Interviewing
Prepare to ACE your Interview
Stages of the Interview Process

1. Preparation
2. The Interview
3. Follow-up

see workshops

Interview • 2
Handle the Tough Questions

Interview • 3
Ace the Interview
The Employer Wants To Know

Who are You?
What skills, assets and experience do you offer?

Are you a good ‘Fit’?
Will you fit with our team and culture? Are you right for this company & industry?

How will you Perform?
What have you done in the past that demonstrates how you will do in future?
The Employer Wants To Know

Who are You?
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Are you a good ‘Fit’?
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How will you Perform?
What have you done in the past that demonstrates how you will do in future?

What is your ‘product’?
What does it do? What are its features?

Do I need your product?
How will it benefit me and my company?

Is your product reliable?
How do I know it will do what you say it will do?
Types of Interview Formats

- Behavioral
- Situational
- Behavioral / Situational Hybrid
- Case – used in the Consulting industry
- Other – panel interviews, group interviews
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Types of Interviews

The Behavioral Interview

This is the most common interview format (along with the combination behavioral/situational) used for general types of jobs and industries. The interviewer focuses on behaviors and abilities that are job related, and on your actual current and past experience that demonstrate these abilities.

The Behavioral Interview format is based on the premise that past behavior and performance are the best predictors of future behavior and performance. Therefore, the interviewer asks questions about your specific experience in handling different situations. The interviewer typically uses the S*T*A*R question process:

- **Situation** “Tell me about a situation/time when X…”
- **Task** what it was that you had to do/accomplish
- **Action** what action did you take to accomplish that goal
- **Result** what was the result; how did it turn out

Sample Question:

"Tell me about a time when you were faced with an unreasonable deadline. How did you handle that situation, and what was the outcome?"

When you hear a ‘STAR’ question, your response will be more effective if you also include the STAR elements in your response.
Preparation

- Focus / Mindset
- Self-Assessment
- Research the Employer
- Analyze the Position
- Determine Your ‘Fit’
- Practice!
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Get the Right Focus / Mindset

- Adopt a ‘Selling’ Mindset
- Understand the Employer’s Perspective
- Think ‘Win-Win’
Get the Right Focus / Mindset

- **Adopt a ‘Selling’ Mindset**

  You are the ‘product’. And you are making the sales pitch to the employer about your strengths, assets, experience, skills; and what you can do for the employer.

  This does not mean a fast-talking ‘hard sell’ approach. Instead, this is an honest presentation to the employer about you (the ‘product’), your strengths, and what you will bring to the job.

  But remember: In order to ‘sell’ yourself as the best candidate for the job, you must be thoroughly knowledgeable about your product and fully confident in your product.
Get the Right Focus / Mindset

- Think Like the Employer
  Understand the Employer’s Perspective

Put yourself in the employer’s shoes and imagine what information you would want to have before hiring someone for your company. The employer has a substantial stake in making the right hire. Hiring is expensive, and re-hiring is even more expensive.

If you were the employer, wouldn’t you seek ‘proof’ of the candidate’s experience and abilities? Wouldn’t you explore what the candidate claims on his resume and application in order to determine if his experience, skills and personality are the right fit with your company’s needs? ‘Thinking like the employer’ will help you prepare your responses to predictable interview questions.
Preparation

Get the Right Focus / Mindset

- Think ‘Win-Win’

Think in terms of...

- Not only why you want the job – but also how you will benefit the company.

- Not only what you will gain (if hired) – but also how the company will benefit from hiring you.
Preparation

 ✓ Focus / Mindset
 ✓ Self-Assessment
 ✓ Research the Employer
 ✓ Analyze the Position
 ✓ Determine Your ‘Fit’
 ✓ Practice!
Self-Assessment

- Know Yourself (know ‘the product’) … thoroughly
- Your Assets and Deficits
  - Strengths and Weaknesses
  - Competencies
  - Direct Skills and Transferable Skills
  - Work Personality / Values / Behaviors
Preparation

Self-Assessment

- **Strengths and Weaknesses**
  Understanding your weaknesses doesn’t mean that you will broadcast these. But understanding that you have weaknesses as well as strengths indicates a mature and self-aware individual.*

- **Competencies**
  Reviewing this list of professional core competencies will help you assess which of these you possess – and can emphasize to the employer.

