



Pine Manor  
College

# Essential Interviewing Techniques

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# INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES

## How to “Wow” the Hiring Manager and Human Resources Recruiter

### PREPARATION

#### Research

- Company → mission, challenges
- Position → skills needed
- Salary Range → salary.com, onetcenteronline.org
- Attire → professional, match industry standards
- Location → do a “test run” so there are no surprises

#### Review

- Conduct a self-assessment of your skills
  - personal, transferable and technical
- Resume
  - know what you wrote

#### Match

##### Employer Needs:

- Presentation skills
- Proficiency in Excel

##### My Background\*

- Chosen to design and deliver a PowerPoint presentation at a Student/Faculty Meeting
- Utilized Excel to prepare purchasing spreadsheets during internship

\*You may include volunteer experience, work study, prior internships, part-time jobs, and/or school projects.

## PRACTICE

Five Essential Questions: Prepare and practice to be able to answer each question in one minute

*Tell Me About Yourself, Strengths/Weaknesses, 5 Year Goals and Salary Requirements*

**RULE#1:**        ~~Dishonest~~            Be Honest!        ~~Brutally Honest~~

### 1. “Tell Me about Yourself”

Personal History -if it relates to the job you are applying to, for example, Early Childhood:

“I grew up as the oldest in a family of nine and have always enjoyed children.”

Education

“I chose Pine Manor because...”

Experience

Include related volunteer experience, work study, internships, part-time jobs, projects.

Personal Characteristics

Match characteristics to the job; for example,

Psychology → good listener, excellent problem solving skills

Biology → detail oriented, analytical

“My professor describes me as...”

Activities/Interests

“When I am not taking classes I enjoy...”

“I participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ club on campus.”

2. *What Are Your Strengths?*

Match specific strengths to the job you are interviewing for (see the Preparation section). Give examples

**Note:** Employers want flexible, adaptable employees

3. *What are your weaknesses?*

**Reminder:** Rule #1

Consider an answer that will not take you out of the running for the job

If you are applying to be a writer, don't say, "I am bad in English."

Instead, say, "I have not had a lot of experience presenting, so I recently volunteered to present for my campus activities board and I received a lot of positive feedback."

4. *Where do you want to be in three to five years?*

**Reminder:** Rule#1

"I want to continue to learn, possibly attend graduate school for \_\_\_\_\_, contribute to the organization and hopefully be rewarded for my efforts."

5. *How much salary do you want? Note: Most internships are unpaid so this may not be asked*

**Reminder:** Rule#1

**RULE#2:** The person who says money first loses!

"What is the salary range for the position?"

Then Listen! Respond to what they say accordingly. Do NOT object!

Remember your salary research. Even if it is a lower amount than you were expecting, now is not the time to negotiate.

You could say, "Although it is a bit lower than I anticipated, I am very interested in working for you and would like to continue our discussions."

## DO's



- Remember Rule#1
- Get to the appointment 10 minutes early
- Review your resume
- Take 3 deep breathes before your interview
- Be yourself
- Smile
- Wear clean, business appropriate clothes
- Ask questions
- Bring your reference list
- Bring extra copies of your resume
- Bring a pen and binder
- Give specific examples
- Show enthusiasm!

## DO NOT's



- Be late
- Chew gum
- Fidget
- Touch your cell phone (it's a deal breaker)
- Wear perfume
- Give out your reference list unless asked
- Take notes
- Give close ended answers (yes/no)
- Ask about salary

## HELPFUL PHRASES

“May I have a moment to think about that?”

“That is a good question...”

“Although I have not had exactly that experience, I have done...”

“Did I answer your question?”

“Let me make sure I am clear, are you asking \_\_\_\_\_?”

# STAGES OF AN INTERVIEW

## 1. Introduction

- Smile from the moment you enter the building
- Eye contact
- Positive attitude in your tone of voice and body language
- Put the interviewer at ease

“Thank you for the directions, it was very easy to find.”

## 2. Information Exchange

### **FORMULA FOR SUCCESS**

Question → Answer → Question

You are asked a question → You answer the question → Then you ask a question

*“What were some activities you participated in on campus?”*

If it is for a communications position you might say, “I was elected Secretary of the International Club due to my strong writing skills. Would I be taking minutes of meetings or writing in this internship?”

-Ask Questions

-When the interviewer asks, *“Do you have any questions?”* The answer is YES! This is your chance to shine; you can show the prospective employer the research you conducted. “I understand that your company is launching a new product aimed at the market. How might this affect the job?”

## 3. Close

- Show enthusiasm with your tone and body language
- Recap how your background meets their needs
- Overcome any obstacles “I understand that you do not have much experience using a MAC. This may be a problem since we have only MACs in our office.”
  - Your response: “I have some experience using my sister’s MAC and I have recently ordered one for myself and am excited to learn all the tools.”
- Ask, “Is there anything else you need to know about me before you make a decision?”
- Next steps, “Where do we go from here?”
- Follow up → Write individual Thank You letters (may be an email) to each person on the interview team. See next page for a sample.

## **Sample Thank You After Interview Letter:**

400 Heath Street  
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467  
[pmanor@pmc.edu](mailto:pmanor@pmc.edu)  
617-731-0000

January 1, 2014

Demetria Jones  
Massachusetts Department of Social Services  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 333  
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you so much for speaking with me yesterday regarding the Communications Department Internship position. I walked away so excited and ready to roll up my sleeves and start work.

Your description of the need for a person with a passion for social justice and a desire to help others fits my values and aspirations. In addition to my studies as a Social and Political Systems major, I realized I had forgotten to mention my college volunteer experience helping orphans in Haiti during Spring Break. In addition, I welcome the chance to use the customer service and administrative skills that I developed as a Clerk at Liberty Insurance.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions and I will contact you by the end of next week to follow up regarding the next steps.

Sincerely,

Patricia Manor