Interview Strategies Guide

1. Logistical Preparation*

a) If you don't have one already, obtain a complete job description if possible. Save it off-line somewhere – it is not uncommon for companies to remove job descriptions from websites once they have enough candidates.

b) If it's not provided, ask if this will be a behavioral, case, and/or panel interview. **See tips for each below**. Often, they will share this information, but it's possible the person arranging the interview does not know. In this case, ask the Career & Practicum Office or your networks if they have heard what to expect.

c) Determine what style of dress is appropriate. Usually, it's safe to err on the business formal side. Business suits are acceptable for an interview unless the organization is extremely informal. In this case, slacks and a blazer might be more appropriate versus a business suit. These settings may include community health centers, NGO's and nonprofits.

d) If you are unfamiliar with the location, consider doing a dry-run. Also, determine commuting time needed and shoot to be there 15 minutes prior. Note: If you're there any earlier, it's uncomfortable for the interviewer who knows you are waiting.

e) Be prepared and bring an extra copy or two of your resume, a notepad, pen, and identification. Organizations will often ask for you ID upon entering their location.

***Note: For phone and Zoom/video interviews, please see special tips on pages 8-11.*

2. Research

a) Go through the website for services they offer, clients/patients served, annual report (if public), press releases, etc. Know their mission and expertise.

b) Research the company's client base, competition, and learn about general challenges in their field. For example, if you're interviewing at a consulting firm, they often ask why you are interested in them versus other firms.

c) Use LinkedIn, your networks, and the power of the internet to learn about who you'll be interviewing with.

d) If you can't find them, ask for names and titles of the people interviewing you. Check them out in LinkedIn and/or ask your networks for any information.

2. Anticipating and Preparing for Interview Questions

Remember, an interview is as much about being a fit with a team as it is the skills, experiences, and attributes you can bring to the table. A conversational yet professional tone goes a long way.

a) Review the job description and pretend every bullet – *under both responsibilities and qualifications* – will be turned into a question during the interview. For example, if you will be responsible for analyzing large data sets, they may ask, "Tell me about your experience analyzing large data sets."

b) Prepare your "Tell me about yourself" answer, often the first question. **See below example**.

c) Prepare for typical interview questions as well as behavioral questions. Behavioral questions are when an interviewer wants to understand how you handled a *previous* situation. **See sample questions below**.
d) Prepare examples of situations where you demonstrated each quality or skill. The S.T.A.R.T. method is excellent for answering behavioral questions. **See below example**.
e) Review your resume thoroughly. **Be prepared for an interviewer to probe on anything written on your resume**. For example, "*Can you tell me more about this project?*" Refresh yourself, particularly for older jobs.
f) Be prepared for questions about what you would do if you were hired into the role. For example, if it's a project management role, you may get a question like, "*Tell me about how you would go about starting this project. Walk me through the steps you would take."*
g) If you anticipate a case interview, check out the Career & Practicum Office's consulting webpage. Also, search for YouTube videos of case interviews to give you a sense of the flow. If possible, read through the book, "*Case in Point*" by Marc Consentino. **See below for more tips and resources.**
h) Use our online mock interview tool, Big Interview. More information can be found on page 11.
i) Finally, make an appointment with the Career & Practicum Office and do a mock interview.
    a. Practicing out loud is helpful, and we will offer feedback. Try to do this at least one week prior to the interview.
j) Most interviews end with, "*What questions do you have for me*?" It's important to have about 3 questions ready to ask based on your research. These questions should show you have done your research and are genuinely interested in the role. Asking about the interviewer's experience with the company is a good one. Or you could ask them to dive deeper into a particular population they serve or service they offer related to the position. Don't ask about something obscure you read on their website; in this case, you run the risk of making your interviewer uncomfortable.

4. Preparing for Salary Questions

a) Research in advance what the position should likely pay. Key resources:
    - Glassdoor.com, Salary.com, LinkedIn. These sites can be helpful, though sometimes ranges are very broad.
    - People in the field. A good way to ask is, "*I'm starting to interview for XXX positions and I'm being asked to provide my salary expectations. You're in the field…what do you think I should expect for a range for someone with my experience level*?"
    - The Career & Practicum Office. We collect salary information and can help you figure out the right range within your certificate area.
    - Note: Do not bring up salary in the Interview process, if possible. Always wait to be asked. When you are asked, always give a RANGE (never a number). **See tips below for handling the salary question**.

5. Preparing Your References – Before Your Offer

a) Contact individuals who you would like to use as a reference and ask for their permission .
b) References are typically former managers (including practicum supervisors), key faculty members, or clients.
c) Prepare a "reference list" including the name, title, organization, contact information, and context of the relationship for each person. You may need to email this soon after the interview.

