

Interviewing with Confidence

Participant Guide

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Career and Workplace Enhancement Center



Learning Bite: Interviewing With Confidence

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About the CWE Center

The Career and Workplace Enhancement (CWE) Center was established by the Labor Management Committee (LMC), a partnership between OHSU and AFSCME. Our mission is to transform and enrich the workplace and work lives at OHSU through professional development focused on:



CWE Center services include:

- Classes
- Requested Unit Training
- Online Learning
- Certificate Programs
- Educational Reimbursement
- Career Counseling
- Conflict Management Coaching
- Lending Library

About Your Facilitator:



Christine Lundeen, Career Development Specialist, joined OHSU in September 2014 with 9 years of career development experience. She provides individual career counseling and offers a variety of career development classes with the goal of promoting an environment of career satisfaction and growth at OHSU. Christine enjoys helping people identify their strengths, skills, interests and values and how those translate into a satisfying career path. Christine is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and holds a master's degree in counseling from the University of Cincinnati and an undergraduate degree in psychology from Linfield College. She also enjoys being involved in leadership with the Oregon Career Development Association (OCDA) and the National Career Development Association (NCDA).

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Learning Objectives

Below are the key participant outcomes of this class:

- Learn effective interviewing practices with a focus on common questions and behavior based interviewing.
- Practice answering questions with peers.

****Core Competencies and behaviors aligned with this class:***



Performance Results

- Knows personal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and limits.
- Seeks feedback.
- Participates in continuous development of knowledge skills and abilities that drives ongoing performance excellence

**Most CWE Center courses align with any one of the Core Competencies. The competencies and behavior(s) listed above are highlighted by the instructor because they are thought to be most relevant. We encourage you to also identify competencies and behaviors you think relevant to this course and your development.*

Participant Introductions

THE 2 MINUTE INTRODUCTION

Name and current position
(30 seconds)

Education & Training
(30 seconds)

Work History
(30 seconds)

What has brought me here today...
(30 seconds)



Congratulations, you have been offered an interview!

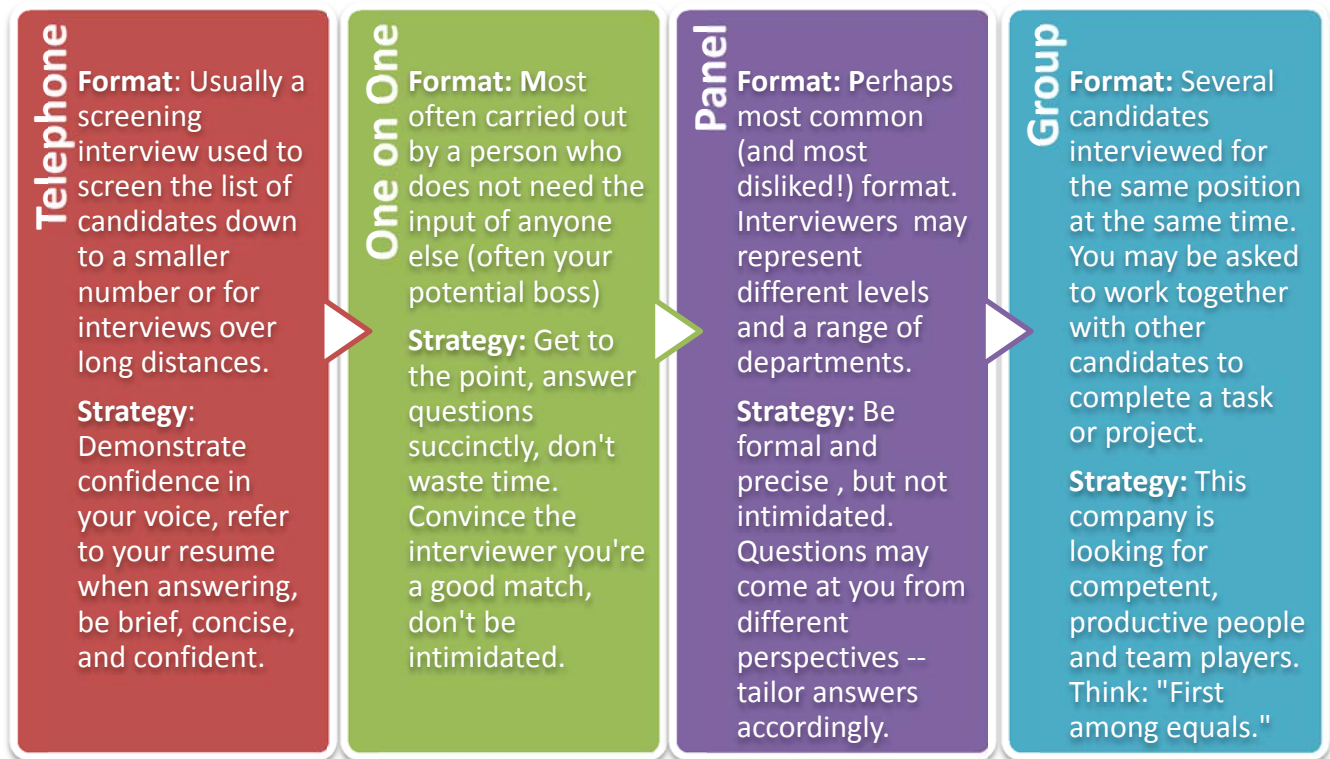
Preparation is the key when it comes to successful interviews. When you are offered a job interview, be sure to ask:

- What is the interview format? (telephone, one-on-one, panel, group, other?)
- With whom will I be interviewing? (names, job titles)
- What is appropriate attire? (only ask if it is not obvious, best to wear formal interview attire if unsure)

Knowing the answers to these questions not only provides important insight into the culture and decision-making process of the organization, but also helps you prepare.

The following are tips that will help you be successful in some of the most common interview formats.

INTERVIEW FORMATS



Before the Interview

DO YOUR RESEARCH: UNDERSTAND THEIR NEEDS

Taking the time to adequately research the organization, its people, and the job itself can help you understand the organization's current and future needs. Clarifying the employer's needs is the first step in understanding and "selling" the specific benefits that you bring to the organization.

People

- Interviewer(s)
- Your potential supervisor
- Other key managers/leadership

The Position

- Job description
- Informational interviews

The Department

- Mission/vision
- Goals
- Structure

Organization

- Mission/vision
- Strategic plan
- Annual reports
- Newsletters/press releases
- Organizational culture

Industry

- Competitors
- Current trends

Review Your Key Strengths and Qualifications

If you have been asked to interview for a job, it is likely that you have already met several requirements for the position. Review your resume and application materials against your research of the organization and the position. Write out your key qualifications for this position and list specific ways that your background and experience will allow you to satisfy the organization's needs.

As a general rule, interviewers are looking for answers to three basic questions during the process: *CAN you do the job? WILL you do the job? Do you FIT in?* Use your knowledge of the organization, the position, and your experience to identify your key selling points in each of these categories.

My Interview Agenda

Can Do (Knowledge, Skills, Abilities)	Will Do (Attitude, Enthusiasm, etc.)	Fit (Dept./Org Culture & Values)
Communicate and demonstrate how I can satisfy the organization's needs.	Show the appropriate level of interest in the position and the organization.	Demonstrate that I understand and am a good fit with the culture and values of the team and organization.
My key selling points:	My key selling points:	My key selling points:

Coping with Pre-Interview Stress

A certain level of stress before an interview is normal and can have positive effects, helping us to prepare and improve performance during difficult times.

Use positive stress (eustress) to motivate you to prepare, set out the clothes you will wear to your interview, prep a folio of information with copies of your resume, list of references, a notepad and a pen.

Recognize when stress has become counterproductive (distress), and use good stress reduction techniques to minimize negative impacts of stress including exercise, listening to relaxing music, yoga, meditation, planning and getting organized, etc.

Good nutrition and adequate sleep also work to our benefit in reducing negative stress. The week before the interview (and especially the day before), be sure to eat nutritious meals and get plenty of sleep. Do not skip meals on the day of your interview. Refrain from alcohol/drugs to cope with stress.

What is one activity that helps you manage counterproductive stress?

Consider prioritizing this stress management activity during the week leading up to (and even the day of) your interview.



At the Interview

Don't...

- ramble use STAR format!
- forget your agenda -- remember your key points about your professional experience and expertise.
- talk negatively about a former employer or supervisor.
- ask about salary, benefits, or sick/vacation time.

Do...

