

INTERVIEWING & ACCEPTING THE JOB OFFER

**“You don't have to be a genius.
You don't have to be a straight-
A student. You just have to do
your very best with all the
capability you have. You have to do your
very best. And somehow, if you do that, God will open the
way before you and the sun will shine, and your lives will
be fruitful and you will accomplish great good in the world
in which you take a part. I couldn't wish for you anything
better as I look into your faces this day.”**

- Pres. Hinckley to BYU-Idaho students

Academic Discovery Center

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PREPARE FOR THE INTERVIEW

Before the Interview

- Research the job you are applying for and the company.
- Be prepared – practice answering questions and have examples of experiences ready.
- Take copies of your résumé and references in a professional portfolio.
- Prepare questions to ask.
- Arrive 10 minutes early.

Sample Interview Questions

10 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What is your most important accomplishment to date?
3. What motivates you?
4. Why should I hire you?
5. Tell me about some of your recent goals and what you did to achieve them.
6. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
7. What major problem have you had to deal with recently?
8. What is your greatest strength?
9. What is your greatest weakness?
10. If I were to ask one of your professors or a boss to describe you, what would they say?

“Tell me about yourself” is a very common interview question and what the interviewer is looking for can seem unclear. Here is a good format to use when responding to this question:

- Introduce yourself.
- Tell what your current status is (student status and/or job title).
- Describe what you do at school and/or work.
- Describe one or two things you’ve accomplished or excel at that directly relate to the position.
- Mention why you decided to apply for the position.

Remember to keep your answer short and concise.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO ASK

- What do you like the best about your job?
- What do you like the best about this company?
- What is the most important quality you are looking for in a candidate for this position?
- What are your expectations for the person you hire?
- What do you see as the main priorities of this position?
- What do you see as the main challenges for this position?
- Do you offer a training program? If so, can you explain it?
- What are the advancement opportunities for this position and the typical time frame for advancement?
- What makes this company/organization different from others?
- What would a typical day be like in this position?
- Where do you see the company headed in the next 3-5 years?
- Can you explain your organizational structure?
- How would you best describe your corporate culture?
- I’m excited about this position. What are the next steps in the hiring process?
- What is your timeline for making a hiring decision?
- *Any other questions that are specific to the company or position.*



Interview Practice

Tell me about yourself.

Everyone gets nervous in interviews. The best cure for nerves is practice. Participate in a practice interview at the Academic Discovery Center (MC 129)



What do you see yourself doing five years from now?

What is your greatest strength?

What is your greatest weakness?

BEHAVIORAL-BASED INTERVIEWS

Behavioral-based interviewing is often used by employers based on the premise that the most accurate predictor of the future is past performance in similar situations.

How to Prepare

Identify three successful situations you have been involved in and are proud of. Then identify three situations that didn't work out as planned, but where you handled the challenges well. Be able to answer specific questions using those situations/experiences. The best way to accomplish this is to use the four-step STAR process.

Situation	Describe a specific situation that you were in. This situation can be from a previous job, a volunteer experience, a school project, or any relevant event.
Task	Describe the task you needed to accomplish. What was the goal?
Action	Describe the action you took and keep the focus on what YOU did.
Results	Explain the results you achieved. What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

Sample STAR Answer

QUESTION: Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership.

NOT QUITE THERE...

- S** – I am a member of the Management Club and I was put in charge of our fundraising event.
- T** – I was responsible for all the logistics of the event and making sure it was successful.
- A** – I made sure we had all the resources and enough volunteers to staff the event.
- R** – The event was very successful. Everyone had a good time and it went smoothly.

A BETTER ANSWER...