6. Positioning Yourself for Success on Interview Day: Managing First Impressions

a) Have extra copies of your resume (on quality paper) in case interviewers don't have a copy. Also, it's good to have a professional pad folio and pen to take notes on.
b) Arrive 15 minutes early. Give yourself plenty of time to get organized and grounded.
c) Turn off your cell phone.
d) Be polite and engaging to everyone when you arrive, even if you are frustrated about something. Negative (and positive) feedback will get back to your interviewer.
e) It's true that perceptions are formed within the first few minutes of an interview. Make eye contact, smile and give a firm handshake. Simple, but easy to forget.

7. Overcoming Nervousness: Relaxation and Confidence Boosting Techniques[1]

a) Most people get a little nervous when interviewing -- it is a natural human response. Power Posing, Visualization and Deep Breathing are some of the techniques you can try. Check out this article for detailed tips: https://biginterview.com/blog/2013/10/interview-anxiety.html
b) Eat a banana 30 minutes before your interview – it helps decrease the fight or flight stress response!

8. The Interview Conversation – Coming Across Confident and Building Rapport

a) Stay confident and positive. Focus your answers on what you can do, not what you can't.
b) Make sure you completely understand questions before you answer them.
c) Keep answers concise – no more than 1 minute. It's easy to unintentionally meander away from the point of the question. If you feel you have rambled, it's ok to ask "Does that answer your question?"
d) "Read" the interviewer as best you can and respond accordingly. If you sense they are losing interest, wrap up your answer.
e) Try to engage and build rapport with your interviewer. A good trick is to end your answer with a question back to them. For example, "*I've used social media to reach parents for our health education program.* ***Have you used social media here?***"
f) Remember to use examples and stories as much as possible. They make you more believable and more memorable.
g) If a question comes up about a former position you held, always be positive. One of the biggest mistakes candidates can make is speaking negatively about an old boss or company.
h) Chemistry and cultural fit are always assessed in an interview. Interviewers want to see you will be easy to work with, and fit in with the organization. Show your personality and use *appropriate* humor if your assessment is that the interviewer will respond well to it.
i) Ask thoughtful questions throughout if appropriate, or at the end of the conversation.
j) Often times, an interviewer will conclude by asking, "So, what questions do you have for me?" Examples of topics could include more detail about upcoming projects, who would this person be interacting with, what they see as the biggest challenge for this person walking in the door, how they will measure success for this person, and what they enjoy most about working there.
k) Do not raise the issue of salary or benefits until the interviewer brings it up.

[1] https://biginterview.com/blog/2013/10/interview-anxiety.html

l) As you are leaving the interview, don’t be afraid to express your enthusiasm for the position.

— **Tip:** Interviewers are sometimes not adept at interviewing. Be sure that you communicate your key strengths and experiences even if the interviewer forgets to ask. Take responsibility for making the interviewer feel comfortable.

9. “Screening Interviews” with Human Resources (HR)

a) Your very first interview is usually a “screening” interview done by a Recruiter or HR professional. Screening interviews with human resources professionals are a crucial step to getting the job. A good or bad interview with HR will determine how far you go in the interviewing process, so it's best to know what to expect and go in prepared. Typical questions include:
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in us? What do you know about our organization?
- Why are you leaving your current organization (if you are working)?
- Where are you at in your search process? When can you start a position? What are your salary requirements?

10. Meeting the Team: How to Handle Peer Interviews

a) Most often, peers have significant influence in hiring decisions. While they are not the hiring manager, this is still an interview (not a conversation). Be careful not to let your "guard down" even if they are very friendly.

b) Meeting with team members can be a great opportunity to ask questions that will give you a sense of the culture and the realities of the position. Some can be very formal or informal. Use your judgment to sense how open the person is and what they may be comfortable in sharing with you. Don’t put them on the spot if you sense they are getting uncomfortable. Some questions might be:

- What types of projects have you been working on (of course be very understanding if they cannot disclose all specifics due to confidentiality)?
- Do you collaborate with other groups? How do people communicate with each other? Is it an open-door culture here?
- What do you enjoy best about working here?
- Are there mentoring opportunities?

11. Approaches to Handling the Salary Question

a) LAWS IN SEVERAL STATES MAKE IT ILLEGAL FOR EMPLOYERS TO ASK ABOUT A CANDIDATES’S SALARY HISTORY DURING AN INTERVIEW. MASSACHUSETTS IS ONE OF THEM. BE SURE TO GOOGLE YOUR STATE.

b) The biggest negotiating mistake is to talk about salary too early in the interview process. If you do, it’s easy to get screened out. You might mention a number that is too high or too low. By going first, you lose your negotiating leverage.

c) Delay the discussion as long as you can. If you have to provide your salary expectations, always provide a RANGE versus an exact number. **See below for several approaches** to the conversation which were adapted from a presentation given by Ginny Rehberg’s (The Career Doctor).