- be sure you heard the question correctly.
- use specific examples in your answers.
- answer questions directly.
- use positive terms to describe your experience.
- be confident, smile!
- offer a firm handshake.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION FOR THE AMERICAN WORKPLACE

Your body language can often convey a stronger message than your words. Effective use of non-verbals can help you stand out in an interview. Make a great first impression by adopting a **confident posture, consistent eye contact, a warm smile, and a firm handshake.**

Avoiding eye contact	• Insecure, passive, nervous
Scratching the head	• Bewildered
Biting the lip	• Nervous, fearful, anxious
Tapping feet	• Nervous
Folding arms	• Defensive, disapproving
Raising eyebrows	• Disbelieving, surprised
Narrowing eyes	• Resentful, angry
Flaring nostrils	• Frustrated
Wringing hands	• Anxious, nervous
Shifting in seat	• Restless, bored, apprehensive

- **Posture** – hold your head up, stand up straight, be confident, but not stiff
- **Eye Contact** – maintain eye contact with those who are speaking, but don't stare
- **Smile** – conveys confidence and can put you and your interviewer(s) at ease
- **Handshake** – should be firm, not too light or “fishy.” Don't be afraid to initiate

Interview Questions

MOST COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (QUESTIONS TO EXPECT)

1. Tell me about yourself and why you interested in this position?
2. Why did you select your current career/field?
3. How is your education and/or previous experience applicable to this position?
4. What are your top three strengths? One weakness?
5. What is your immediate career goal?
6. What are your long-range career objectives?
7. How would you describe yourself? How would someone else describe you?
8. How do you work under pressure?
9. How do you deal with conflict?
10. What was the biggest obstacle you have had to overcome?
11. What two or three things are most important to you in a job?
12. In what kind of environment are you most comfortable?
13. Describe the kind of relationship that should exist between a supervisor and supervisee.
14. What skills have you developed that would prepare you for this job?
15. What two or three accomplishments are you particularly proud of?
16. Why should I hire you?

BEHAVIOR-BASED QUESTIONS: THE ST.A.R METHOD

Behavioral questions are based on the idea that past behavior is the best indicator of future performance. When answering these questions you must be specific and detailed in your responses. Use the acronym **St.A.R.** to help you develop concise stories that represent challenging situations that you were able to turn into something positive.



St = Situation – describe the situation, a problem you faced, or a challenge

A = Action – discuss the actions you took

R = Result – describe the outcomes from your actions (quantify when possible), and explain what you learned.

COMMON BEHAVIOR-BASED QUESTIONS

Tell me about a time when you...

1. Worked effectively under pressure.
2. Handled a difficult situation with a co-worker.
3. Were creative in solving a problem.
4. Were unable to complete a project on time.
5. Persuaded team members to do things your way.
6. Were forced to make an unpopular decision.
7. Had to adapt to a difficult situation.
8. Were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.
9. Were disappointed in your behavior.
10. Had to deal with an angry customer.
11. Delegated a project effectively.
12. Overcame a major challenge.
13. Prioritized the elements of a complicated project.
14. Made a bad decision.

40 DIFFICULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe a few situations in which your work was criticized.
2. Are you analytical? Creative? Give an example.
3. Can you delegate responsibility? Give an example.
4. Describe a typical day in your last position.
5. What strengths did you use in your last position that made you effective?
6. What have been the greatest failures or frustrations in your work life?
7. What did you do in your last position to be more effective?
8. Describe when you were forced to be relatively quick in decision making.
9. Describe when you used communication skills to get an important point across.
10. Describe when you spoke up to ensure others knew what you thought or felt.
11. Describe when you successfully motivated your co-workers or subordinates.
12. Describe the most significant written document, report, or presentation you completed.
13. Describe how you 'read' a person and acted with respect to their personal needs or values.
14. What, specifically, have you done to be effective with personal organization and planning.
15. Describe the most creative work-related project you completed.
16. Describe when you positively influenced others' actions in a desired direction.
17. Do you like to work? Why?
18. What interests you most about this position? Least?
19. What do you want to be remembered for?
20. What other positions interested you?
21. What risks did you take in your last few positions and what were the results?
22. What do you do when you have trouble solving a problem?
23. Describe how you faced problems or stresses that tested your coping skills.
24. Describe a past, important goal and your method of reaching it successfully.
25. Describe when you went above and beyond the call of duty to get a job done.
26. Describe a time you modified your actions in response to another person's needs.
27. Describe a problem you faced and how you resolved it.
28. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and a subordinate.
29. In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
30. If you were an employer, what candidate qualities would you look for?
31. What kind of people do you like? Dislike?
32. What do you think of your previous supervisor?
33. What did your subordinates think of you?
34. What makes you angry?
35. What was your previous supervisor's title and functions?
36. How do you go about making important decisions?
37. What are some things your employer might have done to be more successful?
38. Describe, specifically, when you withheld comment or postponed a task to ensure an informed decision could be made.
39. Describe, specifically, when you conformed to a policy you disagreed with.
40. What, specifically, have you done, to contribute toward a teamwork environment?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