- **Direct Skills and Transferable Skills**
  Understand how all your skills and experience - those directly applicable to the job as well as those indirectly applicable, relates to your qualifications for the job.

- **Work Personality / Values / Behaviors**
  Understand your personality traits and your values - and your compatibility with certain work environments. Are you committed to, and suited for, working in the … corporate environment, non-profit environment, large corporation, entrepreneurial company, mission-driven organization, profit-driven enterprise…etc? Do you prefer to work independently, or as part of a team? Are you more interested in working with people, or data, or tactile “things”? There are several tools for gaining insight into your personality and your career interests – see our website for links to some of these resources.

* for more tips on how to prepare for the interview, see workshop: Interviewing3 - Handle the Tough Questions
Preparation

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In addition to knowing yourself (the ‘product’) … you also need to know to whom you are ‘selling’ (the ‘buyer’).

This helps you shape your responses to better:

- Articulate the ‘fit’ between you and the employer
- Emphasize the things of greatest interest to the employer
- Show your interest in the company
- Show your knowledge about the industry
Preparation

Research the Employer

What you should research about the employer:

- Facts about the company: size, location(s), products/services, mission, etc.
- Environment: industry trends, current events, competitors
- Culture: formal / informal
  - traditional / entrepreneurial
  - hierarchical / team-based
  - training opportunities; etc

Where to research information about the employer:

- Company website
- Vault.com
- Inside contacts within the company
- MiddNet volunteers
  
  MiddNet – is Middlebury’s online database of Midd alumni who have volunteered to share career advice and information with Midd students and fellow alumni. This career information can include background information about the company where they are employed, or information about the type of job or career field in which they work. Use MiddNet! It is a powerful career networking tool for the Midd community!
Preparation

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Preparation

Analyze the Position

- Thoroughly review the position requirements, qualifications, competencies.

- Read ‘between the lines’. Beyond the specific tasks that the job description outlines… what abilities, skills, personal qualities are they really looking for?

- Pay particular attention to the key words and descriptors used in the job description (or advertisement) – especially those key words listed first in the listing of qualifications/requirements. Key words used by the employer indicate which things are most important to the employer, and for which the employer will be looking. Use the same words/language in your resume, cover letter, and description of yourself in the interview. Be prepared to show specific examples of how you’ve demonstrated those key skills/qualities in your past work history.
Preparation

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- Determine Your ‘Fit’
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Preparation

Determine Your ‘Fit’

- Relate your experience, competencies and skills (both direct and transferable) to the job description.
- Link your skills, experiences, competencies, assets to the:
  - job requirements
  - company culture
- Determine your ‘fit’ with the job description. How do your skills match up with the job requirements?
- Why are you the ideal candidate?
- You must analyze and be able to articulate the ‘fit’. The employer is not going to do it for you!
Determine Your ‘Fit’

Sample Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position Requirements &amp; Duties</th>
<th>My Experience &amp; Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Marketing Assistant position]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create e-marketing campaigns.</td>
<td>Assisted in developing online edition of campus newspaper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write and edit various ongoing monthly and quarterly newsletters.</td>
<td>Wrote weekly column on campus speaker series.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner with graphic designers, and producers on complex projects.</td>
<td>Asst editor for arts and sports sections; decided which stories to print based on available completed articles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must have excellent presentation skills.</td>
<td>Teamed with campus newspaper editor, writers and photographers to produce 35 weekly issues/year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must have ability to multi-task and adapt to changing priorities.</td>
<td>Made several presentations in open campus meetings re: plans for campus publications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must be able to produce quality work under tight deadlines.</td>
<td>Part of editorial team that successfully met weekly publishing deadline for 3 consecutive years.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample Exercise

Determine Your ‘Fit’

Position Requirements & Duties

- Create e-marketing campaigns.
- Write and edit various ongoing monthly and quarterly newsletters.
- Partner with graphic designers, and producers on complex projects.
- Must have excellent presentation skills.
- Must have ability to multi-task and adapt to changing priorities.
- Must be able to produce quality work under tight deadlines.