DELAY THE CONVERSATION Politely postpone the discussion.	"*It's really dependent on the opportunity. Could you share some more details with me*?"
THE REVERSE Get them to tell you the salary.	"*I don't have a particular number in my mind yet; is there a salary range you can share?*"
THE MARKET If the new job pays a lot more than your present job.	"*From what I've researched, it seems the range for these positions is $55,000 to $65,000. Can you tell me if that is where this falls*?"
THE POSITIONS If you are interviewing and have other potential offers.	"*Positions I've been looking at are in the range of $55,000 to $65,000*."
THE PACKAGE If they INSIST on knowing what you make presently or in your last position. (Note: Sometimes employers use this number as a "jumping off" point as they think about what they would pay you for their open position – often 10-20% bump).	*"My total compensation package was in the $40's range. (The range you mention could include tuition reimbursement, bonuses, etc.). For post-MPH positions, I've been looking in the $55,000 to $65,000 range*."

12. After the Interview

a) Follow up is crucial - only 20% of interviewees send thank you notes. This is a way to make you stand out from the crowd. Send a thank you note within 24 hours via email.
b) Your thank you should be no longer than 2 paragraphs, and error free.
c) It's always good to customize the note based on something that was said in the conversation. For example, "*Your comment about XXX made me even more excited about the position*."
d) Each person you interviewed with should receive a separate – *customized* – thank you note. If you don't have their email addresses, ask the person who scheduled the interview.
e) Use an email thank-you to show timely follow-up. Also, a hand-written note is rare for employers to receive, therefore often quite effective to send in addition to your email.
f) If you wished you shared a skill set, knowledge, or specific experience that is relevant to the job but did not come up in the interview, you can also highlight that in your note. Example: "*The projects you mentioned are very similar to what I did in my last role. It was so important to gain buy-in for the new EMR system, so I spent a lot of time meeting with nurses and case workers to hear their thoughts and share how the system could help them*."

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Walk me through your background.
3. Why did you choose BUSPH to get your MPH? What is your concentration and why?
4. What do you know about our organization? Why do you want to work here?
5. Why should we hire you? What can do for us that someone else can not?
6. Tell me about a time when you worked successfully in a team.
7. Tell me about a time when you worked with a difficult team member.
8. What would you do if you needed a senior level person in your organization to work with you, and they were not responding to your requests?
9. What was your role in your department's most recent success?
10. Tell me about a time when you had to escalate a problem to your manager.
11. Tell me about a time when you had to say no or push back with a client (or team member).
12. Describe a time when you were not satisfied with your performance. What did you do about it?
13. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
14. What have you learned from your mistakes?
15. What was the most difficult decision you ever made?
16. Describe a time when you faced stresses at work that tested your coping skills. What did you do?
17. What would you consider an ideal work environment? Ideal manager?
18. Do you prefer working alone or in teams? Explain.
19. Tell me about a time when you had to gain the cooperation of a group over which you had little or no authority. What did you do?
20. Tell me about a time when you led a group or project. What do you think makes a good leader?
21. Tell me about your management style. What would your team say about you?
22. What do you do when people disagree with your ideas?
23. Tell me about a time when you took initiative?
24. If you were watching a group of people who have either managed or worked with you – *and they could NOT see you* – what would be the expressions be on their faces if they were in a conversation about YOU? What would they be saying?
25. Describe a time when you were faced with an ethical dilemma. How did you handle it?
26. Do you think it's okay to lie?
27. Tell me about a time when you used your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
28. Recall a time when you were assigned what you considered to be a complex project. What steps did you take to prepare for and finish the project? Were you happy with the outcome? What one step would you have done differently given the chance?
29. Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed. What did you do about this?
30. What professional accomplishment are you most proud of and why?
31. When were you happiest in your career?
32. What motivates you to go the extra mile?
33. What do you see yourself doing 3-5 years from now? 10 years from now?
34. Why did you leave last your job?
35. What have you been doing since you were last employed?
36. Where do you go for current news?
37. What do you do outside of work? What do you do for fun?
38. What are your salary requirements?
39. What questions do you have for me?

PREPARING "START" EXAMPLES (SUCCESS STORIES)*

A START success story (**s**ituation, **t**rouble, **a**ction, **r**esults, **t**ransferable skills) demonstrates very concrete examples of your behavior in specific situations. Below is an example:

SITUATION: "In my first job, I worked at a small consulting company. Our department's job was to do basic research for companies that made products for consumers. All the people working in the department were statisticians, economists, or people who just loved working on a computer. We stayed in our own offices all day long and rarely interacted with each other."

