

# INTERVIEWING

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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



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## YOU NEED TO KNOW YOURSELF

### **Ask yourself some questions:**

*What is unique about me? What skills do I bring? What experiences are important for me to highlight?*

### **Start with your resume.**

What do my experiences say about me? How can I concisely and positively explain my academic background and other experiences to an employer? Look at work experience, volunteer experience, research experience, campus activities and leadership, honors and awards, conferences attended, class projects, presentations and publications.

### **Come up with specific examples.**

You need to be memorable. It is not enough to just make a laundry list of adjectives about yourself.

### **Common Preparation:**

*I'm good at managing my time. I'm a team-player, and I'm hard-working.*

It's great to realize what your unique strengths include. But, in addition, you must explore how you can specifically and concretely articulate those strengths to an employer.

### **Better Preparation:**

*I'm hard-working. I had to work 2 jobs to make ends meet since I'm paying for school. Yet, I value my education and was able to balance my school work and extracurricular activities. By managing my time, I've been able to maintain a 2.9 GPA and still made it a priority to seek out leadership opportunities within my sorority. This past year, I served as V.P. for Public Relations, and I worked with other members of the Greek Life Community as well as the university administration to build better relationships and increase open communication within the Greek Community and also within the entire student body.*

## YOU NEED TO KNOW THE EMPLOYER

### **Do your research.**

The number one complaint Career Services receives from employers is that students aren't prepared and know little about the company with which they are interviewing.

### **Start with the employer's Web site.**

First and foremost, what does the company or organization do? Do they sell something? Provide a service? How many employees do they have? Who are their competitors? Where are they located? What is the company's history? Read the company's mission statement or vision.

### **Search online.**

Google the company to see if you can find any articles in various periodicals such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *Business Week*, or *The New York Times*.

### **Check out the company research links on Career Services'**

**Web site:** [www.muohio.edu/careers](http://www.muohio.edu/careers)

Sites like Hoover's, Vault, Fast Company and Wet Feet can be a wealth of information.

### **Re-read the job description.**

Sometimes, students go into interviews with little knowledge about what the job, for which they are interviewing, entails. If possible, gather as much information about the position as you can before the interview. If necessary, ask for key duties to be explained during the interview.

## **YOU NEED TO PREPARE**

### **Anticipate questions.**

There are some questions you should always be ready to answer. Some of those include: tell me about yourself, what are your strengths and weaknesses, why are you interested in working here? But, in addition, you should anticipate questions related to the industry or field for which you are interviewing. For example, a sales interview question might be, tell me about a time you had to persuade someone to your point of view. Think about the skills most valued in the job for which you are applying. For instance, time-management and working to a deadline are incredibly important in journalism. So a newspaper might ask a job candidate to describe a time when you had to work towards a deadline.

### **Plan for behavioral-based questions.**

A behavioral-based question is one where the employer expects a specific example. The question would generally start with a phrase like: tell me about a time, describe a situation, or give a specific example. There is a technique to answering these questions and it's called the CAR method.

### **C = Context.**

Here is your hook. You need to set up the story and explain how the situation might have been challenging: you had a difficult team member, you had a small budget, or you were working against the clock.

### **A = Action.**

Remember to say specifically what you did. Did you organize an event? If so, what steps did you take. Did you resolve a conflict? If so, how did you go about that? What did you say? What were you thinking? Why did you approach it in that particular way? Describe what you did using "I" in the description.

**R = Result.**

This should be positive and ideally quantifiable. You raised “X” dollars for charity. You increased recruitment to your student organization by “X%”. You raised your grade from a C to an A.

**Practice. Practice. Practice.**

Our office offers mock interviews so you can do just that. It is much better to be prepared than to miss out on an opportunity because of a lack of preparation. To schedule a mock interview call 529-3831. You should also prepare on your own.

**CAR WORKSHEET**

Describe a situation where you took initiative.

C

A

R

Give a specific example of a situation when you had to budget your time.

C

A

R

**Prepare questions for employers.** Some sample questions include: what qualities are you looking for in a new hire? What do you like best about the company? It’s also a good idea to ask the employer what their timeline is for making a hiring decision. For additional questions, see our *Interviewing* guide available in print at Career Services or online on our Web site.

**YOU NEED TO FOLLOW-UP**

**Honestly evaluate your performance** and look for ways to improve.

**Send a thank-you note.**

Every person you met and interviewed with should receive a thank-you note. At a minimum, send your host a thank-you note and express appreciation through them to all you met. An e-mailed, hand-written, or typed note is appropriate.

**Follow up.**

If you haven’t heard anything within the timeframe the employer laid out, follow up with the employer to reiterate your interest and ask how the selection process is going.