My Experience & Skills

- Assisted in developing online edition of campus newspaper.
- Wrote weekly column on campus speaker series.
- Asst editor for arts and sports sections; decided which stories to print based on available completed articles.
- Teamed with campus newspaper editor, writers and photographers to produce 35 weekly issues/year.
- Made several presentations in open campus meetings re: plans for campus publications.
- Part of editorial team that successfully met weekly publishing deadline for 3 consecutive years.
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Preparation

Practice, Practice, Practice

• Do a ‘mock’ interview …
  Schedule a Practice Interview with a career advisor.
  Call ext. 5100 to arrange this

• Practice again …
  practice your responses: get comfortable answering the
  questions you know* you will be asked

• Practice again …
  practice the physicality of the interview: your posture, how you
  will sit in the chair, etc

You can predict many of the questions that you will be asked in any interview.
See next pages for a list of some of these.

* for more tips re: predictable questions, see workshop Interviewing3 - Handle the Tough Questions
Preparation

Practice Your Responses

There are core questions that are typically asked in any interview. You can predict it.

So if you know you will be asked these questions, then prepare and practice your responses beforehand. Being prepared in this way turns a ‘tough’ question into a question that you can deftly handle and answer articulately. This reduces your nervousness and enhances your self-presentation.

Be ready to answer some variation of the questions listed on the following slides…

* for more tips re: predictable questions, see workshop Interviewing3 - Handle the Tough Questions
Practice Your Responses

Questions about Yourself
1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your greatest strengths? weaknesses?
3. What are your best qualities?
4. Why should we hire you?
5. What qualifications do you have that make you feel you will be successful in this job?
6. What accomplishment are you most proud of?
7. What type of personalities do you work with best? Which do you work with least well?
8. How do you define success?
9. How would you describe your personality?
10. What motivates you?

Questions about Your Education
1. Why did you decide to attend Middlebury?
2. How does your liberal arts education prepare you for a career in this field?
3. Which classes have you enjoyed the most? the least?
4. Why did you choose your particular major in college?
5. What is your GPA?
6. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
7. What college activities have you participated in at Middlebury?

Questions about Your Career Goals
1. Why did you choose this field/career?
2. Where do you hope to be in 5 years?
3. What do you think determines an individual's success in this field/job?
4. What are your career goals?
Practice Your Responses

**Questions about Your Experience / Personality**

1. Tell me about your internship?
2. What did you like most about the internship? Least?
3. If I were to contact your former supervisor, what would she/he say about you?
4. What is your greatest strength?
5. Which of your accomplishments are you most proud of?
6. What is one of your greatest weaknesses?
7. Give me an example of a problem you encountered and how you dealt with it.
8. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a teammate about how to handle something. What did you do? What was the outcome?
9. How would your colleagues describe you?
10. How do you resolve conflicts?
11. Have you ever received negative feedback? How did you respond?
12. Why do you think you are a ‘team player’?

**Questions Specific to the Job & Company**

1. What about this position appeals to you? (why are you interested in this position?)
2. Why do you want to work for us?
3. What do you know about our company?
4. How much direction do you need?
5. What contribution do you believe you can make to our company?
6. What do you expect from a supervisor?
7. Why do you think you’re a good fit for this job?
8. Tell me about a time when you led a team of peers on a project. What was the biggest challenge and how did you handle it?
9. Describe the ideal job for you.
Prepare to Ace the Interview

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Check out all the career clips in the job search series

Networking
- Networking • 1
  Your Elevator Speech
- Networking • 2
  The Networking Interview

The Resume
- Resume
  Make Your Resume Count
- Cover Letter
  The Right Introduction

Interviewing
- Interviewing • 1
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Interviewing
Prepare to ACE your Interview