Interview Skills Workshop

Adelphi University
Center for Career Development
Post Hall
One South Avenue
Garden City, NY 11530

Phone: 516.877.3130
Email: careerconsultor@adelphi.edu
On Your Interview

First impressions...
First things first...

- Interviewers decide about you in the first few seconds of seeing/meeting you.
- Then, they spend the rest of the interview *justifying* their decision.
- *First Impressions* can only be made ONCE.
On Your Interview

The first look...
First things first...

- A first and lasting impression of you is usually what someone perceives, including:
  - how you LOOK
  - how you MOVE
  - how you SOUND
Dress for success...
You’ve got the look...
You’ve got the look...
Get the look...

- Jacket/pants or jacket/skirt cut from the same cloth
- Black, dark blue, medium to dark gray
- No beige
- Solid, plaid or tweed (subtle pinstripe is ok)
Get the look...

- Women
  - skirt suit preferred
  - pantsuit ok
- Men
  - single-breasted, 2- or 3-button jacket
  - no loud patterns in your tie
Putting your best foot forward...
Your best foot forward...

- **Men**
  - Black oxfords or loafers
  - Black dress socks
Your best foot forward...

- Women
  - Black or color coordinated with suit
  - Simple pumps, mid-heel
  - Neutral, tan, taupe
  - Bring extra pair!
Ready, set, accessorize...
Accessorizing your look...

- Bags
  - Black or dark leather
  - No studs/tassels
  - No logos
Accessorizing your look...

- Portfolio
  - Black, brown, maroon leather
- Belt
  - Leather
  - Same color as your shoes
Perfecting your look...
Perfecting your look...

Hair
- Women: well-groomed, tied back if long
- Men: well-groomed, clean shaven
Perfecting your look...

- **Nails**
  - Women: short-medium length clear polish, no chips
  - Men: clean, buffed, trimmed
Perfecting your look...

- **Make-up**
  - Natural / healthy-looking
  - Do not use too much!
Perfecting your look...

- **Hygiene**
  - Shower that day
  - Use deodorant
  - All clean clothes
  - *Very light* perfume/cologne, if any
A JOB FAIR is a mini-interview for full-time positions, so interview dress guidelines apply
Dressing for job fairs...

- At a Job Fair, *Business Casual* may be acceptable when applying for summer jobs

- *BUSINESS CASUAL*
  - Blazer and slacks
  - Button-down shirt
  - Khakis may be acceptable
  - Loafers
Dressing for job fairs...
What NOT to wear at the fair...
What NOT to wear...

- Sneakers or sandals
- Sweats
- Shirts with pictures or writing
- Jeans
- Hats
- Backpacks
Other NO-NOS...

- Chewing gum
- Ringing cell phones
Prepping for your interview...
Prepping for your interview...

- Find out “format” of interview
  - group vs. 1-to-1
- Research employer in advance!
- Review resume
  - have a “story” to elaborate on each point
- Prepare answers to likely questions
- Do a “dry run” to the site, so you are not late
Finishing touches...
Finishing touches...

• Practice greeting
  – eye contact, firm handshake
• Bring extra
  resumes/reference list in
  portfolio
• Avoid unnecessary baggage
• Arrive 10-15 minutes in
  advance
• Be polite to ALL you
  encounter on the way
Finishing touches...

- Avoid coffee/dairy products beforehand
- Turn down any offer of beverage or food
Finishing touches...

- Obtain business card(s) of interviewer/recruiter
- Determine hiring timetable
  - when can you expect to hear from them regarding a decision?
It’s all about selling yourself...
Your sales pitch...

- 2 minutes, maximum
- Summarize education, work history and reason for interest in the position
- Don’t ramble
  - no personal information
- Conclude: express your enthusiasm for opportunity to learn more about (...insert organization name)
Prepping for informational interviews...
Informational Interviews...

- Gather information
- Find out how to make yourself more marketable
Informational Interviews...

- Sound like an "insider" on your actual job interview
- Increase network of contacts
Master behavioral interviews...
Behavioral interviews...

- “Tell me about a time when…”
- Don’t just TELL me, SELL me!
• How did you handle job-related situations?
  – conflict, teamwork, leadership, multi-tasking, prioritization...
• Be SPECIFIC (Do not theorize or generalize).
  – Include context, action and results
Selling your strengths AND weaknesses...
Strengths and weaknesses...

- Give concrete examples that PROVE your strengths
- Relate them to employer’s needs
- Areas that need improvement – show SOLUTION in progress!
- DON’T use, “I work too hard.”
Commonly asked questions...
Be prepared to answer...

- Why are you interested in this position?
- What goals have you set for yourself?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Why did you select your major area of study (or this career)?
Be prepared to answer…

- What was your most significant contribution during your last job or internship?
- If I were to contact your most recent supervisor for a reference, what would he/she have to say about you?
- Be prepared for a role-play scenario
How to NOT land a job...
10. Like, y’know, what does your company do?
9. My greatest weakness is that I work too hard. Basically, I’m a workaholic.
8. If I worked for you, what would you pay me?
7. I want to work here because it’s close to home.
What NOT to say...

6. How’d I choose this career/major/college? I dunno.

5. You touch somebody and they call it sexual harassment!

4. I’m also interviewing in advertising, insurance, social services and sales.

3. In five years, I plan to have my own business.
What NOT to say...

2. Can we wrap this up fairly quickly? I have someplace I have to go.

1. I was fired from my last job because they were forcing me to attend anger management classes.
Negotiating your salary...
Negotiating salary...

- Deflect the issue as long as possible!
- Do NOT bring it up until AFTER the interviewer does
Negotiating salary...

- If asked about your salary expectations, provide a RANGE
  - not a specific #
Negotiating salary...

- Show that you are flexible
- Research salaries
  - www.salary.com
  - www.payscale.com
  - www.onetcenter.org
Show that you know...
Essential questions to ask...

- Could you describe the *typical career path* for this position?
- What do you consider to be *the most important aspects* of this job?
- Could you *describe a typical day/week/month* in this position?
Essential questions to ask...

- This organization recently (use your research here). How is this affecting the organization?
- DON'T ASK about SALARY, VACATION, BENEFITS
Summary of key strategies...

- Demonstrate RESEARCH
- Explain by EXAMPLE
- Ask QUESTIONS
- Express ENTHUSIASM
Don’t forget to follow up...
Following up...

- Get interviewer's business card
- Ask: What is your timeline for filling this vacancy?
- Send thank you letter within 48 hours (must be error-free)
- Jot down notes: positives AND negatives
  - study before next interview
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