TROUBLE (OR PROBLEM, OR OPPORTUNITY): "Being one of the newer employees, I wanted to learn as much as I could as fast as I could, so I got in the habit of stopping by other people's offices and asking them about their work. To my amazement, I found out that no one had any clue what anyone else in the department was working on. What was worse was that I realized we were often struggling to solve the same problems and reinventing the wheel every time – repeating the collection and analysis of data that someone else had already done for another client."

ACTION: "I compiled information about everyone's projects as I did my visiting and then wrote up a newsletter every two weeks."

RESULTS: "It wasn't long before people were telling me that they were using the information from the newsletter all the time. Before starting a project, they would check the newsletter to see what they could 'borrow' from past projects. This greatly reduced duplication of effort and saved time so we were able to get more work done."

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS: "These are skills that I can bring to you as a project manager. I like things very organized. If I see something that needs to be done, I do it – I don't have to wait to have it officially made part of my job."

**Source: Your Job Interview: An Easy, Smart Guide to Interview Success by Cynthia Ingols and Mary Shapiro.*

PREPARING YOUR "TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF" ANSWER

During an interview, often you are asked the question, "Tell me about yourself", or "Walk me through your background." It's always good to capture the attention of a 'screener' fairly quickly. One way to do that is to prepare a 1-minute "*tell me about yourself*" story. This should be short and interesting, and usually includes the following:

- High level starting point that frames you and gives a sense of your path for getting there
- Personal highlight about an interest or passion for something
- Closing statement that connects back to the job and organization you're interviewing for

Here is an example:

"My experience in communications started in college. I was active in our school's service learning program and volunteered for a few nonprofits to help them use Facebook and Twitter to promote their organizations. For one of them, I helped raise awareness for healthy eating among inner city youth. During this experience, I realized I had a passion for helping underserved communities so I decided to go back to School for my MPH in order to learn more about the field at a broader level. My concentration was in Social & Behavioral Sciences where we learned about community health issues and strategies to change behavior. We did a lot of field work with the Boston Public Health Commission. I wrote and designed educational materials, and also created their social media plans. In both places, my work is still being used which I'm particularly proud of. I finished these projects just before graduating and now I'm excited to focus on my job search. Based on what I read about your organization and this particular position, it sounds like a great fit for my background and interests. I'm really looking forward to hearing more about it today."

Worksheet to Get Started

My background is in ____.

A few highlights/examples include ____.

Through this work, I realized I wanted to go into _______________________________________.

I decided to pursue a degree in public health so I could __________________________________.

I've been working on and learning about ____ which I have really enjoyed.

Based on what I read, it sounds like this position is a great match for my background and I'm particularly excited about your _________________ work. I'm looking forward to learning more about the role today.

PHONE INTERVIEW TIPS

1. Have your resume in front of you, as well as the job description along with any research notes/questions you have prepared. Have pen and paper on hand to take notes. You may also want to dress up for a phone interview so you are in a professional frame of mind.

2. Test your phone reception, and try to ensure no interruptions during the call.

3. A phone interview is used to "screen" you, and recruiters commonly ask about your salary requirements and salary history in the very first conversation. Employers request salary information for various reasons. If your current salary is too HIGH, they can "SCREEN YOU OUT" because it is higher than their range and/or because they think you won't be happy working for less money (even if you say it's okay). If your current salary is too LOW, they might "LOW BALL" you with a low offer because they believe they can. In this case, you may be leaving money on the table. <u>The bottom line: you should never ask or speak about salary. Let the prospective employer initiate that discussion</u>. When pressed for an answer, here are a few ways to handle this:

   "For the past year, my internship position has been part-time, and I have been paid hourly. It's hard to share an accurate picture of my salary history. In terms of what I'm looking for, while the opportunity is the most important thing to me, I have been looking at positions in the $60's range."

   OR

   ""In my last position – 'pre-MPH' – I was making in the $40's range. In terms of what I'm looking for when I graduate, while the opportunity is the most important thing to me, I have been looking at positions in the $60's range."

4. Remember, on phone interviews, the interviewer cannot see your expressions (hand or facial). Be sure to show energy over the phone - **use your voice to show emphasis on points**, and be sure to speak loudly enough for the person to hear you. Pretend there is a live person in the room.

5. Sometimes there is an awkward silence during phone interviews. Tip: End your answers with a question back to your interviewer or a closing statement. It helps to let them know you are done speaking. An example of a question could be*, "…is this similar here? Is this the type of experience you are looking for?"* An example of a closing statement could be*, "…so that is why I am interested in this position. I'm looking forward to learning more about it today."*

6. Often times an interviewer will be on a speaker phone, which can be distracting. Try to work with it assuming you can hear the person well. If not, you might kindly mention that <u>your</u> phone connection is not receiving her/him well. In most cases, the person will take you off of the speaker phone. If it's an interview team, you must adapt. Either way, always accommodate the interviewer.

