



Interviews

An interview is used to assess your suitability for the position of interest. There are several types of interviews and each company may elect to use more than one style of interviewing. Interviewing styles vary from employer to employer and interviewer to interviewer. To better prepare for an interview, students are encouraged to become familiar with the different types of interviews that may be encountered. Just like a resume is used to get you an interview. The **INTERVIEW** is what will get you the job! Be sure to follow the proper interviewing guidelines by speaking with your Career Center and landing the perfect job will be that much easier!

INTERVIEWING TIPS

How do I prepare for my interview?

- ✓ **Self-assess!** Take time to critically think about your education, experiences and skills and how it relates to the career you are seeking.
- ✓ **Do your research.** Know where the company is, what the company does, its culture and details about the job description. Thoroughly read the company's website and any recent articles published.
- ✓ **Arrive early, dress to impress and have your materials well-organized and error free.** Arriving approximately 15 minutes early is the standard. Be sure you are **DRESSED PROFESSIONALLY** (no exceptions!) You should be prepared with multiple copies of your resume, reference page, transcripts, work samples and any other materials you believe will help showcase your abilities.

What else should I be aware of during my interview?

- ✓ Be enthusiastic and smile. Remember your manners and always greet and leave with a firm handshake. A positive, upbeat attitude makes you likable!
- ✓ Remember to provide examples when answering questions and don't hesitate to ask the interviewer for clarification or to repeat a question if you are unsure. Be prepared with your **OWN** questions to ask.
- ✓ Be aware of non-verbal cues. Remember to use the **SOLER** approach:

S--Face Interviewer **Squarely**;
O--Maintain **Open** stance
L--**Lean** forward slightly
E--Maintain good **Eye** contact
R--**Relax**

What are the next steps after my interview?

- ✓ Write a thank you note to the employer and send within 24 hours.
- ✓ Critically think about how you did, what you could have done differently and what you may want to ask in a 2nd interview or upon a formal offer.
- ✓ Haven't heard back? Wait 1-2 weeks before calling to follow-up. When you do, re-introduce yourself and the date you interviewed, reiterate your interest in the position and ask the status of the opening.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWING

TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW

Traditional interviews still take place, although they are much less common. This type of interview has been around for many years and the examples of the most common interview questions follow in this guide. You should always be prepared to answer some traditional interview questions. Many times employers will combine another type of interview with typical traditional interview questions.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

Behavioral interviewing asserts that "the most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation." In a behavioral interview you will have to demonstrate your knowledge, skills, and abilities, collectively known as competencies, by giving specific examples from your past experiences. Many examples are acceptable and could include previous internships or other relevant work experiences, course projects, accomplishments, difficult situations, and leadership roles held in on or off-campus organizations. Answering behavioral questions require that you give relevant examples to "prove" you have that skill or strength. The S.T.A.R. technique is an excellent way to answer such questions. When providing an example from a past experience, include the following and your answer will be both complete and concise:

Situation-	what was the situation?
Task-	what task were you doing?
Action-	what action did you take?
Result-	what was the result (choose only positive experiences)

While many candidates are intimidated by this method, a behavioral interview gives you the opportunity to demonstrate to a prospective employer why you are well-suited for the job. Sample behavioral questions can be found in this guide.

CASE INTERVIEW

This interview is most commonly used among consulting firms. During a case interview, a student will be given a scenario, asked to identify the problem, and then solve the problem identified. This type of interview is not as common, but can be very difficult. Often the employer will be looking at 'the process' of HOW you went about solving the problem, not necessarily the answer to the problem. The focus is primarily on analytical skills, but other skills are reviewed such as attention to detail, how you handle pressure, and time management skills.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Typically telephone interviews are used to assess whether or not the student should be considered for an on-site interview. Many times employers will use the telephone interview as the first interview. It is especially common for those employers who are not located in the local area. Be sure you are prepared for the phone call. Have your resume and transcript readily available. You will also want to prepare talking points, but DO NOT read the answers to the employers.

GROUP INTERVIEW

Group interviews may take place in order to determine how a student interacts with various groups of individuals. It could involve several people taking turns asking questions or presenting scenarios for the students to solve. During group interviews there may be more than one interviewer. If this happens be sure you respond to ALL interviewers even if only one is asking the questions. Maintain eye contact with ALL interviewers.

Group interviews could also include several candidates at once. Be sure to be honest and truthful in your answers and try to focus on your experience, not worrying about how other candidates answered the questions. The interviewer/s will be focusing on one answer at a time so be sure to remain calm and demonstrate all that you can about why YOU are the most qualified person for the position.

STRESS INTERVIEW

Stress interviews are very uncommon. They are sometimes used by financial service employers, advertising agencies and government agencies that perform clandestine operations. The purpose of these interviews is to see how you react to a stressful situation. You may be asked difficult questions in a pressuring manner or be given a complicated project to work through in a tense atmosphere. One example that has been used is *“What is charisma and do you have it?”*

ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

You may find that an employer asks a question you do not feel comfortable answering. Many of these questions might be illegal. Illegal questions may include but are not limited to topics regarding:

- Age
- Gender
- Personal Information
- Disabilities
- Marital/Family Status
- National Origin

If you are asked an illegal question, you have one of three options:

1. You can answer the question.
2. You can ask the intent of the question (i.e. “How is this relevant to this position? “). Then answer the question in the best way possible.
3. You can refuse to answer the question, however, keep in mind that this may harm your chances of getting the job.

