



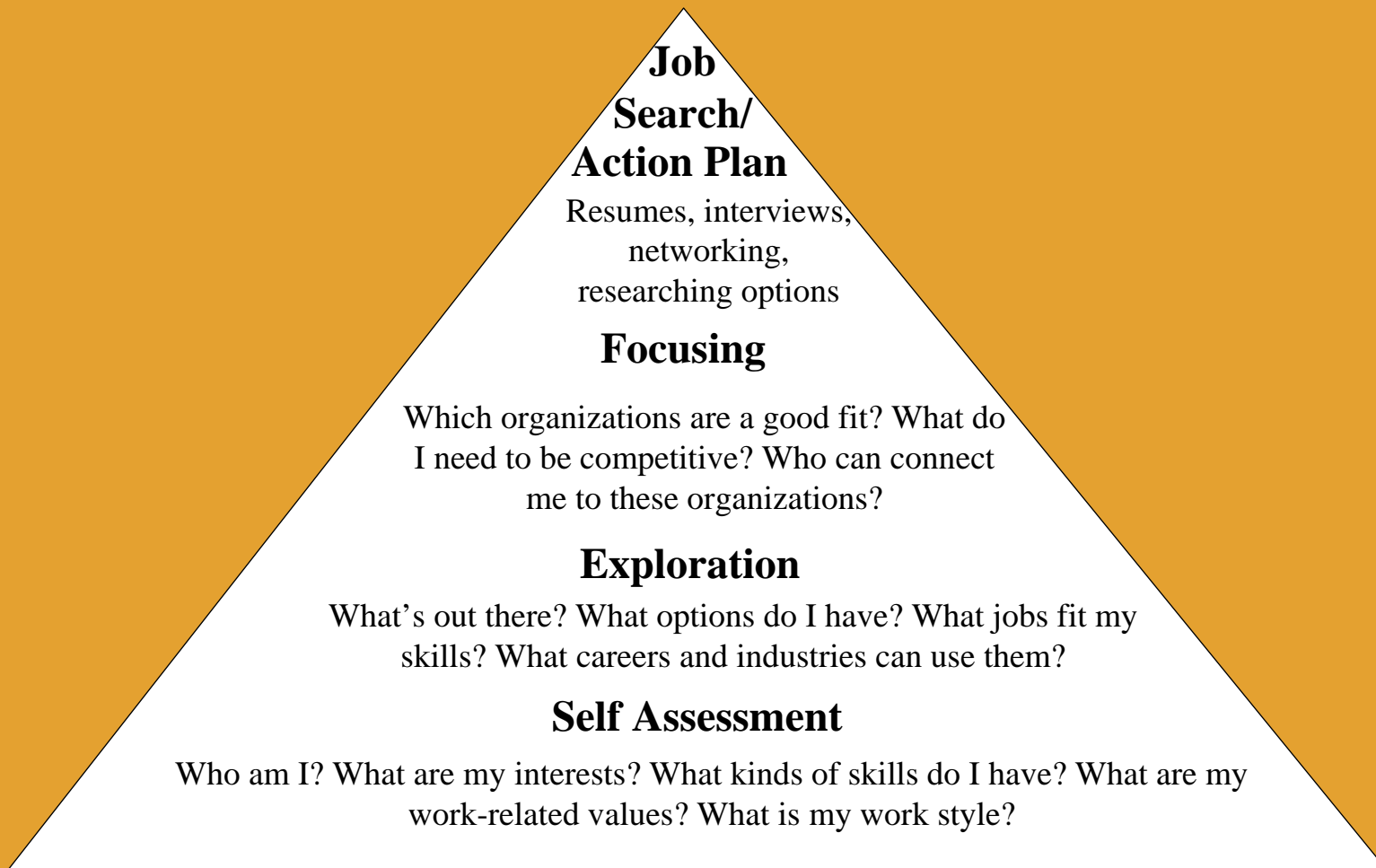
SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

The MIT Careers Office

12-170, 617-253-4733

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/>

The Career Planning Process: How Do I Start?



From Peter Fiske: To Boldly Go: Practice Career Advice for Scientists, Workshop at MIT, April 1998

Modified from Stanford University Career Planning and Placement Office



PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

- Meet the employer in-person or by phone
- Sell your strengths and skills as they relate to the employer and position.
- Learn about the position and the employer.
- Assess if the employer/position are a good fit for your career goals, values and needs.



TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

- Traditional
- Behavioral/Emotional Story Telling
- Case-Method, Cased-Based
- Job Specific Cases

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Traditional:

- Requires you to relay factual information
- Employer is taking your word at face value
- Sample Questions:

Tell me about yourself.

Why did you choose your major?

What is a weakness you have?

Why are you interested in this position?

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Behavioral/Emotional/Story Telling:

- Employer makes assumptions about your future performance based on past behaviors and attitudes.
- Requires you to offer concrete, specific examples to reveal skills
- Sample Behavioral Questions:
 - Tell me about a time when you exhibited teamwork.
 - Give me an example of a challenge you experienced and how you dealt with it.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Behavioral/Emotional/Story Telling:

Recommendation:

"**STAR**" framework to structure your responses:

What was the **SITUATION**?

What was your **TASK**?

What **ACTION** did you take?

What was the **RESULT**?



Behavioral Interview Activity

1. Take a few minutes to develop a STAR response to the following.

*Tell me about a time
when you exhibited teamwork.*

2. Share your response with the person sitting next to you.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Case-Method/Case-Based

- Commonly used interview method in business and consulting fields.
- Interviewee is requested to analyze a problem/situation and present a solution.
- Employer assesses analytical ability /thought process, not the accurateness of the response.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Case-Method/Case-Based Examples:

- How many gas stations are there in the U.S.?
- You have eight balls, one of which is heavier than the others. All the balls appear identical. You have a balance-type scale, and you can perform trials on the balls. What is the minimum number of trials required to determine which is the heaviest ball?

Source: Wetfeet.com

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Case Interview Tips

- Listen to the information provided, take notes.
- Take time to think the problem through.
- Identify the key issues
- Frame your answer toward action. Identify what steps you would take.
- Share your ideas or thoughts that brought you to your proposed solution.
- Identify resources you would use/seek.

Source: Wetfeet.com- visit the site for more on the above tips and for additional information on case interviewing.

Methods of Conducting an Interview

- In person:
 - On-campus
 - Company Site visit
 - Dining interview
- Telephone
 - Cost Effective
 - Screening process
- Video Conferencing

General Preparation for Interviews

- Research company prior to interview
 - Know who you will be meeting with and their position in the company
- Create a list of questions to ask about the company and position
- Arrive at least 15 minutes early.
- Bring resume to the interview and portfolio/notepad.
 - No food, bags, gum, etc.

Interview Etiquette

- Be on time to interview
- Turn off cell phone prior to interview
- Shake hands firmly at the beginning and end of interview.
- Maintain good eye contact throughout interview
- Write a thank you note

Interview Dress Code

Women

- Suit: preferably skirt suit, pants acceptable
- Skirt: not overly short or tight
- Makeup: minimum, nothing too bold
- Jewelry: nothing too large or noisy that would be distracting.
- Perfume: lite application, if any
- Nylons/dress socks- in similar color tone to clothing.
- Shoes- no sneakers or sandals

Interview Dress Code

Men

- Suit preferable- jacket, tie, & slacks acceptable
- Cologne- lite application, if any
- Jewelry- nothing too large or noisy that would be distracting.
- Dress socks- try to closely match the color of your dress pants
- Shoes- no sneakers or sandals

The Day of the Interview

- Speak positively about yourself and others.
- Use body language to show interest.
 - Nod
 - Sit forward
 - Sit up straight
 - Smile
- Reflect on the interview
 - What did I do well?
 - What could I prepare to answer better next time?



What to Expect the Day of the Interview

On-Campus Interviews – approx. 30 minutes

- Shake hands firmly and address interviewer by Mr.____ or Ms.____.
- Small talk: Builds rapport and gives the interviewer an opportunity to assess your interpersonal skills.
- Questions assessing your strengths, weaknesses, goals, skills, character, experiences, etc.
- Last 5 minutes: Ask 2-4 specific questions.
- Shake hands and thank the interviewer.

Illegal Interview Questions

Educate yourself about illegal questions. Be prepared to handle them diplomatically.

- What is your race?
- Are you married?
- How old are you?
- What is your religion?
- Have you ever filed bankruptcy?
- Do you have a disability?
- Are you a US citizen?

Source: <http://www.wetfeet.com/asp/article.asp?aid=479&atype=Diversity>

Illegal Interview Questions

How to React to Illegal Questions

- Try to determine what type of information an employer is looking to receive through the question.
 - For example, if an interviewer asks if you have children, you may deduce that s/he wants to know if you'd be missing work often to care for them. You might simply answer that you have no problem meeting the position's attendance requirements.
- If you suspect you were denied a job because of discrimination, check with the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as to the best course of action.

