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Preparing for Your Interview

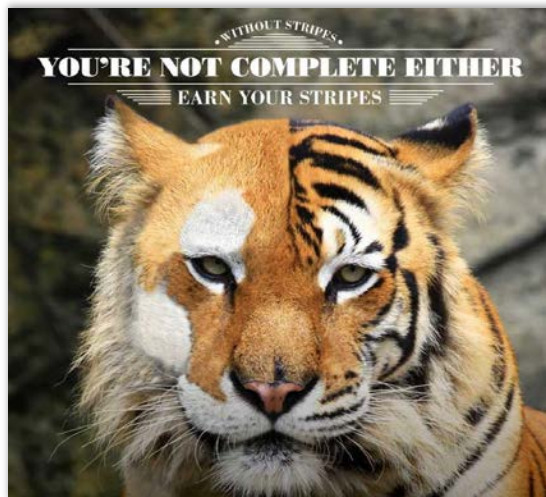
Interview Preparation Packet

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Interview Preparation--Be Prepared and Ace Your Interview!

*Your résumé is polished and ready to go...what's the next step? Your résumé is your initial tool to make a first impression and land the interview for you. The next critical step is being equally **polished for the interview**. Here are some following steps to take to prepare for your interview with any employer.*

1. **Gather as much information as you can about the organization. Some of the information you should know often can come from a trip to the organization's website or annual report if the company is publicly traded. Learn the following:**
 - a) What products or services do they offer?
 - b) Where do they distribute their products and/or services?
 - c) Who are their primary customers?
 - d) Who are their primary competitors?
 - e) What is their mission? Vision? What do you know about their culture?
 - f) Google the company and see what recent news updates you can find that might not be on the website.
2. **Gather as much information about the internship or job you are interviewing for in the upcoming meeting. Specific facts you should learn:**
 - a) Review the description and know what role this position plays in the hiring manager's department.
 - b) Who will be interviewing you? When the appointment is set, ask "Can you tell me who I will be meeting with on Tuesday?" Go to LinkedIn and try to find him or her. Learn their names carefully.
 - c) Identify how your courses can benefit the company. For instance, if this is an Accounting internship and you have just completed a major project in your Audit class, learn how you can "transfer" what you learned in the project to the internship. If you have work samples from a previous internship, take them with you.

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- d) If other students have interned there before, contact them and learn as much as you can—be resourceful!

3. Google yourself—what will they have learned about you?

- a) If you are not on LinkedIn, develop a well-written profile and join! You will need a professional “head shot,” no “Facebook” style photos.
- b) Attend our LinkedIn workshop to learn how to have an All Star LinkedIn profile! There are numerous resources to help you build a great profile! Post your resume on your profile as well.
- c) Consider updating your security settings on your social media accounts so that previous photos by friends will not be visible. Manage your social media well to avoid any unfavorable images.

4. Prepare for the interview.

- a) Purchase a portfolio and print extra copies of your résumé.
- b) Practice the STAR Method attached—this format of questions, “behavioral” questions, are often asked. These are open-ended questions to learn more about you—preparing in advance will help you tremendously!
- c) Develop 5-10 questions that you want to ask the interviewer—these could be:
What have you liked most about working at.....XYZ?
Will this position allow me to work on projects involving_____? (review the description for this one)
What do you think the next 6-12 months will bring to the company? What projects have other interns completed successfully in the past?
Review the description carefully and draft these questions—they don’t have to be tough questions but it shows you did your homework and want to engage with the interviewer!

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5. Get the logistics down!

- a) Call and confirm the interview time and location. Be sure you know where you are going! Take the phone number of the company and the interviewer with you so you can easily call if there's a traffic delay.
- b) Take a trial run the day before so you're sure where the interview is located.
- c) Arrive 10-15 minutes before your appointment, if you are on time, you are late!
- d) Dress like the job you want to have—shoes should be polished, correct “professional dress” even if they are business casual. Err on the side of being overdressed, not underdressed.
- e) Be cordial and pleasant to everyone you meet—sometimes those who are not really interviewing you are watching you in the lobby, on the phone, etc.
- f) Turn off your cell phone! Do not text or answer calls during the interview!
- g) When the interview is over, that day, send a well-written and proofed thank you email to your interviewer (s). If possible, follow-up with a handwritten note. Be sure to spell all names correctly—even if you must call and ask the receptionist to help you!

Virtual Interview Checklist

Many companies today perform virtual interviews. Preparation for virtual interviews is just as important as preparing for face-to-face interviews.

- ✓ Check your surroundings—neat and clean? Professional?
- ✓ Do not have any distracting visuals in the background—TV's, music, conversations.
- ✓ Do a test run with a friend to make sure your camera and volume work properly.
- ✓ Dress just as if you were going in for a face-to-face interview.
- ✓ Make sure you are alone.
- ✓ Turn off electronics (email, cell phone, TV, etc.).
- ✓ Look directly into the camera so that you have a positive view from the receiver's side.

