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1.133 M.Eng. Concepts of Engineering Practice

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# Interviewing Basics

A Human Resources Perspective

# Top Mistakes Made by Job Candidates

## 1. Unprepared

- No knowledge of what company does, company history, values, mission, industry.
- Unsure of what job and responsibilities are

## 2. Lack of Interest/Enthusiasm

- No questions asked
- Unable to communicate why they are interested in job/company

## 3. Inappropriate Attire

- Too casual, too much perfume/cologne/makeup
- Rule of thumb: Conservative business attire - always!

## 4. Poor Body Language

- No eye contact/facial expressions
- Leaning on chair/desk/table
- Fidgeting
- Weak handshake

# Mistakes continued

## 5. Lack of Resume Knowledge

- Cannot articulate accomplishments/provide specific examples
- Overstated/incorrect work history

## 6. Lack of Punctuality

- Being late without reason
- Arriving too early Rule of thumb: Arrive 10-15 minutes before scheduled time

## 7. Unprofessionally

- Talking negatively about past company/manager/employees
- Chewing gum
- Using inappropriate language

## 8. Rambling Answers

- Talking so much that questions is not answered
- Bragging/displaying arrogance rather than confidence
- Rule of thumb: Keep answers concise, 2-3 minutes

## 9. Cell Phones

- **TURN THEM OFF!!!**

## S.T.A.R. System

- The S.T.A.R. System is a way to determine past behavior through effective interview questions.
  - Determine the **S**ituation or the **T**ask for which the applicant was responsible.
  - Find out what **A**ction the applicant took.
  - Determine the **R**esults of that action.

## Positioning Statement

- A statement to introduce your strengths and expertise which manages to create a clear impression of value to employers.
  - I am an environmental engineer with experience.....  
(present tense)
  - Keep your positioning statement under 2 minutes. This is good to use at career fairs.
  - P.S. includes profession, expertise, type of organization/environment and unique strengths

## Accomplishments and Skills

- Today's job market, it is important to know your skills and be able to find positions that require those skills.
- Knowing your skills will help you identify your value to a potential employer.
- Create 3 accomplishment stories.

# Accomplishment Stories

#1 ..... # 2

● Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

● Obstacles: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

● Actions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

● Results: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

● Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

● Obstacles: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

● Actions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

● Results: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Interviewing takes practice!

- Practice with a college friend or discuss upcoming interviews and what you'll say.
- Familiarize yourself with interview questions and practice interviewing.
- Know your resume and use it like a script.
- After each bullet on your resume ask yourself the question "So what?"

# Where to practice and network

- Go to career fairs especially the your school sponsors or crash another local University's career fair.
- Practice your pitch at different company booths
- Network Network Network!!- through friends, family, faculty or the internet;try

[www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

# Interview Questions

- How do you think your previous experience ties in with the job we have open?
- Can you tell me a little about your current job or course work/school projects?
- What was your single greatest achievement on the job? What was your lowest achievement?
- If you could have made improvements in your last job, what would they have been?
- What has been the most interesting job or project so far in your career?
- How do you think you could improve yourself?
- What sort of work environment do you prefer? What brings out your best performance?
- Where do you see yourself and your career in three years? What is your long-term ambition or goal in life?
- Tell me about an important decision you made and how you arrived at it?
- Please elaborate on your Microsoft Office skills including Access and web experience.

# Fine Tuning the Interview

- Give me an example of a time when you emerged as the leader of a group. How did it come out?
- Where would you like to go from here in your career? How do you plan to accomplish this?
- In what ways did you and your manager think alike? How did you differ?
- What did you learn from your previous job that prepared you for greater responsibilities?
- What have you done to set performance objectives for your subordinates?
- How do you feel your education and experience prepare you for this job?
- Tell me about an important relationship that you had to maintain. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time that you had to take some criticism. What did you do? How did you feel?
- Describe a situation in which you had to make an important decision. What did you do?

## Getting to Know Your Candidate

- Tell me about yourself.
- What has been your greatest accomplishment? Why?
- What has been your greatest challenge? Why? How did you handle it? What did you learn from it?
- How do you reward yourself for working hard?
- What are your current career prospects in your current company?
- According to your definition of success, how successful have you been?
- What is the difference between a good position and an excellent one?
- What is the most adverse situation with which you have had to deal in your life? How did you deal with it? What was the outcome?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- If you had only one word to describe yourself, what would that be?
- How are you unique?

## Job History Details

- Describe your ideal job.
- Walk me through a typical day in your work life. What is your favorite part? What is your least favorite part?
- Have you ever had an assignment that required careful attention to detail? How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a recent experience where you had to work closely with someone else on an assignment or project. What was your role? What happened?
- Give me an example of how you did more than what was required in your job.
- I'd like to hear about an instance in which you anticipated a problem or influenced a significant decision. How did it work out?
- How are you measured in your current position?
- What did you do in your last job in order to be effective at planning and organizing?
- What did you do in your last job to contribute toward a positive work environment?
- What was the best job you ever had and why?

# Tell me About....

- Who was your best manager and why?
- What qualities have you liked or disliked in your bosses and why?
- Everyone has to bend or break the rules once in a while. Can you give me an example of how you handled this kind of situation?
- Can you tell me about a time when you had to be critical of someone else? What happened?
- Give an example of a situation where you had to reach a quick decision.
- Describe the most successful experience you have ever had in persuading someone to do something.
- Tell me about a situation in which you were under particular pressure. How did you handle it?
- How do you show your anger and frustration?
- What was the most difficult ethical decision you have had to make and what was the outcome?
- Why are you interested in this opportunity?
- How would you proceed if you are hired? What would you do first?
- Tell me about a specific problem you encountered and describe how you dealt with it.

## Continued....

- Give an example of a time when you could not participate in a discussion or could not finish a task because you did not have enough information.
- Tell me about a time when you had to use your verbal communication skills to get a point across that was important to you.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Give me an example of a situation when you were able to communicate successfully with a person who did not like you.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to read another person effectively and used this insight to guide your actions.
- Give me an example of a problem you faced on the job and tell me how you solved it.
- Describe a situation in which you were able to positively influence the actions of others in a desired direction.
- Describe a situation in which others in your organization depended on you.
- Describe your most recent group effort.