

Interviewing Skills

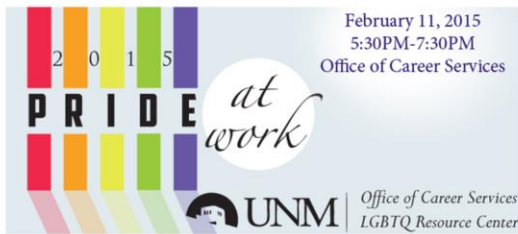
PRESENTED BY: TARA HACKEL

FEBRUARY 2015



- Are any of you job searching or looking for an internship right now?
- For the rest of you, how many of you are interested in getting a job or internship at some point?
- How many of you haven't raised your hands yet? – Why are you interested in this workshop?
- How many of you have had an interview before?
- How did it go? What went well?

Upcoming Events



Register | Which employers are coming?
Career Services | career.unm.edu

- So, now that I've gotten you all to admit that you are interested in internships and jobs, I'm going to convince you to go to the Career Fair next week.
- How many of you have heard about the Career Expo or Pride at Work coming up?
- Talk about each event.

Agenda

1. What is the interviewer looking for?
2. Preparing for an interview
3. General tips for answering questions
4. Follow-up etiquette

What is the interviewer looking for?

- “Fit” with the organization’s needs and culture
- Knowledge of field, type of work, organization
- Related skills and knowledge
- Motivation and initiative
- Self-awareness
- Positive Attitude
- Interviewers: anything to add?

- I know you don’t have the internet right now and I understand that some of you have maybe never thought of this before, but just off the top of your heads, What do you think the interviewer is looking for during an interview?
-

- Typically if you’ve gotten to the interview phase, it’s because, on paper, you are qualified for the position.
- Interviewers are typically inviting only a handful of applicants to the interview phase where they will start to narrow down their list.
- So, not only are they looking to better understand your skills and knowledge, but they are also looking for cultural fit. Would they want to work with you all day every day?
- They want to see that you have done your research on the field as a whole as well as on this organization and this position. **And that you still want to work there.** They might be hiring one or two people and so they care a whole lot about who they bring on board. They want to see that you care about working there, too.
- They are typically looking for red flags. What do I mean by red flags?
 - Lack of motivation, self-awareness, bad attitude
 - In unfortunate cases, maybe that you lied on your resume.

- So, let me ask you all. How do you think you could demonstrate motivation in an interview?
 - when they ask you where you see yourself in 5 years – you don't want to say that you see yourself in this same position. If you're coming in at entry level, most companies want to know that you're interested in moving up and taking on more responsibility.
- How could you demonstrate self-awareness
 - You should be familiar with your strengths and weaknesses. If you understand your weaknesses and have strategies to cope with them, you won't be learning about your weaknesses on the job.
- How would you demonstrate a positive attitude?
 - A really common one: You should never talk crap about anyone. Because if you talk poorly about your old boss, they will expect you to do that with them, too.
- Ask interviewers in the room to add anything to this list.
- Take advantage of this opportunity today: Ask your mock interviewer today what they are looking for during interviews.

What should you be looking for?

- Interviewing is a two-way process
- Additional details about the position and organization
- Opportunities to make the match
- Overall fit with organization (values, culture)
- Clues and “red flags”

- Interviewing is a two way street. You are also looking for fit with the organization. Do you want to work there? Do you want this job?
- From my personal experience, when I first started working, I didn't know a lot about what I wanted in a job. I frankly just wanted a job, right. But, now that I have some years of experience, I better understand the type of characteristics I'm looking for. For example, I always ask about collaboration in an interview. I am a highly collaborative person and if their work culture is very individualistic, I won't make it. That's a deal breaker.
 - So think about what you want in a position and be looking for that during an interview.
- You should also be looking for additional details about the job so that you can continue to make what they are looking for with your experiences. For example, an employer might reveal that they are looking for a certain skillset that was not previously listed in the job posting. You can bring up that skillset in later interview questions.
- You should also be looking for red flags.
 - We have a intern position open because all of our previous summers' interns are not returning.
 - “Why is that?”

- There wasn't enough work to keep them busy so they were bored.

Preparation: Make the Match

1. Research organization/position/industry
2. Know what you have to offer to employers
3. Determine top things you want employer to know about you

Top 5-10 Skills They Want	Why?	You?
1. Good oral and written communication skills.	Why?	Example:
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
...		

- The goal of the interview is to demonstrate your fit for the organization.
- You cannot demonstrate this fit if you don't know what they want, right?
- So, the first thing I do when I'm preparing for an interview is to do some research.
 - I analyze the position posting and know this forwards and backwards. I also try to figure out where the position fits in to the overall structure of the organization.
 - I research the department and company: website, mission statement, annual reports, whatever I can get my hands on.
 - I also research the industry as a whole to try to understand where this company fits in to the bigger picture.
 - For example for the job I have right now, not only did I make sure I understood the organizational chart for my department, but also where this department fits into UNM as a whole.
- Once I've done my research, I make a list of the top skills, experiences, etc. that a company is looking for. The job posting usually breaks this down pretty well for you but their mission statement might clue you in to other things. For example, may the mission focusses on collaboration and innovation. So, teamwork would go on your skills list.
 - I use a table similar to the one up on the screen. The last list I made for a job

interview had about 15 skills.

