



INTERVIEWING

THE ART OF THE INTERVIEW

1

Know the company with whom you are interviewing.

Who you are talking to

What they do

Who they do it for

Research: client list, work examples, industries they work within, etc.

Ask yourself: Is this a company who is in line with my core values/beliefs? Would I be happy doing work for this company and their clients for the next 3-5 years?

Don't be afraid to ask for an informal chat, informational interview, or portfolio review

2

Get involved with industry organizations because...

They host networking events

There are people who work for the companies you are interested in belong to these organizations

You will find out about potential job openings

You will find out the real scoop behind a company and its culture

Companies will be much more likely to hire you if they've had the opportunity to get to know you personally first

3

Do not drop by without an appointment.

Agencies are busy places

People like to have time to look your resume/work over before meeting with you

4

Respect the value of the first impression.

WRITE AND EDIT YOUR RESUME

Use spell check

Take time to design your resume – doesn't need to be over the top, but something simple that demonstrates your ability to think outside of the box goes a long way

Don't worry about listing jobs or experience that have no relevance with what you are applying for – we hope that you know how to use the phone, fax, and internet

WRITE AND EDIT COVER LETTER

Did I mention "use spell check"?

Don't try to be wacky, just be yourself!

UPDATE YOUR PORTFOLIO ON ALL FRONTS

Take the time to design a portfolio site

If you don't know how to design a portfolio site, hire a design student to do it for you

There are a lot of great template sites that look really professional in the marketplace. Try googling, "portfolio template"

Make sure to include a downloadable resume PDF on your portfolio site

If you create a portfolio site, don't give it a business name, use your own name

Keep content up to date and professional (update monthly)



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WATCH WHAT YOU SAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- Remember that employers may look at your blog, Twitter feed, or Facebook page
- Keep all content on these pages professional!

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

- Even if an office is casual, even if you have friends in the office, **dress professionally** for your interview
- Let's not forget personal hygiene

PERSONALITY

- Don't be afraid to talk about your personal interests
- Don't have an attitude
- Don't be afraid to break the ice by talking about yourself, or even admitting that you're nervous

ETIQUETTE

- Always be on time (or a little bit early)
- Always say please and thank you
- Always follow up with a thank you note (via email or by post)

5

Know the FAQ

- Do internships matter?
 - Internships always look good to employers
 - Internships show that you have the drive to do things outside of your schoolwork
 - Internships show that you have familiarity with the type of environment you will be working in
- Does a degree matter?
 - Sometimes, very much
 - Sometimes, not so much
- Do your software skills matter?
 - Sometimes, very much
 - Sometimes, not so much
 - Use Lynda.com (free membership through the MICA portal) to teach yourself new programs or things you need to master in order to be qualified for the job

6

Be prepared

- Go to mock interviews
- Attend job fairs
- Do resume and portfolio reviews
 - Think about how you would answer tough questions
 - Clean up your portfolio
 - Have extra copies of your resume ready
- Be prepared to talk about the work in your portfolio
 - Your involvement
 - How successfully the work addressed the challenge
 - What you might do to improve the work today/how you might approach the work differently today

Adapted from "The Art of the Interview" workshop by Erin Myers '96, Human Resources Director at AKQA



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SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

THE BASIC QUESTIONS

- Tell me a little bit about yourself and your work.
- Why did you choose to be a _____ major?
- Why are you interested in working for us?
- Describe your greatest strengths and what areas you would like to improve.
- What special skills do you have that you could bring to the position?
- What sets you apart from other candidates?

EXPERIENCES

- Briefly describe your experience, if any, with the following:
 - Specific skill required of the position
 - Adobe Suite, Office Suite, Mac/PC, Programs, etc.
 - Any skill/experience you have listed on your resume
- Tell us an experience in which you had to work under pressure.
- Describe a time when you have had to juggle multiple responsibilities/deadlines at once.
- Tell us about a recent project that you are proud of. Include how you prioritized your work, met deadlines, and collaborated with others in this process.
- Can you tell us about a time you needed to educate yourself on a topic/issue and how you did so?
- Give an example of dealing with an angry customer/client. Describe how you handled the conflict.
- What is the greatest challenge you have had to face professionally and how did you handle the situation?

BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS

- How do you recognize stress and how do you deal with it?
- What does a work/life balance mean for you? How do you maintain it?
- How would you describe your communication style and can you give us an example?
- Do you work best on your own or in groups?
- How would you describe your organizational style?

WHAT YOUR RESUME MIGHT NOT SAY

- Tell us something that is not on your resume that will give us a different perspective of you as a person.
- What are some of your personal interests, and how might they help you in this role?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- What is your ideal work environment?



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THE POSITION

If I were to call one of your classmates/colleagues, what would they say it is like working with you?

What are a few things that are important for you to gain from this job experience?

Being a new staff member at our company, you would bring a fresh perspective to the organization and may have suggestions for improvement and change. How would you go about making those changes?

What expectations do you have of your colleagues? Your supervisor?

What are some of your short term and long term goals, and how will this position help you?

What about this position are you most excited about? What part of the position will be most challenging for you?

WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE FOR US?

Do your homework! Ask questions that show you have an understanding of the organization/employer, and the job you are interviewing for. Have at least 3 prepared! Some basic sample questions you could ask are:

What qualities are you looking for in the person you hire for this position?

Can you tell me more about the specific job responsibilities of this position?

What are the new directions your organization is going in? What are your next big projects?

What is one of your biggest challenges currently?

What is the work environment like?

DON'T ASK IN AN INTERVIEW:

What does your company do? (you should know)

How much will I be making? (appropriate to discuss before you accept an offer, but not in the first interview)

What is the vacation/leave time like? (appropriate to discuss before you accept an offer)

INTERVIEW TIPS

Be yourself! Confidence, a positive attitude, and willingness to learn can go a long way. Make eye contact, give a firm handshake, and be respectful in your body language. Dress professionally and bring copies of your resume and business artist cards.

Be courteous, polite, and positive! Smile!

Research the employer you are interviewing with! Look for the About Us, Mission, or Philosophy pages to learn more about the size and scope of the organization. Is the company regional, national, international? Where are they located and who are their clients or customers? What trends are happening in this industry? What is their mission/purpose?

Don't feel like you have to accept any position if offered on the spot. Thank them graciously for the offer, reiterate your interest, but ask if you can send them an email the following day.

Follow up all of your conversations with a thank you note via email/mail within 48 hours, reinforcing your interest in the position. Get the business card of the interviewer, or write down their name so that you can research their contact information later. You may be judged on whether or not you do this, it's important! So, bring a note pad and take notes!

Be honest. Don't lie about your qualifications to get a job. But learn to "spin" your weak areas into areas for you to grow. Share your enthusiasm to learn, or discuss a project/program you are currently working on to improve in this area.

Never criticize a former employer/coworker if you had a negative experience at a former position. Always stay positive with your comments.

Make sure your portfolio is portable, neat, and begins and ends strong. Include only your best work and be sure to have pieces that reflect the type of position you are applying for. Be prepared to discuss each piece.