7. Whether it is one interviewer or more than one, if you have not been given names beforehand, write down each name (and title if given) as they are introducing themselves. Try to take notes of who is asking the questions – this will help you frame a thank you letter later as you can refer back to the conversation.

5 TIPS TO HELP YOU TACKLE A PRE-RECORDED JOB INTERVIEW

1. Treat It Like Any Other Job Interview:

OK, so I know it can be difficult to treat a pre-recorded interview like a typical job interview because you're not going to meet anyone or even leave the house – but you need to try your best to treat it the same. Be sure to do lots of research around the company you're interviewing for and try and demonstrate this knowledge within your answers. Also you might feel a bit silly dressing up smartly in your living room – but remember, employers will see you and first impressions count. That said; it is important to try and dress appropriately for the company you're interviewing for. For example, while a suit and tie might be perfect for a finance job, it's probably a bit too over the top for a digital job with an agency that's famous for favoring casual dress.

2. Practice, Practice, Practice:

With a pre-recorded interview, you've got the advantage of knowing what questions you're going to have to answer, and, deadline permitting, you've also got the advantage of having time to practice and prepare so make the most of it. Jot down some key points you definitely want to cover in each answer and practice answering each question. **Practice with family and friends, or record yourself practicing to see where you can improve using our online interview tool – contact Career Services for details.**

3. Remember, You're Not a Robot:

That might seem like a strange tip, so let me explain. When it comes to pre-recorded interviews, it can be really easy to come across as a bit robotic and stiff because you've had time to practice your answers and you're keen to try and ensure you cover everything in your answer – but you really need to try your best to come across as natural. As I mentioned in the last paragraph, rather than creating proper paragraphs for each answer, jot down key bullet points that you want to answer – and use these as reference when recording your answers. Similarly, employers want to see that the candidates they're considering have a bit of a personality – so try and ensure your answers have a bit of a life in them (e.g. a monotone voice and no movement probably isn't the way to go.) People's voices naturally go up and down as they talk and a lot of people use their hands a lot when they talk – so think about how you talk normally and try and replicate this in your answer.

4. Don't Rush It:

As I said at the beginning, if you've got a deadline for your response, it can feel like the pressure is really on – but you need to be careful not to rush your answers. Employers want to employ people who are confident, have clear communication skills and can keep calm under pressure – so if you're mumbling, rushing through your answers and getting flustered, you're probably not going to impress. Before you record your answers, take a big deep breath and think about what kind of impression you want to make and what you want to portray and try and bear this in mind throughout the course of your interview.

5. Take Advantage Of The Situation:

With a pre-recorded interview you essentially get to have a job interview from the comfort of your own home so you need to take advantage of that. Remember, the employer will only see what you let them see (i.e. your background) so it's a good idea to use the space directly in front of you wisely. Just like a Zoom interview, it's a good idea to stick post it notes to the outside of your screen or on the wall in front of you which contain your answer bullet points and notes on the company – and then use these as reference throughout your interview. Also, if there's something you're trying to avoid (e.g. playing with your hair or looking at the floor), stick behavior pointers on your post-it notes too. That said; while the employer will be focusing on you, they're probably going to give your background a quick once over to - so don't let a controversial poster or picture catch their eye for all the wrong reasons!

DO A DRY RUN -- USE *BIG INTERVIEW*, OUR ONLINE MOCK INTERVIEW TOOL

https://busph.biginterview.com/

1. Record yourself doing an interview using our Big Interview Tool: https://busph.biginterview.com/. Create your password and then answer the profile questions.

2. Select the "Practice Interview" button. Note: you can start with other resources/sections offered on this tool depending on your time available.

3. Start with General Interviews, top 10 questions. Click on the CHALLENGING level; this is more geared toward graduate level candidates.

4. Click on "play" to hear the questions using the GREEN button, and then "record" each answer when you're ready using the RED button. Turn on option for webcam and adjust your camera angle. You will be able to save and review your answers on camera. This will help you go get ready.

5. After you complete the General Questions, move on to Industry Questions under "Management Consulting". Go through each of these modules:
    - Basic
    - People Skills
    - Team Player
    - Logic (if you have time, these are brainteaser questions)
    - Analytic
    - Case Module
    - Note: Other good Industry Modules include: Project Management, Nonprofit, Operations (Operations Manager) and Marketing (Social Media and General Marketing).

6. When you're done, play back your videos to see where you did well, and where you may need to practice more to ace the interview!

