically start out: "Tell about a time..." or "Describe a situation when..."

Your response needs to be specific and detailed. Candidates who tell the interviewer about particular situations that relate to each question will be far more effective and successful than those who respond in general terms. Review your STAR accomplishments from Step 2 on page 27 and in your resume on page 47 to prepare for behavioral interviews.

2. *Qualifying or Screening Interviews*

These interviews usually are relatively short and may be done by telephone or in person. They may be as short as 10 minutes, and they rarely last more than an hour. Recruiters or someone from the company's human resources department often conduct them. The interviewers usually focus on your experience and education, your personality and values, and/or your specific technical experience and expertise.

The interviewer may ask about your salary history and compensation expectations. You should try to delay discussion about money until later so you can gain a better understanding of the responsibilities and expectations of the position. If you must declare what compensation you need or want, give as broad a range as possible since so many factors are unknown at this point.

Be sure to ask questions that are important to you, but realize that the screening interviewer may not know some of the answers. The interviewer may know very little about the details of the position for which you're interviewing. Try to find out what the company is looking for, who the hiring manager is (so you can try to network to him/her by personal referral), and what the next steps are.

If the screening interview is done by telephone, be prepared, and don't have any distractions around you. Have your resume and notes on the employer and position with you by the phone. If an interviewer calls without an appointment and you're not ready, ask for few minutes to call back, or schedule another time that will allow you time to get ready so you can be your best.

3. *Hiring Manager Interviews*

This interviewer is usually the person to whom you will report if you are hired. They normally have the most influence on whether or not you're hired. Their success depends on selecting the right person, but they may or may not be the best interviewer.

Seek first to understand, then to be understood. When you meet them, get to know them, their background and current position. Ask questions to discover what this person wants to accomplish through the job and how he/she wants the job done. Take notes and ask follow-up questions. Be alert for opportunities to connect relationally by mentioning things you have in common. Be prepared to tell this person about your accomplishments that parallel their needs. Talk about how you can help this person succeed.

4. *Sequential Interviews*

It's not unusual to have a series of interviews scheduled with a variety of people in the organization—not only the hiring manager and human resources representative, but also employees in and around the position to be filled. All of them are important! Be responsive to their interests and to their perspectives on the job, to what needs to be accomplished through the job, and to the hiring manager. Be sure to make notes on each person you meet, and get each person's business card if possible.

5. *Introduction Interviews*

You may meet senior executives or business owners. The hiring and human resources managers may already have agreed that they want to hire you but need to let senior management get a look. This "chance" meeting is an opportunity to get perspectives from top management on the organization and the work for which you are interviewing.

6. *Presentation Interviews*

For some jobs and organizations, you may be asked to give a presentation followed by a Q&A time. This approach is common in sales organizations. This type of an interview provides an interviewer with an opportunity to evaluate your ability to sell. It also gives you a chance to show your abilities—consider this a great opportunity! While you want your presentation to be memorable, avoid using gimmicks or being too cute. If you're in the room while other candidates are making presentations, be attentive and courteous.

7. *Stress Interviews*

Sometimes one of the interviewers may have the assignment of putting you to the test by asking you difficult questions in hard ways to see how you'll respond. No matter how awkward, frustrating or intimidating, don't lose your cool. Do the best you can, and be firm and friendly. If the interviewer needs to be confronted, do so with tact, speaking the truth in love.

8. *Team or Panel Interviews*

Sometimes you may interview with two or more people at the same time. While potentially intimidating for you, this type of interview saves time for them. The advantage to you is that you have a chance to see how they interact with one another, giving you a feel for the chemistry and the culture of the organization. Be sure to address your answers to everyone in the room. Pay attention to the quietest person, who is often the final decision-maker.

4 STEPS FOR ENGAGING INTERVIEWS

1. *Pray*

Start with your heart. Fill it with positive thoughts about how you can serve the interests of the employer or customer with what you do best and like most. Imagine yourself working for the prospective employer or customer with sincerity of heart. Remember, whatever is in your heart will show up on your lips.

"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart." Luke 6:45

2. *Prepare*

Research the employer or customer by visiting their website to read and print information about who they are, what they do, recent news, careers, and their jobs. Search the Internet for more information. Call people in your network who may know the organization and people in it. Ask about key issues and trends. Make a list of questions to ask during your interviews.

Work through and share with a friend the "Interview before the Interview" Exercises on pages 65-67.

Dress for success. Eat right, exercise, and get plenty of rest the day before the day of the interview. If you need a haircut, get it. If you need new clothing, buy it. If your clothes need cleaning, do it. Look your best – conservatively. Proper attire will vary depending on the organization and the work to be done. Find out what is appropriate in that particular workplace. If you don't know and can't find out any other way, call and ask the person with whom you're going to interview. Read and write the devotional on page 70.