- Then, I go through and ask myself why they care about this skill. For example, maybe the skill they list is communication. Ask yourself who you will be communicating with in that position. For engineers, you will be communicating with other engineers but may across disciplines. You might also be communicating with customers – maybe communicating technical info to non-technical people. So, maybe you have experience doing this while working on projects for class. So in your resume and interview, you don't just saying you have great communication skills, you can say that you have experience communicating in multidisciplinary teams as well as communicating technical information to people without technical backgrounds. Sounds way better, right?
- So, that's sort of the idea: I drop a skill in, ask myself why they want it, and then apply it to my life.
- Once I do that, I organize it to figure out the top skills I want an employer to know about me. This essentially tells you everything that you want to talk about in your interview.

Preparation

1. Understand Logistics
 - Format, length, parking instructions
2. Research common questions*
 - Glassdoor.com
3. Develop questions to ask the employer (bring 5, ask 2)*
4. Practice
 - Friends/family, mentors, classmates, etc.
 - Schedule a mock interview with Career Services
 - Career Services has an online Mock Interview program
5. Present your best self on the day of the interview*

* Career Services has great handouts on their website, career.unm.edu

- Technical vs. behavioral | Group vs. individual | Over a meal?
- You do not want to be late to an interview because you couldn't find a place to park.
- You can try to figure out some of the questions they might ask. Career Services has a list but you can also look up questions on glassdoor.com by company. People who have had interviews post them.
- You also want to develop questions to ask the employer. You don't want to talk about salary yet. But you can ask things like I mentioned early "tell me a bit about the culture in your office." "what's a challenge your department is currently facing and what role with this new hire play in addressing that challenge?"
- Interviewing is a skill. You were not born knowing how to do calculus. You were not born knowing how to interview. You've made a great effort by coming to this event today. Keep reaching out and practicing. There are a couple ways to do this:
- Present your best self: dress your best. If you don't have a suit, see if you have one you can borrow. I've also had great luck thrifting blazers and slacks. You also want to be prepared to speak with them about their organization and how you fit their

needs.

General Tips for Answers

1. Relate answers to the position at hand
2. Give examples, use relevant data!!
3. Keep your answers concise
4. Stay positive, keep negative answers short
5. Ask for clarification if needed
6. The “Tell me about yourself” question

- Remember, the goal is to show fit.
- You should only talk about things that they will care about and see as relevant to you doing the job.
- If you're applying for a STEM internship, depending on what it is, I likely don't need to know that you are CPR certified. It doesn't mean that you being a lifeguard isn't relevant to this job. Things like the communication skills, teamwork, problem solving, those are all relevant to this job.
- Give examples! It's not enough for you to tell me that you are a great communicator. You need to provide evidence. "I've developed excellent communication skills through leading a team of 5 during a design competition as well as through presenting results of various scientific projects in my courses and at a national conference."
- Answer the question and then stop talking. Give the best example, not every example you have.
- Always stay positive. We've already talked about not taking poorly about people. This goes for everything. If they are asking you to talk about why you want to work for this company. You don't need to talk about why any other companies suck. You can just talk about why this company is a really great fit for you. Tell me about a time you experienced a conflict with a teammate. You do not need to talk poorly about

the other team mate. You simple need to say that you had a disagreement and how you solved the problem. Strengths and weaknesses, do the weakness first so that you can finish on the positive. You need to simple state what the weakness is and the strategies you use to mitigate the challenge.

- If you don't understand the question, ask if they can repeat it. You can also try rephrasing the question. I had an interview question where took me through this really long hypothetical situation and I wasn't entirely sure what they were asking for. So I said "are you asking about my time management skills?" they said yes, and I answered the question.
- This is typically the first question asked during an interview.
- They are not asking how many dogs you have and if you like long walks on the beach.
- They want to know: academically and professionally what has lead you to applying for this position.
- I think of it like the abstract of a science report or publication. It should briefly touch on everything that's going to come up during your interview.
- Before your interview, you want to practice this but not sound too rehearsed. It's a fine balance.

STARR Method

1. Situation
 - Describe the circumstances
2. Task
 - Describe what needed to be done
3. Action
 - Describe what was done
4. Result
 - Describe the outcome
 - Lessons Learned
5. Relate
 - To the position



One way to help you keep your answers concise is the STARR method.

Follow-up Etiquette

- Ask about next steps
- Get business cards
- Send thank you note*
 - Thank you
 - Position
 - Something excited for
 - Match with skills
 - Contact info
- Call your references
- Check on status

- One of your questions should definitely be what the next steps are in the process.
 - They should tell you when they expect to finish interviewing and let folks know who have moved on to the next step. This could be next week this could be in two months.
 - But, they might not know this yet. So, you can then ask, when would be appropriate for me to follow up again?
- You are going to send a thank you note. I encourage students to write hand written notes. I take blank thank you cards with me to the interview. Then, I sit in the lobby or my car and write up the note. Then, I'll drop them off at the front desk before I leave. If you had a phone or skype interview, you can email this thank you note.
 - You have 24-48 hours to send this.
- If it went well and you think you could move on to the next step. You want to remind your references that they will be getting reference checks for you.
- Follow up when you said you would, whether that be two weeks or two months. Don't be a pest. You don't want to ask if you have the job. But you can absolutely ask when they expect to let applicants know about their decision.

Questions

Tara Hackel

The STEM Collaborative Center

- tshackel@unm.edu
- Fun summer field trips
- Job shadowing, etc.

Career Services

- career.unm.edu
- 505-277-2531

Students for STEM Success

- facebook.com/S3UNM
- About > Page Info
- Scholarships, internships, calendar

Upcoming Events

Resume Rescue – walk-ins

- February 11th, 9AM-4 PM, Career Services

Pride at Work – networking, food

- February 11th, 5:30-7:30 PM, Career Services

Career Expo

- February 12th, 9-3, SUB Ballrooms

Etiquette Dinner – interview over a meal

- March 24th, 5-8 PM, SUB Ballrooms