1. How would you describe the main responsibilities of the position?
2. How would you describe a typical day/week in this position?
3. Why is the position open? Is there an internal candidate?
4. What are the main issues that you see as needing attention in the position?
5. Who would be my key associates/co-workers?
6. Who would be my supervisor?
7. Whom would I supervise?
8. What would be the extent of my authority in carrying out these responsibilities?
9. What objectives do you have in mind that you would hope the person who is hired meets or surpasses?
10. What are the opportunities for growth and advancement?
11. What is the typical career path that an employee follows in this organization?
12. How would I best learn the practices, policies, and expectations that will enable me to function successfully?
13. What are you personally looking for in the successful candidate?
14. Is there anything I have not addressed about my fit for the position?
15. Who sets the priorities for this position?
16. How will my performance be evaluated? By whom?
17. What is the best thing about this position and what is most challenging?
18. What do you like about working in this team?



*What questions do
you have for us?*

QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

1. What does your department do? (Do your research ahead of time!)
2. How soon would I be able to take time off for vacation? (Wait until you get the offer to mention prior commitments)
3. Can I change my schedule if I get the job? (If you need to figure out the logistics of getting to work don't mention it now...)
4. Did I get the job? (Don't be impatient. They'll let you know.)

TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING AT PANEL INTERVIEWS

- **Introduce yourself to each of the interviewers**, if needed, jot notes on a notepad to remember names, titles, etc.
- When responding, **look primarily at the person who asked the question**, but include the other panel members as well.
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions**, especially to get clarification on a question you are answering.
- **Don't be intimidated by the formal design** and specific time limits. This format is focused on giving equal treatment to all candidates, but on the surface it may sometimes feel unfriendly.
- Often **candidates find it more difficult to "read" interviewers** in this format, they may be busy writing notes and not responding with favorable body language. **Remain positive, warm, and confident** – this is not necessarily a bad sign.
- **Thank each of the interviewers** for their time, by name if possible.



After the Interview

HOW DID IT GO?

After the interview, take a moment to evaluate the interview meeting. Respond to the questions below and take notes on your answers. Consider not only your own performance, but also your evaluation of the job itself.

If you identify any remaining questions or “missed opportunities” – these may be perfect items to include in a follow-up phone call or a thank you note.

- What went well?
- What did you learn?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Has your impression of the job/organization changed? How so?
- Do you have any additional questions for them?
- Did you articulate your top qualifications? Anything you missed?

Notes:



SEND A THANK YOU NOTE

Send a well-written thank you note within 24 hours of the interview to show your appreciation and to reiterate your interest in the job. Consider these tips in writing your thank you note:

- Remind the interviewer of your top qualifications.
- Include information you might have overlooked in the interview.
- Mention something specific that you learned or that impressed you about the organization, especially if you can tie it to your skills, goals, or ability to contribute.
- Thank you notes may be hand written or sent via email, but consider your audience and the hiring timeframe in making your decision. Email is quick and a good choice if a hiring decision is to be made very soon, although a more personal hand-written note may be a better option if there is more time.

THANK YOU NOTE SAMPLE

Dear (Name),

I enjoyed meeting with you yesterday and learning more about the (name the position) at (name the organization or department).

Our conversation confirmed my interest in becoming part of your team. I was particularly interested to learn more about the upcoming project to improve patient satisfaction outcomes in your clinic. I feel confident that my customer service experience and attention to detail would enable me to excel in this position and effectively meet each of the job requirements.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide you with any further information. I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

- ✓ Address the interviewer(s) by name.
- ✓ Open with a positive, pleasant greeting.
- ✓ Remind the interviewer of the position for which you interviewed.
- ✓ Make sure to mention your continued interest in the position.
- ✓ Mention something specific that you learned, demonstrate that you understand their needs.
- ✓ Highlight your top qualifications as they relate to their specific needs.
- ✓ Invite the interviewer to keep in touch.
- ✓ Thank them for the interview.
- ✓ Use a formal closing

IT AIN'T OVER 'TILL IT'S OVER!

