

Step-by-Step Interview Success

Instructor's Guide

Overview

When most people think of a job interview, they imagine spending thirty minutes sweating in a business suit, nervously fielding questions from a potential employer. But the interviewing process is much longer and more complex. It consists of several stages, from preparation to execution to follow up, and job seekers need to know how to handle each of those stages if they hope to be successful. The three main stages and their sub-stages are:

1. The Pre-Interview (Research, Practice, Prepare)
2. The Interview (Opening, Exchange, Closing)
3. The Post-Interview (Follow up, Negotiation, Decision)

Step-by-Step Interview Success will prepare job seekers for the three main stages of the job interview, from the moment one is scheduled to the moment they accept an offer. At each stage in the process, the video provides specific strategies for preparing for, succeeding at, and following up after an interview, while also providing opportunities for viewers to stop and consider how they would approach each stage and answer each question. The goal of the video is to empower each job seeker to interview with confidence and composure gained from knowing what to expect and how to answer questions to convince an employer that he or she is the best candidate for the job.

Presentation Suggestions

Ask participants to describe the entire interview process. What does it look like? How long does it take? What parts of the process do they struggle with? What parts do they have control over? What parts are beyond their control? What parts can they prepare for? If you like, you can map out what they think interviews are like on a board or overhead.

Many participants will likely focus only on the meeting between the job seeker and employer and will ignore all the hard work that happens before and after. Use this as a springboard to talk about the multiple steps involved in a successful interview, from preparation to follow up. Emphasize that most of the hard work required to be successful during an interview happens before they step in the employer's office.

When you feel participants are ready to think about the various stages of the interview process, give them the **Anticipation Quiz** to complete prior to watching the video. If you wish, allow the students to state their answers and discuss them.

Show the video. Encourage students to make changes to the answers they put down for the Anticipation Quiz while watching the video. If you wish, allow students to do this section-by-section whenever the video suggests a pause.

At the conclusion of the video, ask students to discuss any changes they made to their answers on the Anticipation Quiz as a result of information in the video. Follow up the discussion with the **Activities**.

Use the **Discussion Questions** to request oral or written responses from students, or assign the questions as homework essays.

Give the **Quick Quiz** at the conclusion of class and correct the quizzes as a group.

Assign the **Homework Option**, if desired.

Anticipation Quiz

Directions: Answer these questions as completely as possible. You will revise your answers as you watch the video.

1. True or false: It's a good idea to memorize answers to every possible question you could be asked in an interview.
2. List three things you can do to prepare for an interview the night before.
3. What is the one interview question you absolutely must have a great answer for?
4. Name two things that a thank-you note does for you as an interviewee.
5. How does researching a company ahead of time help you during an interview?
6. List three things that contribute to making a positive first impression.

Answer Key

1. False. But you can use key strategies to answer just about any question.
2. (Answers may vary.) Set out and iron your interview attire. Pack your briefcase. Practice common interview questions and responses. Plan your transportation and route to the interview.
3. What makes you the best candidate for the job?
4. (Answers may vary.) Keeps you on the forefront of the employer's mind, shows you are gracious, reiterates your interest in the job, provides a final chance for you to emphasize your key skills.
5. It helps you appear knowledgeable about the company and the industry, and it can help you to connect your skills and past accomplishments to the company's current

needs and goals.

6. (Answers may vary.) A warm smile, a firm handshake, good eye contact, proper manners, good posture, professional appearance.

Activities

Activity #1

Title: Making the Connection

Format: Individual/Pairs

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Resume, sample job openings, pen and paper

Procedure:

1. Print out a wide variety of job descriptions for open positions and put them in a hat. (You can easily find them online at sites like Monster.) Have each participant draw a job at random or draw two and then pick one to work with.
2. Participants should then use their resume as well as their own understanding of their best transferable skills and abilities to think of three reasons why they would be good at doing the job they chose. These reasons should be directly tied to their best skills.
3. Participants should then split into pairs and practice answering the following question with regard to the position they drew: *Why are you the best candidate for the job?*

Activity #2

Title: Story Time

Format: Group/Pairs

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. As a group, make a list of all the possible ways an interviewer may finish this request: Tell me about a time when....
2. Break participants into teams of two and have each person take a turn being the interviewer and the job seeker. Role-play responding with anecdotes. Give everyone

the chance to answer at least two different versions of “Tell me about a time when....”

3. When everyone has had a chance to practice, come back together as a whole group and discuss strategies for answering questions of this nature. What kinds of stories/examples work best? How do you incorporate your skills? How do you keep the story concise? How do you tie it back to the job you are applying for?

Discussion Questions

1. The video suggests that you have a very small amount of time, probably less than thirty seconds, to make a positive first impression. What do you think is most important when making first impressions? What do you notice when meeting someone for the first time? How can first impressions alter the course of the rest of the interview?
2. Your decision of whether or not to take a job should not depend solely on salary. There are many factors that go into deciding whether a position is right for you. Think about the things that you value most in your work. Which is more important: flexible hours or autonomy? The potential for advancement or the possibility for extra training and education? What would you consider to be your three most important requirements for a new job?
3. Everyone has at least one question that they don't want to answer. Maybe it's a question about your work history, or your education, or your relationship with a past supervisor. Because such a question likely makes you uncomfortable, you should be prepared to answer it. Think about what that question is for you and discuss different ways you could answer it.

Quick Quiz

Note: You may read these questions out loud, allowing time for students to respond, or copy and hand this out as a written exercise. If you read the quiz, write or project responses for the group to see.

Directions: Indicate whether each statement is true or false, according to the video.

1. A company's mission statement can usually be found on its web page.
2. The interview process starts from the moment you shake the interviewer's hand.
3. A business suit is generally appropriate attire for any interview.
4. You generally have two to three minutes to make a good first impression.

5. Regardless of what question you're asked, you need to provide evidence of your abilities in the form of past successes.
6. Looking your best can increase your self-confidence.
7. You should come to the interview with two or three questions that you'd like to ask the interviewer.
8. You should *not* tell the interviewer you want the job at the end because it makes you look desperate.
9. A thank-you note is a nice gesture, but it won't have any impact on whether or not you get the job.
10. If the salary is non-negotiable, you can assume all other aspects of compensation are non-negotiable as well.

Answer Key

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. True | 6. True |
| 2. False | 7. True |
| 3. True | 8. False |
| 4. False | 9. False |
| 5. True | 10. False |

Homework Option

The video emphasizes the importance of research as a pre-interview strategy. Researching the company beforehand can provide you with information about the company's **products, goals, values, personnel, corporate structure, current initiatives, past successes and failures, and financial outlook**. You can then use this information to give more comprehensive answers during an interview, connecting your past experience directly to the company's needs and values.

Using the resources listed in the video as well as any others you can find, research a company that you intend to interview with or would like to interview with in the future. Be sure to find information on all the boldfaced terms listed above. When you've finished, use your research to write an answer to the following question: *Why do you want to work for this company?*