If you believe you have been asked an improper or illegal question, DO NOT accuse the interviewer to his/her face, but instead bring your concern to the Saint Vincent Career Center. We will be sure to address the issue without doing harm to your job or internship search.

THE 30-SECOND COMMERCIAL (ELEVATOR PITCH)

The 30-second commercial is one of the most important aspects of the job / internship search. Always tailor each 'pitch' to the unique needs of each employer. It can be used:

1. During job fairs and networking events when introducing yourself to an employer
2. During an interview to answer the question "Tell me about yourself?"
3. During other social, academic, or professional gatherings

Structure:

A brief commercial describing the benefits of buying a particular product or service – YOU

Purpose:

Enables the listener to quickly learn your specific, unique, and impressive attributes

Benefit:

You will come across more poised, confident, and career focused by opening with your commercial

Use:

- In a cover letter – to highlight your background and key abilities
- During an interview – in answering the question – "Tell me about yourself"
- During professional, social, and organizational meetings – when you must introduce yourself (i.e., job fairs, networking events, informational interviews, presentations)

Contains Personal Attributes:

- Details the job title or the type of position you are seeking
- Sells your professional abilities and experiences
- Emphasizes your individual strengths and links them to the perceived needs of the employer
- Uses descriptive statements of your acquired skills and abilities

Samples of Sentences:

- I am an experienced _____ with extensive knowledge of _____
- My technical skills include....
- My strongest skills are....
- I have ____ years of experience in _____

General Structure:

- Opening Statement – Your name, what you are CURRENTLY doing (describe job or education), and what you know about the company / how you fit in
- Next Statement – Discuss 2-3 skill sets that you have and how they relate to the position/employer
- Closing Statement-Remember to:
 1. Ask the next step in the interviewing process.
 2. Offer a firm handshake.
 3. Obtain business card/s from the professional.

30-SECOND COMMERCIAL -EXAMPLE 1

My name is Janine James. I am a current senior at Saint Vincent College majoring in Psychology. I will be graduating in May 2008. As you can see on my resume I have had much experience working with children and teen-aged populations. I would like to work for the Children’s ABC Company and use the education and skills I have gained during my internship and classroom experiences.

I am here today to discuss the full-time Counselor I position at Children’s ABC. I learned from your website that you specialize in emotional and behavioral issues. I have been interested in this type of work since my internship last summer at Pressley Ridge. At Pressley Ridge, I had the opportunity to work with children serving as a role model, assisting with behavioral modification. I also served as the facilitator for both group and family interventions. I am hoping this experience along with my Psychology background will allow me to succeed at ABC in the Counselor I position.

Could you tell me a little more about the Counselor I position and what you are looking for in an ideal candidate?

30-SECOND COMMERCIAL -EXAMPLE 2

My name is Richard Riches. I am currently working part-time and have 2 years experience as a Marketing Assistant with 123 Company, a small organization specializing in advertising and PR. I am also a student at Saint Vincent working on a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing, and will be graduating in December.

I have developed my communication and business skills through direct interaction with clients, through both small and large local businesses. I have also worked on several projects for 123 that have allowed me to gain excellent analytical, research, communication and organizational skills. I’m currently looking for opportunities that involve a high level of client interaction with a nationally known marketing firm such as Johnson Marketing. I noticed on your website that your organization is hiring a Marketing Associate in various locations throughout the US. Because of my experience and educational background, I’m very interested in these types of opportunities and am also open to relocation if necessary.

My 30 Second Commercial

Try writing your own commercial, tailoring the content to the audience you will be addressing.

Most Common 'Traditional' Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your strengths? Weaknesses?
3. Why are you interested in working for us?
4. Why should we hire you?
5. Where do you want to be 5 years from now?
6. Why did you choose your major? Saint Vincent College?
7. What courses did you enjoy the most? The least?
8. Are you willing to relocate? Are you willing to travel?
9. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working alone? In groups?
10. Do you possess good communication skills?
11. Which is more important to you, money or the type of job and why?
12. How do you feel about working with people from diverse backgrounds?
13. How do you feel about being an entry-level employee?
14. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
15. What do you do in your free time?
16. Do you think your grades are a good reflection of the type of work you can do for us?

Most Common 'Behavioral' Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your work experience.
2. Tell me how a friend would describe you? A professor? A family member?
3. What motivates you to put your best foot forward?
4. Tell me about a mistake that you have made recently and what you have learned from it?
5. How have you demonstrated your ability to contribute to a team effort?
6. Give me an example of how you have performed successfully under stress?
7. Tell me about a difficult co-worker and how did you handle her/him?
8. How do you prove your credibility to a team member or employer?
9. How do you handle disappointment and criticism?
10. Tell me about a time you set a goal and failed to reach it.
11. Describe your most rewarding academic experience.
12. In what ways do you feel that you will be able to contribute to this company?
13. Why are you considering leaving your current job? (may or may not apply)
14. What did you enjoy most about Saint Vincent? What would you change about your experience?
15. Have you managed people in any of your previous positions?
16. If you were the boss, how would you motivate your employees?
17. When working in a team, how do you get others to follow your ideas?
18. If you could change one thing about your previous job, what would it be?
19. Tell me about the most difficult decision you have ever made.
20. Tell me about your greatest achievement.