

PRE-NIGHT PRESENTATIONS

We've all heard, "You never get a second chance to make a good first impression." And, while interviewing can cause some anxiety, Career Services offers a variety of resources and services designed to enhance your preparation for interviewing and reduce your apprehensiveness. These include individual career advising appointments, digitally recorded practice interviews, and access to employer information in our Career Resource Center and via the Career Services Web site. Another way to better prepare for your interviews is by attending appropriate "pre-night" presentations.

Pre-nights are information sessions that many Miami recruiters hold during the evening preceding their on-campus interviews. They are actually an integral part of the interviewing process, so it is very important that you attend them. Please note that some employers host information sessions that are not necessarily connected to upcoming campus interviews. These "stand alone" information sessions are designed to provide students with an overview of the opportunities available within an organization, information about the employer, and how students may apply for these internships/jobs through either Career Services' Miami CAREERlink or directly with the employer. Pre-nights are usually held the evening before the employer conducts its on-campus interviews, while "stand alone" information sessions are usually not associated with next-day interviews.

Both pre-nights and "stand alone" information sessions are listed on Miami CAREERlink under the 'Events' tab. Students are also informed of an employer's pre-night on the screen as they sign up for interviews.

The following information describes pre-nights, including their purpose and structure, and provides tips on how you should prepare for them.

What is the purpose of a pre-night?

Although pre-nights vary from employer to employer, the rationale for hosting pre-nights is basically the same: to provide you with a broad base of knowledge about the organization and to answer your questions. They also relieve the interviewer from having to cover the same basic information with each candidate during individual interviews. Generally, recruiters will discuss the organization's history, culture, mission, structure, products or services, and career paths. In addition, specific information about training programs and the positions for which they are hiring will usually be discussed. By covering these areas during the pre-night, the on-campus interview will be much more productive for both you and the employer. Therefore, you should plan to take advantage of this opportunity to learn more about the organization.

What is the structure of a pre-night?

The structure of pre-night presentations will differ among individual employers. Some recruiters will use formal PowerPoint presentations, while others will conduct an informal discussion about their organization. Occasionally, several representatives, including recent Miami graduates, will speak at a pre-night. They will discuss the topics mentioned previously and will usually address your questions.

Some pre-nights include food and beverages. The employers provide these refreshments to help create a relaxed and cordial atmosphere. Show them your appreciation by partaking and by talking with them

about their organization. Do not be reluctant to approach recruiters with any questions you may have. Your interest will be appreciated.

How will I know if an organization is sponsoring a pre-night?

If an organization intends to have a pre-night, it will be noted on the organization's interview sign-up screen on Miami CAREERlink and under the 'Events' tab on Miami CAREERlink. Be certain to carefully note the date, time, and location of the pre-night and keep this information handy for your reference.

How should I prepare for pre-nights?

After you schedule your interview via Miami CAREERlink, carefully review the organization's Web site and any recruiting literature that is available. You may then want to formulate some specific questions based on your review of the Web site and other research you have done. Areas of inquiry might include:

- What are the long-range goals of your organization?
- What qualities are you looking for in new hires?
- What are your organization's strengths and weaknesses?
- What differentiates your organization from your competitors?
- How would you describe your organization's personality and management style?

Keep in mind that some of these questions may be answered in the presentation. You may also want to

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refer to our *Interviewing* booklet for additional questions to ask employers.

What should I wear to pre-nights?

Unless instructed to the contrary on Miami CAREERlink, it is usually best to err on the conservative side and wear professional attire. Once again, you'll want to try to make a positive first impression.

What if I cannot attend the pre-night?

Unless you have a conflict with a class, or another compelling commitment, employers will expect for you to attend their pre-night. However, if you cannot attend the pre-night, simply apologize to the

employer at an appropriate time during the interview and explain the circumstances. The important thing is to acknowledge that you were aware of the pre-night and that you regret being unable to attend. This will show both courtesy and conscientiousness, and will distinguish you as a thoughtful and mature candidate. And, of course, if you receive an invitation to a pre-night directly from an employer with an RSVP, be certain to respond to the invitation as soon as you can.