Resource: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
<http://www.eeoc.gov/>



What to Expect of a Telephone Interview

- Number of interviewers can vary from 1-3 or more.
- Conversational skills main focus. Your ability to verbally convey your skills and qualifications will be examined closely.
- Lack of physical cues to guide you in the length or strength of your answer.



Tips for Telephone Interviewing

- Speak directly into the phone and keep mouthpiece about 1 inch from your mouth
- Select a quiet space for your phone interview.
- Do not eat food, chew gum or smoke during the interview.
- Have a copy of your resume and references in front of you during the interview
- Smile over the phone.
 - Pretend as if the person is right in front of you, it will help you sound “friendly” and relax you.
- Avoid discussion about salary and benefits until 2nd interview.



Interview Success Factors

This information is based on an informal survey of recruiters at the Sloan Career Development Office.

- Verbal and written communication skills (including listening)
- Analytical/logical thinking/problem-solving skills
- Interest in industry/company/function
- Interpersonal comfort and skills
- Enthusiasm
- Knowing what they want/having focus
- Leadership skill
- Confidence
- Staying focused on the question & not going off on a tangent

Interview Success Factors

- High energy (But not overwhelming)
- Ability to work well in teams
- Professionalism
- High degree of intelligence
- Personal presence
- Projecting substance/credibility
- Asking good questions/making statements that show thought process
- Ability to think creatively
- Personal "fit" with company
- Clear, concise answers
- Honesty

Interview Dining Etiquette

- Unfold your napkin and place it on your lap after the host has done so.
- Be familiar with the table setting.(see next slide)
- Order a meal that is moderately priced and easy to eat. (no spaghetti)
- Avoid alcohol or smoking during the dining interview.
- Do not talk with your mouth full.
- Place your knife and fork diagonally across your plate when finished with your meal.

Table Setting



Interview Checklist

- Research the company
- Practice sample interview questions
 - Practice discussing your strengths and weaknesses.
- Conduct a practice interview with a friend or staff member at the Careers Office.
- Prepare your interview wardrobe*
 - Purchase/borrow
 - Tailor
 - Launder/dry clean
 - Iron
- Try on your outfit and shoes in advance to make sure they fit properly and are comfortable.**

Interview Checklist

- Bring extra copies of your resume with you.
- Travel to the interview location for a practice run.
 - To avoid being late, make sure the address/directions are correct.
 - If you're at the company location, use the time to observe the environment. Is this a place where you'd like to work?
- Know your Worth
 - See “Evaluating and Negotiating Job Offers” workshop:
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/services/workshops.html>
 - Review MIT Graduate Survey:
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/infostats/graduation.html>

Interview Resources

- **Monstertrak Job Search Guide:**
<http://www.monstertrak.monster.com/>
- Case Interview
 - **Boston Consulting Group:**
http://www.bcg.com/careers/interview_prep/interview_prep_splash.html
 - **McKinsey & Co.**
<http://www.mckinsey.com/aboutus/careers/applyingtomckinsey/interviewing/casestudytips/index.asp>
- **Networking:**
<http://content.monster.com/career/networking/>

Interview Resources

- **MIT Careers Office Salary Survey**
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/infostats/salary.html>
- **Behavioral Interviewing:**
<http://www.careertalk.com/behavioral-frame.html>
- **Negotiating Job Offers:**
<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/services/workshops.html>
- **Graduate Student Resources:**
<http://www.phds.org>



Mock Interview Practice

With a partner as the interviewer:

- Interview: 10 minutes
- Feedback: 5 minutes
- Discussion: 15 minutes

The Student:

Think about what type of job you might be applying for (or have applied for in the past) and share this with the interviewer before you begin the role-play.

The Interviewer:

Ask the following questions:

1. Why are you interested in this position?
2. Why should we hire you?
3. Describe a weakness you have and how you are working to overcome it.

Mock Interview Practice

Observer:

Give interviewee feedback on the following:

- Physical presence (posture, smile, use of hands, etc.)
- Verbal communication
- Ability to identify skills and support claims with concrete examples (**STAR** Method use)
- Positive portrayal of him/herself and others
- Expression of interest and knowledge in the position and company



Resources for Further Assistance with Interviewing

- Counseling Appointments
- Mock Interviews

To make an appointment contact:

MIT Careers Office

Room 12-170, 617-253-4733

<http://web.mit.edu/career/www/>