- S** – I am an active member of the Management Club. As a club, we do many activities including fundraisers for charity. This year the charity we worked with was Animal Rescue, which is a facility that provides care and rehabilitation for abandoned, neglected, or abused animals.
- T** – For the fundraiser, we decided to sponsor a concert with several local bands. I volunteered to be in charge of the event. This included handling all the logistics of the bands and necessary equipment, advertising the event, scheduling security for the event, and staffing the event with volunteers. The goal was to have over 200 people attend and raise over \$1,000.
- A** – First, I assembled a team of six members from the club to help with the event. I met with the team to identify all of the tasks that needed to be accomplished, and then I made assignments. It was very important to me that goals were set and I established a timeline to meet those goals. As the team worked to plan the concert, I kept in contact with each team member and helped them solve problems that came up. One week before the event, the bands were booked and the equipment was rented. Posters and flyers were posted all over campus, and emails were sent to various email lists. I personally contacted volunteers and had enough committed to help at the concert.
- R** – The event was a big success. Over 300 people attended the concert and \$1,500 was raised for Animal Rescue. We also didn't have any safety issues because I had arranged for campus security to be there. I am very proud of the outcome of this event. I worked really hard to manage the team and the volunteers to make sure the event was successful.



Sample Behavioral Questions

ADAPTABILITY

Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone who was hard to get along with.

LEADERSHIP

Describe a time when you were able to motivate others to get the desired results.

PROBLEM SOLVING

Explain a situation where you had to solve a complex problem. What did you do? What was the outcome? What do you wish you had done differently?

COMMUNICATION

Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate your point of view within a group of people. How did the group respond?

CREATIVITY

Tell me about a situation that you handled in a unique or creative way. What was the outcome?

DECISION MAKING

Explain a tough decision you made and how you came to the conclusion you did. Would you make the same decision if you could do it again?

GOAL SETTING

Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.

PRIORITY SETTING

Tell me about a time when you had to balance competing priorities and did so successfully.

OBSTACLES

Explain a time when you failed at a task or made a mistake. What were the positive and negative outcomes of the situation?

WORK QUALITY

Tell me about a specific project or program that you were involved with that resulted in improvement on a major work area.

FLEXIBILITY

Describe a time when you had to completely change your plans because something unexpected happened. How did you handle the change in plans and what was the result?

****Remember to always stay positive. Focus on your skills, the solution, or how you overcame difficult circumstances, not the problem, difficult person, or situation. Also make sure to keep the focus on you and what you did, not your team or coworkers.****

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

First impressions – whether good or bad – go a long way. Always lean toward the professional and conservative side even if you think the company has a casual or nontraditional work environment.

10 General Rules

1. Hair should be conservative, washed, combed, and not covering eyes.
2. Be well groomed – fingernails, facial hair, etc.
3. Never chew gum.
4. Shower/bathe, use deodorant, and have fresh breath (perfume/cologne is not recommended)
5. Dark colors and conservative clothing is best.
6. No tight or revealing clothing.
7. Accessories should be kept to a minimum.
8. Wear something that you feel comfortable and confident in.
9. Items that can be handy to have: lint brush, mirror, fingernail clippers/file, comb/brush, breath mints, extra nylons, hairspray, shoe polish.
10. Make sure everything is clean, pressed, and polished.



REMEMBER:

The employer is looking for someone to represent the company....make sure you look the part.

Women

SUITS

- Pants or skirts – dark colors such as black, navy blue or charcoal grey
- Skirts should not be too long or too short – knee length is recommended

BLOUSES

- White or light, solid colors (thin stripes acceptable)
- Long-sleeved and conservative neckline

HOSIERY/SOCKS

- Flesh toned hosiery with skirts; hosiery or dark trouser socks with pants
- Hosiery required with skirts – no bare legs

SHOES

- Basic pump/dress shoe with 1-2 inch heel or dressy flats – no open toe or open heel
- Make sure they are comfortable and easy to walk in

MAKE UP AND NAILS

- Conservative, natural look – less is more
- Polish should be neutral or no polish (remove cracked or peeling polish)

JEWELRY

- Should be kept to a minimum and conservative
- Other piercings besides ears are unacceptable

Examples of Professional Business Attire - Women



Men

SUITS

- Dark colors such as black, navy blue, or charcoal grey – wool or high quality blend
- Make sure suit fits properly and is comfortable (tailoring may be necessary)

DRESS SHIRTS

- White recommended; light, solid colors acceptable (wear a plain undershirt)
- Always long-sleeved, buttoned all the way up, and tucked in.