HOW TO PREPARE FOR ZOOM INTERVIEWS

Things You Will Need:

- A computer equipped with a webcam, microphone, and Zoom
- Appropriate interview attire
- As isolated room with adequate lighting, lacking any distractions

1. First, remember this is a REAL interview! Do not be tricked into thinking that preparation is not required since the interview will be done online. Though there are some tricks to Zoom interviews listed below that are not available in an on-site interview, hiring managers will still be choosing individuals that they perceive as most qualified for the job. Thus, PREPARE for the interview in advance. Think about what would be the appropriate dress for the interview for you to best fit in with the company's culture (if you do not know already).
2. If possible, test out your computer set-up days before the interview is set to take place. If possible, use an Ethernet cable to access the web; relying on Wi-Fi during an interview is a risk that should be avoided at all costs. Also, make sure there is plenty of lighting in the room, so that the hiring manager can clearly see your face. Free the room of any unnecessary distractions (for instance, a red umbrella or green coat hanging in the background), but it is okay for there to leave non-distracting objects up (such as a clock, a table, etc.). Test the call with another friend to make sure no minor details need to be adjusted (such as the distance between you and the screen).
3. Try to get the computer's webcam high enough so that it is eye-level with you. Some laptops naturally require the user to look down at the camera, and that look is typically not as flattering for an interview as the eye-level approach. This can be achieved by a variety of creative means; a laptop or computer stand would be best.
4. Get there early! Log onto Zoom approximately 15 minutes before the interview start time. If the hiring manager is already online, they will be impressed that you have shown up for this virtual interview early. If not, they will still notice you were already online when they got on.
5. Be professional, but be yourself! Don't get nervous; demonstrating confidence can sometimes be one of the deciding factors to who the company chooses for the job. Try not to refer to notes (see tip below), however, feel free to write down anything the interviewer might say. Also, it is appropriate to look at the video feed of the interviewer while they are talking, however, it is imperative that you speak to them by looking at the webcam. This will give the impression of eye contact, which is a major selling point in any interview.

Tips & Warnings

1. Sometimes, the hiring manager will prefer to make contact via telephone initially, then continue with the interview on Zoom. In these instances, do not hang up the phone until you are absolutely sure the hiring manager has done so as well. Occasionally, a hiring manager will still want you to continue the conversation on the phone (for instance, if they do not want to dress the part, they may claim they have no webcam or microphone...though unlikely, you must continue on the interview with your phone in hand. One good benefit to this is that you can look at the camera the whole time, not worrying about looking down at their picture during their speaking parts).
2. If you would like to quote some statistics about the company in your speech, it is best to memorize them beforehand. Nothing looks more natural to a hiring manager than when it is obvious that you know plenty about their company. However, one nice thing about Zoom interviews is that you can put tricky information/statistics on a piece of paper or poster board (in large print), tape it on a wall about three feet behind your computer (slightly higher than the webcam), and reference it when need be. Make sure the

information is large enough that you can access it with peripheral vision, so the interviewer does not notice your eyes jerk off the camera.

3. You should still follow all protocols for regular interviews, such as avoiding taboos, being honest, and performing appropriate follow-up. This includes writing a thank you note immediately after your interview, thanking the hiring manager for their time and consideration.

CASE INTERVIEW TIPS AND RESOURCES

Many people wonder what the differences are between a behavioral interview and a case interview. The case interview is employed primarily by consulting firms and hospitals hiring administrative fellows and other management-type roles. Case interviews are increasingly being used by other types of organizations as well.

Below you will find a summary of the differences between behavioral interviews and case interviews. You will also find many helpful websites, practice sites, and additional information to help you prepare for your *case interviews.*

Behavioral Interview Summary

The behavioral interview technique is used by employers to evaluate a candidate's past experiences and behaviors in order to determine their potential for future success. The interviewer identifies desired skills and behaviors, and then asks for very specific examples from the candidate's prior experience to demonstrate that they indeed possess these skills. For example, an interviewer might ask, "Could you give me a specific example of when you worked with a difficult team member, and how you handed it?"

Case Interview Summary

The case interview is one in which "you are introduced to a business dilemma facing a particular company. You are asked to analyze the situation, identify key business issues, and discuss how you would address the problems involved." (MIT Careers Handbook)

For preparing for case interviews, below are several resources:

1. Take a look at this excellent YouTube video that showcases the flow of a case interview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-VgpMrFlIs

2. *Case in Point* by Marc Cosentino. Considered "THE" top resource for case interview preparation, explore various case questions and learn a system to tackle sophisticated case questions.
    - Check out website resources: https://casequestions.com/case-preparation/
    - Find partners to practice with via the free EXCHANGE tool.

