

INTERVIEW PERFORMANCE

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER

- To ensure promptness, arrive on site 10—15 minutes early; don't go into the office until approximately 5 minutes before the interview. Smile and introduce yourself to the receptionist.
- Be pleasant and polite to everyone you see, no matter their position in the organization. You should assume that the interview has begun when you enter the building where you will be interviewed.
- Be mindful of your body language. Stand when the interviewer comes to greet you. Smile and show enthusiasm. Establish good eye contact and give a firm handshake. Have the interviewer indicate where you should sit. Keep your hands gently folded in your lap.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Really listen to the interview questions and reflect on your responses before answering. If you do not understand a question, politely ask for clarification.
- Speak clearly and enthusiastically, but not too quickly. Avoid slang and verbal pauses such as “um” and “like”. Keep your responses concise—no more than a minute or two.
- Be specific about your skills and experiences and how they can be of benefit to the employer. This is a major pitfall area for many interviewees as they often provide answers that are too vague or general in nature.
- If you are in a group interview, make eye contact with everyone as you speak. Start and end with the person who asked the question.
- Ask researched and prepared questions about the position and the company. It is generally not appropriate for you to bring up salary and benefits in the first interview. However, be prepared to respond to this question should the interviewer introduce it.
- Maintain a conversational flow. By engaging in a dialogue, not a monologue, you will be perceived more positively. Use feedback questions at the end of your answers, as well as body language and voice intonation, to create the appropriate conversational interchange between you and the employer.
- Close by stating your sincere interest and enthusiasm for the position. Let the interviewer know that you want the job.
- Before leaving, ask the interviewer when a hiring decision will be made and request the business cards of those who interviewed you. Thank the interviewer for the opportunity to interview.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Reflect on your interview experience. What parts of the interview went well or poorly?
- Send a thank-you note to the interviewer within 48 hours of the interview. While handwritten notes tend to be more memorable, an email thank-you may also be appropriate. Use what you know about the company and the interviewer to determine which method would be ideal. Make sure to briefly include things that you might want the interviewer to know about you that you missed in the interview. Personalize the message by mentioning specific things that you discussed.

Traditional Interview Questions

There are several main “categories” of questions that an interviewer may ask. An interviewer may use your resume as a guide to learning more about you, as well. You should be well-versed in the content of your resume as it relates to a specific position and employer. Additionally, it will be helpful to review the following categories of questions and begin crafting and practicing your responses.

Personal and Career Related Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you consider to be your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?
- Where do you want to be in five years? In ten years? What are your professional goals?
- Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- How would you describe the ideal job for you following graduation?

Education Related Questions

- Why did you choose St. Bonaventure University? Your academic major?
- Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
- Describe your role in your extracurricular activities, specifically with respect to leadership.

Experience Related Questions

- Of what two or three accomplishments are you most proud? Why?
- What have you learned from your past experiences that would help in this position?
- How do you think a former supervisor would describe you?

Organization Related Questions

- In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our organization?
- Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
- What qualifications do you possess that make you think you will be successful in an organization like ours?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

An employer wants to hire someone who has made an effort to research the organization and has prepared intelligent questions. The following are sample questions. Review and revise these questions to be appropriate for the position and organizations for which you are interviewing.

- What personality traits and qualities do you consider critical to success in the position?
- What skills do you find most valuable in an employee?
- What do you see as the strengths of this department/organization?
- What does the department/organization hope to achieve in the next two or three years?
- What attracted you to this organization? Why do you enjoy working for this company?

For additional interviewing resources, and to schedule a practice interview with a CPRC career counselor, visit the Career and Professional Readiness Center website at www.sbu.edu/cprc.