Leave yourself enough time to get ready. Wear little or no jewelry, with the exception of a watch, a wedding ring, and (for women) conservative earrings. Do not wear cologne, perfume or other scents. Be sure that your hair is in place and off your face. You want to look professionally well-dressed so the focus will be on what you have to say and not on how you look. Before you leave your home, check yourself in the mirror. Brush and floss your teeth, and take along breath mints.

Be sure you know the location of the meeting. If you are not sure and have time, make a test run so you can find the building. You can get a map and direction from the Internet. Take money for parking. On your way to the interview, be thinking about this key verse...

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7

Allow plenty of time to find the location and get into the building. Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time. Take time to go to the restroom for one last check; make sure your hair is neat, your clothes are straight, your shoes are clean and your confidence is in place with a smile on your face.

3. *Perform*

Present yourself to the receptionist 5 minutes before the appointment. Be polite and courteous to the receptionist. If offered something to drink while you wait, politely decline. Look around the waiting area for new information on the organization, and be ready to meet the interviewer. Be especially thoughtful of and friendly to administrative and support people who may not be interviewing you but will be making observations; these people may be asked what they thought about you.

As you are waiting, be thinking about this great memory verse...

*Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth,
but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment,
so that it will give grace to those who hear. Ephesians 4:29*

Greet the interviewer with a warm smile and a firm handshake. Look them in the eyes, and tell them how glad you are to meet them. Look around the office for clues about the person like photos of family, certificates or awards. Ask questions or comment on objects of mutual interest.

Ask a short list of questions about the organization and the person interviewing you, as well as about the work to be done. Seek to understand what needs to be accomplished through the job. You can even ask what they are looking for in the successful candidate – often they will tell you.

Answer the interviewer's questions confidently and honestly. Give accurate information and be direct. Limit answers to 10 to 30 seconds, and absolutely no more than 1 minute; the interviewer will ask for more if he/she wants to know more. Feel free to pause to arrange your thoughts; if you do not understand a question, ask for clarification. Always be positive in your answers. Never say anything negative about a previous employer. Focus on your accomplishments by describing a Situation you faced, the Task to be accomplished, the Actions you took and the Results you achieved using the STAR format.

Before the interview is over, ask if you may summarize your understanding of the work to be done and what needs to be accomplished. Summarize your accomplishments relevant to what they need done. Try to connect for them what you do and like best with what they need most.

When closing the interview, thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration. Say that you enjoyed the interview and learning about the company. If you're interested in the position, make sure to say so, but if you think you're not interested, don't say anything at this time. Ask about next steps, and take notes on what you find out.

4. *Praise*

Whether you feel the interview went well or not, praise God from whom all blessings flow. Write thank you notes to the interviewers on nice stationery, as well as send an email. Don't rely on email alone!

If you are interested in the opportunity, say so. If not, don't. If there is another opportunity in the same organization that appears to be a better fit, ask about it. If the organization is not a fit, then perhaps there are others you can recommend. Whatever the situation, do not burn bridges with anyone.

If you are interested and don't hear back from the employer or customer by the agreed upon date, make a follow-up call and/or send an email to underscore your interest. If you hear nothing back, continue to follow-up once a week for 7 weeks. If you still hear nothing, then assume it is not the work prepared for you, and God has something else for you.

Warning! During the interview process, we strongly recommend that you continue searching for and sorting new opportunities. Don't get stuck on one or two possibilities and quit looking.

**Keep praying, networking and searching,
Until you get and accept the offer that's right for you.**

INTERVIEW BEFORE THE INTERVIEW EXERCISE PART 1

The following chart includes some of the most commonly asked interview questions and some tips for answering each one. It's important to use your own words and style when answering questions and to give honest answers.

It's better to have "talking points" in mind rather than trying to memorize answers. Trying to memorize answers creates unnecessary stress for you and may give the appearance that you're not being yourself. For each question, write down some points you'd like to make as you answer. Make sure to include work-related accomplishments (STAR stories with situation-task -action-result) whenever appropriate.

Questions	Tips and Talking Points
<i>1. Tell me about yourself.</i>	Give work-related information. Include such things as education, experience and 3 to 4 strengths. Also include an accomplishment.
<i>2. What do you know about our organization?</i>	Do your research. Check the employer's website, and talk to anyone you can find who works there. Include information the organization's mission, services, products, markets, size, scope.
<i>3. What are your strengths?</i>	Give 3 to 4 work-related strengths. Give examples of accomplishments to illustrate.
<i>4. What are your weaknesses?</i>	Be prepared to talk about a time when you failed to achieve your goals. Keep it brief. Don't elaborate. Tell what you've learned or done to improve.