TIES

- Conservative pattern or striped (solid color also acceptable)
- Hang to belt line

SOCKS

- Dark colors that match attire – no white socks
- Long enough so no skin is visible when sitting or legs are crossed

SHOES

- Black or dark color dress shoes – should match your attire
- Shine shoes, no scuff marks

BELT

- Leather that matches color and finish of shoes
- Small belt buckle

JEWELRY

- Watch – sophisticated and formal
- Cuff links and 1-2 rings are also acceptable

What is Business Casual?

Business Casual ≠ everyday casual. Business casual is only ONE step down from formal business attire – you still need to look polished and professional.

WOMEN

- Dress slacks, dresses, skirts and blouses or nice sweaters; dress shoes
- No khakis, jeans or shorts

MEN

- Slacks, a button down shirt (no tie), and dress shoes
- No khakis, jeans, shorts or white socks

Examples of Professional Business Attire - Men



ACE THE INTERVIEW

An interview is your opportunity to showcase your skills and abilities. It is the time to prove to the interviewer that you are the right person for the job. Sell yourself!

During the Interview

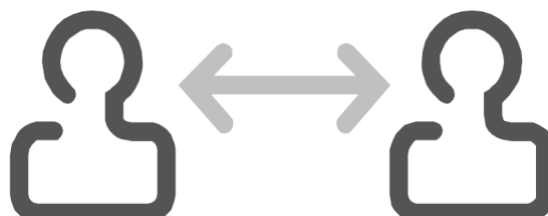
- Make a good first impression – firm handshake, pleasant smile.
- Listen attentively and maintain eye contact.
- Avoid nervous mannerisms.
- Speak clearly and openly.
- Be positive, enthusiastic, and honest.
- Act polite and professional at all times.
- Ask 2-4 thoughtful questions at the end of the interview.

Be sure to show your excitement and enthusiasm for the position and the company!



After the Interview

- Ask the interviewer for a business card.
- Thank them and shake their hand.
- Send a thank you card or email within two days.
- Follow up with the interviewer/company in a week unless a different timeframe was established.



Phone Interview Tips

- Do the interview somewhere free of distractions (at a desk, in a conference room, etc.).
- If you will be using a cell phone, do a test call with a friend to make sure you have good reception.
- Have a copy of your résumé and paper for notes, as well as questions to ask at the end.
- Make sure you sound interested and enthusiastic – all they have to go by is your voice.
- Dress up – it will put you in the right mindset.
- Avoid filler words – they stand out more in phone interviews.
- Don't get uncomfortable if there is a pause on the interviewer's end of the phone – they may be writing down notes from your answers. Just wait for the next question.

SEND THANK YOU CARDS



Sending a thank you card or email after an interview leaves a very positive, lasting impression with an employer. It shows your appreciation for the interview, solidifies your interest in the position, and demonstrates your professionalism. In most cases, it also distinguishes you from other candidates. Many employers expect and hope to receive a thank you card or email and can even get a negative impression of candidates who don't send them.

What to Include

1. Thank them for their time and knowledge shared.
2. Remind them why you're right for the job.
3. Thank them again and state that you look forward to hearing from them (include contact info).

Basic Guidelines

- It is appropriate to send a thank you card (handwritten) or email. The handwritten card is preferred as it is the most personal way to thank someone. However, an email is received immediately, which is also a benefit.
- If sending a card, be sure it's an appropriate "business-style" thank you card.
- Send your thank you card/email within 48 hours.
- Thank you cards/emails should be kept brief.
- Always write in a professional and formal manner – no slang or abbreviations.
- Address the card/email to the specific individual who interviewed you. Be sure to spell their name correctly. Use Mr. or Ms. (or Mrs. if you know it's correct).
- If you had multiple people interview you, write each of them a thank you card/email. You can follow a similar format, but try to make each one individual and special.
- If at all possible, have someone proofread your card or email before sending it.
- Thank you cards should also be sent after any meeting with a potential employer or after meeting someone that you want to network with. These thank you cards should express appreciation for their time and leave the door open for correspondence in the future.