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Interview Follow Up Checklist

- ✓ Send follow-up thank you emails within 24-24 hours. Be concise, courteous and correct - proof carefully!
- ✓ Check spelling of all names and company names.
- ✓ Make sure you are sending notes to correct company/representative.
- ✓ If you have not heard from the employer within one week to ten days, a follow up phone call is appropriate. Practice your phone message carefully before you place the call—you may have to leave a voice mail, so be prepared!
- ✓ Keep a journal of the employers you've interviewed with and corresponded with as well. This step may help you in the future.
- ✓ Maintain an electronic file of all of your correspondence to your employers. A hard copy file can be helpful as well for quick reference.

Notes:

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Interview Preparation Worksheet

Use the following sheet to help you prepare for the interview through research the company, the interviewers, and the social media available.

Interview Appointment: Day/Date/Time _____

Company: _____ Division: _____

Hiring Manager(s)/Interviewer _____

Products and Services: _____

Primary Customers: _____

Competitors: _____

Mission: _____

Research findings: (Google the company): _____

Google the Interviewer/Check LinkedIn: _____

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Which Questions Will You be Asked by the Interviewer?

Common Interview Questions

Tell me about a time when you had to work with a difficult individual.

Describe how you solved a problem at your current job or internship. What were the outcomes?

Tell me about your teamwork skills and how you use them in your current internship.

Tell me about a mistake that you made in your current job. (At the end of your answer on this one, always include.....What I learned from this was.....we all make mistakes, it's what we learn from them that matters)

What is your best quality? What is your worst quality?

Be honest but positive for example:

My best quality is that I can multi-task well when I'm working on a big project.

My worst quality is that I'm a perfectionist at times. I've learned that sometimes time or budgets may not allow that type of detail so I try to be sure to review the project carefully at the beginning and plan carefully now.

Prepare your answers in advance but don't try to memorize them. Be natural but prepared and you will impress the interviewer! Strong interview results are based on strong interview preparation!



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PLANNING + PREPARATION = POLISHED INTERVIEW!

Using the Star Method attached, develop 3-5 “situations” that tell how you handled typical questions like: “Tell me about a time when you worked on a team”—use school projects or previous work examples to answer:

What was the Situation? “In my Organizational Behavior class, the professor wanted us to work together to develop a project on _____ . There were four of us in the group.”

The Task? “We had to develop a 5 page group paper and an interactive PowerPoint presentation for the class, complete with handouts. Each group presented to the class as if the group was teaching the subject to the class.”

Action? “We divided the paper into sections and set deadlines. We all agreed when we would meet to do a group review. Once the paper was moving along, we also developed our ideas for the presentation so that it would be really creative.”

Result? “The professor really liked our presentation and felt we included the class members well. We got an A on the project. We learned a lot, including time management and more creative techniques for handouts and presentations.”

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THE **STAR** METHOD

A technique for answering behavioral questions

Many employers today use behavioral interviewing which is used to identify experience. The idea is that “past behavior is a predictor of future success in a job.” Develop your answers to traditional questions around the STAR – situation, task, action, and result. Class projects can be an excellent example to use if you don’t have related work experience.

SITUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who? • What? • Where? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the back story • Show the situations you have been in
TASK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the challenges and expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you handle the situation?
ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborate on your specific action (s) • What steps did you take? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you overcome any roadblocks? • Was there anything unique about your approach?
RESULT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the outcome and end on a positive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn? • What was your accomplishment? • Be specific and use quantifiable metrics

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Job Interview Cheat Sheet

Use the questions below to help you prepare for common interview questions.

Tell me about yourself

-
-
-

Examples of working in a team environment

-
-
-

Why interested in the company

-
-
-

Example where you took the lead

-
-
-

Strengths and Weaknesses

-
-
-

Examples of innovation/thinking
"outside the box"

-
-
-

Short-term goals

-
-
-

A time when your work was criticized

-
-
-

Long-term goals

-
-
-

Qualities you look for in a supervisor

-
-
-

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Example of ability to multitask deadlines

-
-
-
-
-

Experience working with diverse populations

-
-
-

Why should we hire you?

-
-
-

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Sample Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
3. Give me an example or situation in which you
 - a. Faced a conflict or difficulty at work or in school;
 - b. May have had difficulty with a supervisor, co-worker, or peer;
 - c. Were in a leadership role or had a project you were most proud of.
4. Can we go over your resume?
5. What are your career goals and where do you see yourself in the next five years?

Academic/Professional Interests

1. Why did you choose your major or area of work?
2. What activities are you involved in outside of school/work?
3. What were your favorite/least favorite classes? Why?
4. What did you enjoy most about your last job?
5. How would your professor or past supervisors describe you?
6. Describe your research experience.

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7. What has had the most impact on your academic or professional interests?
8. Have you ever resigned from a job or project? Why
9. Have you ever worked while attending school?
10. What was the most challenging part of your educational/work?

Internship/Job Related

1. Why are you interested in this job/interview?
2. What do you know about our organization?
3. What is our mission statement?
4. Why do you think you are qualified for this position?
5. What do you know about the issues faced by our organization/constituents/members?
6. Do you have any ideas on how to solve or address some of the issues our organization may face?
7. What type of work environment do you prefer?
8. What makes you unique from the other candidates?