INTERVIEW BEFORE THE INTERVIEW  **EXERCISE PART 2**

Questions	Tips and Talking Points
<p>5. Tell me about a time when you achieved your greatest accomplishment?</p>	<p>Make it work-related, even related to the position for which you are interviewing. Don't hold back. This is a chance to shine. Use your STAR story to talk about the Situation, Task, Actions and Results.</p>
<p>6. What are you looking for in salary? What was (is) your last (current) salary?</p>	<p>Defer this question until later if at all possible. State that you are interested in the overall opportunity to contribute and grow. If you feel you must answer, talk about the total compensation and a salary range.</p>
<p>7. What are your career goals? Where do you want to be in 5 years?</p>	<p>Relate your answer to the position you are interviewing for. Talk about your desire to grow in your field and to contribute to the organization.</p>
<p>8. Why should we hire you? What contributions can you make?</p>	<p>Give 3 to 4 strengths supported by examples of accomplishments. Relate them to the needs of this employer/position.</p>

INTERVIEW BEFORE THE INTERVIEW  **EXERCISE PART 3**

Questions	Tips and Talking Points
<p>9. Have you ever had a conflict with a boss or co-worker? How was it resolved?</p>	<p>Note that if you say no, most interviewers will keep drilling deeper to find a conflict. The key is how you behaviorally reacted to conflict and what you did to resolve it.</p>
<p>10. Why do you want to work for us?</p>	<p>Using what you know about the employer and position, focus on their needs and how you can meet them.</p>
<p>11. What do you find most attractive about the position we are discussing?</p>	<p>Talk about the challenges of the position and needs of the company, and then talk about how your strengths relate.</p>
<p>12. Why did you leave/are you leaving your last/current position?</p>	<p>Talk about your goals and your plans for meeting them. DO NOT say anything negative about any past employer or boss.</p>

Understand Compensation and Benefits

Discussions about compensation and benefits do not have to be stressful. They help you qualify the opportunity, here are some tips:

- Refer to your “Target Opportunities” Exercise on page 37.
- Do your homework on similar positions using www.Salary.com.
- Ask the employer how they’ve budgeted for the position before or during interviews.
- If you are told the salary, ask if it is the *hiring* range or the *position* range. Most organizations hire at less than the mid-point of the position range so you can earn raises without a promotion.
- If you are asked about desired or current salary, try to delay. If asked on a job application, leave the space blank or write “negotiable.” Tell them you like to understand about the position first. If they insist on knowing, give a broad range, but maybe hold back on your absolute minimum.
- Check their website for information on benefits. Ask about benefits after an offer is made.
- Be careful about ruling out an opportunity because it doesn’t pay enough. After they meet you, they may pay more than planned, or they may have another better opportunity for you.
- For more information, go to “Understanding the Offer” Exercise on page 74.

Prepare for Testing

Testing is a common tool employers use to assess if you have the skills or personality to fit the position. Being asked to take a test is good because it suggests that hiring the right person is important to them.

The key to taking tests is the same as interviewing – eat right, exercise and get plenty of rest. You want to be energetic and relaxed. Be honest with your answers because it is all about fit. Ask if they would like you to share highlights from your CareerDirect or PLACE assessment results.

If the testing shows that your skills or personality do not fit the position, consider that as good news. You don’t want to be in a position or organization that is not a fit for you.

Get Ready for References

Referencing is interviewing others about you. Be ready to provide reference contacts when asked.

Reference requests are most appropriate after interviews have established a mutual interest between you and the employer or customer. Ask with whom they would like to speak. Have a master list of references already prepared so you can select the people best suited for a particular opportunity. Call or email the people you’ve chosen to ask them and let them know what employer will be calling.

Complete the “Master Reference List” Exercise on the next page.

Remember that referencing is a 2-way street, too. You’re evaluating them while they evaluate you. Ask the potential employer or customer for references, such as people who currently or used to work in the department, as well as customers and vendors. Call people you know in or around the organization.

Ask references about their experience with the organization. Assure them of confidentiality, that is you will not report what they say. Be specific in asking questions about not only the organization and work to be done, but also the people. Ask about culture and operation values. Sample questions include...

- What are the critical issues the organization faces? How do/did you like working there?
- What can you tell me about the work to be done, and others who have worked in the job?
- How would you describe the boss and others around the position – strengths and struggles?

Compare notes from your references to those from your interviews. Summarize your findings.



READ & WRITE DEVOTIONAL



DRESS FOR SUCCESS

*Put on the full armor of God
so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.*

*Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,
with the breastplate of righteousness in place,
and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*

*In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith,
with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
Ephesians 6:11; 14-17*

Draw a picture of yourself wearing the full armor of God. Here are the items:

1. Belt girded with **truth**
2. Breastplate of **righteousness**
3. Shoes gospel of **peace**
4. Shield of **faith**
5. Helmet of **salvation**
6. Sword **Word** of God

How will the armor of God help you to *stand firm*? _____

Spiritual “underwear” is more important than physical outerwear. Post this devotional where you will see it while you dress. The full armor of God.... Don’t leave home without it!

STEP 5 SORTING  WRAP-UP

Write down the ideas that were most helpful to you and that you will put into action or practice today.

Write down how you feel now.

Write down your prayer requests for the coming week.



If you have not registered yet, go to www.CrossroadsCareer.org/register and start browsing our webpage of career resources. If you are already registered, log in at www.CrossroadsCareer.org and scroll down to Career Tools > Search by 6 Steps.

Write down the career tools that were helpful.