

## 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, the Office of 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, videotaped 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. 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 for 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 sign-up screen on our online interview scheduling system. 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 online, carefully review the organization's Web site and any recruiting literature that is available. Check in our Career Resource Center to see if the organization sent any literature in advance. 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 be:

- 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 refer to our "Interviewing" booklet for additional questions to ask employers.

### What should I wear to pre-nights?

Unless instructed to the contrary, 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.

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We hope this information has helped answer your questions about pre-nights and how you can benefit from them. By learning more about the organization and the positions for which the employer is interviewing, you will be better prepared for the interview, more confident, and better able to communicate how you can contribute to the organization. If you have additional questions about pre-nights or other job-search matters, please consult with one of our career advisors. We look forward to assisting you.