3. Caseinterview.com. Free tutorial created by consulting "guru" Victor Cheng.

4. Review Bain Consulting and McKinsey Consulting websites for tips including case interviews.

   Be prepared for cases such as the following: *Your client is the CEO of The Methodist Hospital. Located in the Texas Medical Center in Houston, Texas, Methodist is one of the most comprehensive hospitals in the United States, with leading specialists in every field of medicine. The hospital has earned worldwide recognition in multiple specialties including cardiovascular surgery, cancer and epilepsy treatment and organ transplantation. As a large comprehensive hospital providing full range of services in a large urban area, the Methodist Hospital has done very well historically. In the last five years, however, the hospital's profitability has decreased to the point that they are almost out of money and will not be able to meet their financial and social mission. The CEO comes to you to ask for advice. Specifically, she wants you to help address the following two questions: Why has the hospital's profitability gone down? How should they turn it around and improve profitability?*

Case Interview Tips

- Listen very carefully to the problem stated. Make sure you are answering the question you have been asked.
- Begin by setting a structure. Think of four to five sub-questions that you need to answer before you can address the overall issue.
- Stay organized. When discussing a specific issue, remember why you are discussing it and where it fits into the overall problem.
- Communicate your train of thought clearly. If you have considered some alternatives and rejected them, tell the interviewer what and why.
  Step back periodically. Summarize what you have learned and what the implications appear to be.
- Ask for additional information when you need it. But make sure that the interviewer knows why you need the information.
- Watch for cues from the interviewer. Any information given to you by an interviewer is given to help you—listen to them carefully and follow their lead.
- Be comfortable with numbers. You will almost always have to work with numbers in a case. This requires comfort with basic arithmetic and sometimes large quantities. You may also be asked to perform estimations.
- Don't fixate on "cracking the case." It is much more important to demonstrate a logical thought process than to arrive at the solution.
- Use business judgment and common sense.
- Relax and enjoy the process. Think of the interviewer as a teammate in a problem-solving process and the case as a real client problem that you need to explore and then solve. Clients need pragmatic solutions that they can act on as soon as possible. Always focus on actionable recommendations, even though sometimes they may not be the most elegant solution to the problem.

Some Common Mistakes

- Misunderstanding the question or answering the wrong question.
- Proceeding in a haphazard fashion. For example, not identifying the major issues that need to be examined or jumping from one issue to another without outlining your overall approach.
- Asking a barrage of questions without explaining to the interviewer why you need the information.
- Force-fitting familiar business frameworks to every case question, whether relevant or not, or misapplying a relevant business framework that you do not really understand, rather than using common sense.
- Failing to synthesize a point of view. Even if you don't have time to talk through all the key issues, be sure to synthesize a point of view based on where you ended up.
- Not asking for help. Some candidates feel it is inappropriate to ask for help when they are stuck. Whether it is a misunderstanding related to the overall problem, or whether you are struggling with a specific analysis, be sure to ask for help when you need it.
- To practice, look up the website(s) mentioned above in the previous section and try out their case interview samples. The website will typically give you some information, ask a question, and then, when you are ready, give you a sample answer. (Please note, usually computer cookies must be enabled to use the website samples effectively).

FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION TIPS - SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself (professionally speaking).
- Why are you interested in our institution?
- What do you think sets us apart from other institutions?
- What attributes do you believe are necessary to be a leader in today's changing healthcare landscape and why.
- If you could change anything about Healthcare Reform, what would it be?
- From a provider standpoint, what do you think are the biggest challenges and opportunities related to the ACA? How about for payers? Patients?
- How do you build relationships? What do you think is critical for gaining credibility with colleagues, executives, clinicians?
- What would you do if someone asked you to take on an important assignment, and you knew you did not have the necessary background to complete the task?
- Tell me about a time when you:
  - Dealt with a difficult team member – how did you handle it?
  - Had to be resourceful to get a project done.
  - Built consensus for change management with physicians, nurses and/or other clinical professionals.
  - Leveraged technology to solve a problem.
  - While managing a project, had to juggle competing demands. What were your successes? What were your failures?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why should we bring you in as a Fellow?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- What questions do you have for me?

Questions to Prepare for THEM

Most interviewers end the interview with something like, *"So, what questions do you have for me?"* This is your opportunity to ask questions that show your passion and interest, as well as your knowledge of their institution and program. For preparing your questions, think about who is interviewing you. For example, if this is a "screening" interview with an HR person, you may want to ask questions about the culture, and what types of people thrive there. Base your question on something you read or learned about them. For example, "*After speaking with a former Fellow and reading through your website, it sounds like your culture rewards risk taking. I'd love to hear your perspective on that."*

Questions with interviewers who are more closely aligned with the Fellowship (i.e. Fellowship Director, Hiring Manager, etc.) may be asked more specific questions about the program. For example, if it's a rotational program that has information about the specific rotations, you may ask something like, *"I read about a few sample projects that former Fellows have worked on in the Finance Rotation. Would this next Fellow continue on with that work and/or are there are other projects you foresee this next Fellow working on?"*

PANEL INTERVIEW TIPS

The Firing Squad: How to Survive a Panel Interview By Nicole Lindsay

If your palms start to sweat before a one-on-one interview, you can imagine the nerves that come when a potential employer says you'll be meeting with not one, but *four* people—all at the same time! Four-on-one hardly seems fair—that means four times the interviewers, asking four times the rapid-fire questions. But fair or not, it's best to be prepared—"interview by firing squad" is a common way for companies to speed up their hiring process, not to mention see how candidates will react in a group setting . Yes, building a rapport with multiple evaluators is that many times harder than connecting with just one—but it's definitely possible. Here are a few survival tips for your next panel interview.