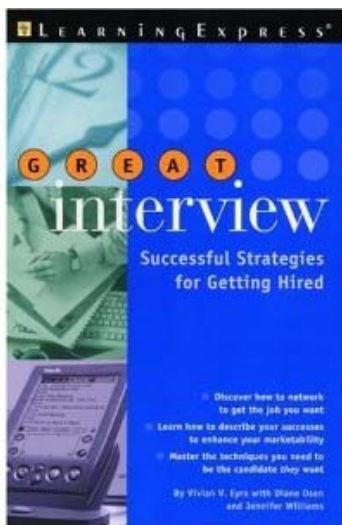
Waiting to hear from an employer on a job offer can be exciting, but also very uncomfortable. Unfortunately, the hiring process frequently takes longer than anticipated, as hiring has become an increasingly complex process often involving many people within an organization.

It's important not to assume the worst. Instead, try these tips:

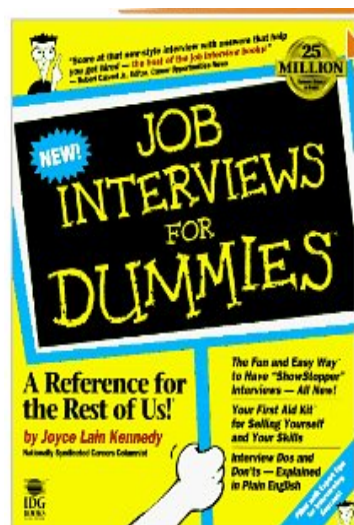
- Maintain a positive, proactive attitude and work to keep lines of communication open between you and the hiring manager.
- Always ask what the next step in the hiring process is. Is it a second interview? When can you expect to hear back?
- If you haven't been contacted by the employer within the timeframe they expressed, it's okay to follow up with them. Politely explain that you are checking in to let them know you are still interested in the position and to see if they have an updated timeline for making their decision.



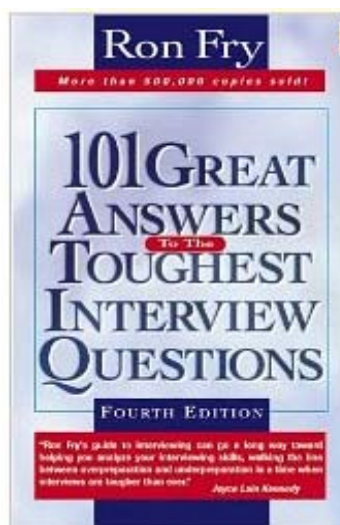
Additional Resources



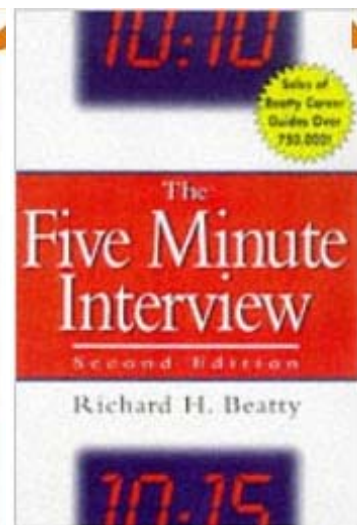
Great Interview! Successful Strategies for Getting Hired
By Learning Express



Job Interviews for Dummies (For Dummies Series)
By Joyce Lain Kennedy



101 Great Answers to the Toughest Interview Questions
By Ron Fry



The Five-Minute Interview
By Richard Beatty

These titles are available for loan through the CWE Center Lending Library www.ohsu.edu/cwecenter/selfpaced

Oregon Career Information System (CIS)

OHSU's CIS is an online system that provides information on more than 300 careers at OHSU, including required qualifications, wage information, links to education/training programs, and much more. Based on the Oregon CIS platform, this easy-to-use system is a great resource for planning your career/education, conducting a job search, and making the most of your OHSU career.



To Access OHSU's CIS

1. Visit the CWE Center Career Development Website: www.ohsu.edu/cwecenter/cis
2. Then, click on the CIS Globe logo or "Login" link to get started.

➔ **Interviewing tips are located under the "Employment" Tab under "Job Search"** ←

Note: You do not need a user name and password to access Oregon CIS from within the OHSU network. If you want to access Oregon CIS from off-campus use this information to log in: User Name: cwecenter, Password: enhancement

Notes

Career and Workplace Enhancement Center

A partnership between OHSU and AFSCME

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