Top 5 Reasons to Send a Thank You Card

1. It makes you memorable and you want them to remember you when they make the hiring decision.
2. It demonstrates that you are serious about the position.
3. It shows you are thoughtful and pay attention to details.
4. Allows you to summarize important points from the interview.
5. It can also be an opportunity to add anything you may have forgotten.

Dear Mr. Whitman:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me for the Management Trainee position at Any Company. I appreciated learning more about the position and the company and feel that my degree in Management, previous management experience, and enthusiasm would make me a good fit.

I am very excited about the possibility of working for Any Company and hope to hear back from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

{Signature}

abc@email.com


ACCEPT THE JOB OFFER

Accepting that first job out of college feels like a big step and you want to be sure that you've considered all of the important factors before "signing on the dotted line." Companies are investing in you, but you are also investing in them – the partnership should be mutually beneficial.

Ask for time to think over an offer

- Consider other companies, positions or offers.
- Talk to family and friends.
- Consider ALL aspects of the position including salary/compensation, advancement opportunities, location and relocation, cost of living, etc.

Ask to extend the acceptance deadline if you need more time to make a decision.



Things to consider before accepting the offer

- Is the job and company the right fit for you and your goals?
- Do you fully understand the duties and expectations of the position?
- Is the location a place where you will be happy and where you can afford to live?
- Do you think you will like the job?

OFTEN IT IS HELPFUL TO:

- Meet prospective coworkers and your boss.
- Talk to recent hires to gain their perspective of the job and company.
- Do an onsite (corporate) visit so that you can see the company for yourself and experience the company culture firsthand.
- Job shadow someone in the job that you will be doing (if possible).

WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN COMPENSATION?

- Salary, commission, bonuses
- Stock options
- Healthcare (medical, dental, vision)
- Vacation/sick leave
- Retirement
- Disability insurance

Additional Compensation Considerations

- Tuition reimbursement or loan repayment
- Training
- Raises, pay scales
- Gym membership
- Parking
- Cell phone/laptop
- Company car
- Work environment
- Work-life balance
- Flexibility
- Personal satisfaction

When accepting an offer

- Get the offer and all terms in writing.
- Negotiate if you feel it is appropriate (see next page).
- Establish a start date.
- Thank the employer and show enthusiasm to start the job.

****If you have accepted a job offer, do not continue to search or interview for other opportunities!****

Deciding to Negotiate

The first step in the process is to decide whether or not to negotiate. It's important to be as knowledgeable as you can about the salary ranges in your field. In addition, there are many factors to job satisfaction and it's not always "all about the money."

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

1. What are my salary expectations? Are they realistic?
2. What am I worth? How do I find out?
3. What is the average salary for my degree/major? With my experience?
4. What are the qualifications for the position, the average compensation, and the cost of living where the job is located?
5. What are my strengths specific to the position?
6. Why do I deserve a higher salary?
7. How and when are raises granted?

For answers, conduct salary research

- Online (company websites, job announcements, position descriptions)
- Career centers and career counselors
- People in similar positions
- Recruiters/company representatives
- Friends (past graduates), professors, parents, mentors

Cost of living calculators are available online and can be very helpful tools!

****After doing your homework, you can begin to negotiate. Be open, honest, and humble.****

HOW MUCH CAN YOU NEGOTIATE?

- It's recommended to use the "10% rule" (if offered \$40,000 you would ask for \$44,000).
- You might negotiate a bit higher as you may receive less than you asked for.
- Some people feel more comfortable giving a range (\$43,000-\$46,000).
- You can also negotiate moving expenses, signing bonuses, start date, and location.

HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT DOING IT?

- Don't do it immediately after hearing the offer.
- Tell them you are honored and excited to be offered the job.
- Ask for time to consider the offer.
- Sometimes it's easier to negotiate over the phone.
- Be courteous (you may still want the job even if they don't increase your salary).

Some companies do not negotiate starting salaries

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

- Is the salary negotiable?
- Be ready with an amount or range.
- "Based on my research..." or "...fellow graduates in my field..." or "...my skills/prior work experience..." or "...the location...", etc.
- If they are not willing or able to negotiate, tell them "I understand your position" and be ready to either ask for more time to consider, decline, or accept the offer.
- No matter how it turns out remain professional and polite.