Know Who's Firing Questions at You

Typically, your panel of interviewers will represent multiple areas of the company, so each representative will consider you through a different lens. For example, if you're interviewing at a tech company for a project management role, your panel might include the department manager (your potential direct supervisor), an HR manager, and team leads from the engineering and marketing departments, whose teams you'd work with on a daily basis. Because your interviewers come from different backgrounds and roles, each one will consider your resume and responses differently. The department manager might be most interested in your project management background, while the engineering supervisor probably wants to hear about your technical experience.

So, to prepare best for this type of interview, find out who your interviewers are in advance. Simply ask your company contact (whoever you spoke or emailed with to arrange the interview), "Can you tell me a little bit about the panel I'll be meeting with?" More than likely, she'll at least be able to give you their names. If not, start brushing up on your memorization skills. On the day of the interview, your initial introductions with the panel will be vital—you'll need to recall (and use) each interviewer's name and role throughout the meeting. In fact, you may find that writing down this information is easier than committing it to memory. Taking notes is generally acceptable in an interview—just ask your interviewers, "Is it OK if I jot a few notes down?" first.

Engage the Group With Your Responses

Once you have a solid understanding of who's in the room, you can build rapport by connecting with the interviewers, both as individuals and as a group. To do this, answer each question directly, but then elaborate further by adding points to address the perspectives of the other interviewers. For example, one interviewer may ask you about how you effectively manage a team —but you know the managers from other departments are more interested in how you would engage their teams and work interdepartmentally. So, you could respond with, "Holding weekly team meetings are a must, so that everyone has clear priorities and expectations. I also apply this when I'm working with different departments, by scheduling standing meetings with those teams. This really enhances our communication." By taking a role-specific question and molding it to apply to each person on the panel, you've strengthened your rapport with the entire group—instead of just the question-asker.

Mind Your Body Language

As you're speaking, be aware of how you're communicating with your body language, too. You may be tempted to focus your attention solely on the interviewer who holds the most senior position, asks the most questions, or has the most say in the ultimate hiring decision, but it's important to make a connection with each representative. When responding, direct your initial answer to the person who asked the question, but as you continue to elaborate and provide examples, address the other interviewers. And don't just make eye contact—shift your shoulders so that you're squarely facing each individual. Even if they look down to take notes, continue to move your gaze from interviewer to interviewer to establish a more conversational atmosphere.

Defend Yourself Against the Rapid Fire Questioning

As you sit on the other side of the table, you may feel like the interviewers are shooting each new question at you faster than you can fully answer the previous one. And, well, they are—hence the name "firing squad interview." Each interviewer wants to get his or her questions answered, but has to compete with the other panelists for air time. To succeed in this interview format, you have to control the pace of the conversation. Don't rush your answers; when asked a question, pause for a second to really consider what you want to say before responding. But make sure you answer briefly and get to the point quickly—in a panel interview, you will probably get asked another question before you've fully responded to the last.

If an interviewer cuts you off to ask an unrelated question and you haven't finished your thought, immediately assess whether what you had left to say is critical for the interviewers to know. If it's not, then let it go. If it is important information to share, then politely say, "Before I answer your question, I'd like to share a final thought on the last," and then complete your previous response.

Prepare for Follow-Up Questions

Beyond the fast pace, this type of interview also usually evokes more follow-up questions than usual. Multiple panelists means multiple perspectives—and what satisfies one interviewer's question may spark additional inquiries from others. To avoid coming up short on content, make sure you're armed with multiple examples and anecdotes to explain your background and experience. You can prepare for this by recruiting some friends to host a mock panel interview. Go through some typical interview Q&A , but encourage your pretend panel to dig into your answers by asking extensive follow-up questions. This will not only improve the quality and depth of your responses, but it'll also help you get more comfortable with the panel interview format.

It's never pleasant to think of yourself on the receiving end of a firing squad—even if the ammunition is only interview questions. But by building rapport with your panel of interviewers, you'll convey that you can confidently handle any situation.

Oh, and even though they put you through the ringer, make sure to express your appreciation by sending each interviewer a personalized thank-you note. Then, breathe a sigh of relief—you survived!