Successful Interviewing
Preparation. Practice. Focus.

Career Services
Northampton Community College
Purpose of an Interview

- An exchange of information between you and an employer.
- Explore the possibility of a mutually beneficial fit.
Know the Employer

Where to find information

- The internet
- Annual Reports
- Newspaper articles

What to look for

- Products & Services
- Company History
- Corporate Culture & Mission

On the internet

- vault.com
- wetfeet.com
- hoovers.com
- fortune.com
Know Yourself

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What will you bring to this position?
- What are your goals?
- Be prepared to answer: Why should I hire you?
What the statistics reveal

The most important factors in an interview

- Your presentation - 45%
- Your answers to questions – 35%
- Experience – 10%
- Miscellaneous – 10%

With practice and preparation, most of this is under your control!
What to Wear

- Keep it simple and conservative
- Limited jewelry and piercings
- Cover tattoos
- Shoes are shined and professional looking, not scuffed.
- For more help, go to http://bit.ly/amUVJV
- Interview attire is available from First Impressions at no charge to students. Contact firstimpressions@northampton.edu for details.
Non Verbal Communication

A great deal of your information, feelings, and attitudes is conveyed through your body language.

- Smile
- Firm handshake
- Posture
- Eye contact
- Voice tone
Verbal Communication

- Use good grammar with no slang.
- Speak clearly and honestly.
- Take your time. Pauses are fine.
- Be responsive to the employers questions.
- Be prepared to articulate your skills.
- Make sure your enthusiasm for the position shows!
Why Should I Hire You?

- Be prepared to talk to the employer about your education, related coursework, and experience in the field.
- Prepare a One Minute Commercial describing your unique combination of skills and experience.
- What sets you apart from all the other applicants?
- What can you bring to this organization?
Your One Minute Commercial

A great response to the question – “Tell me about yourself.” Write it down and practice until it sounds natural.

- Speak about your professional career and what key skills and education you have that relate to this position.
- A brief summary of your related work history, emphasizing your best accomplishments and results.
- Point out how your work experience relates to the open position.
- Close by showing interest in the company.
Sample Interview Questions

- Why did you choose this field of work?
- What are your strengths?
- Why do you want this position?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Describe your long term career goals.
- What would your co-workers or classmates say about you?
Behavior Based Interview

Applying for a job at IKEA

Make a chair and take a seat.
Behavior Based Questions

- Can you tell me about a time when.... ?
  - Describe a specific problem you solved for a previous employer or instructor
  - Describe, step by step, the action that you took
  - Discuss your problem solving process in detail
  - What were the results?
  - What did you learn from solving this problem?
Inappropriate Questions

- Are You a U.S. Citizen?
- How old are you?
- What is your marital status?
- What are your childcare arrangements?
- Do you have any disabilities?
- Have you ever been arrested?
- How tall are you? How much do you weigh?
Responding to Inappropriate Questions

- What does the employer really want to know?
  - Can you be at work on time?
  - Are you able to handle the work?
  - Do you have the legal right to work in the U.S.?

- What are your choices for responding?
  - Decline to answer the question
  - Answer it truthfully
  - Answer the question based on the underlying concerns. You can ask a question to clarify employer concerns before you answer. (Yes, this is your best choice!)
Not at a First Interview

Avoid discussion of these topics in a first interview.

- Pay
- Work Schedule
- Benefits
- Vacation
- Time off

These topics are generally discussed at a second interview, or when a job offer is made.
A Salary Discussion

- Consider your total compensation package, including benefits.
- Avoid stating specific numbers when possible.
- Do your research and have a salary range in mind that is appropriate for the position. CareerOneStop has salary finder at http://bit.ly/crNiXC.
Examples

What salary range are you looking for?
“İ’d like to talk about the job requirements and expectations first, so I can get a sense of what you need.“

What did you make at your last job?
"This position is not exactly the same as my last job. So let's discuss what my responsibilities would be here and then determine a fair salary for this job.“

Rather than mention a specific dollar amount, ask
“What range have you budgeted for this position?”
Questions to Ask the Employer

Show your interest in the position by preparing a few questions to ask the employer.

- What type of training will I receive?
- What is your time line for filling this position?
- Why is this position open?
- What changes would you like to see made over the next year by the person who takes this job?
After the Interview

- Write a thank you note or e-mail within 24 hours.
- Follow up with an employer if you hear nothing within the time discussed in the interview.
- Continue your job search until you receive and accept a job offer.
- Think about the interview questions you answered. Which ones caused you trouble?
Questions?

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