Interviewing

Methods of Interviews

➢ Phone Interviews
  o Still dress up so you feel professional
  o Sit upright at a table
  o Keep a cheat sheet of important points
  o Smile – it helps with the inflection in your voice

➢ On-Site Interviews
  o Usually meeting with HR, Peers, & Manager
  o Multiple interviewers
  o Pay attention during the tour and ask ENGR related questions

➢ Skype/Google Hangout Interviews
  o Test internet/camera/sound connections prior to interview
  o Dress up, smile, same as an on-site interview
  o Show up 1-2 minutes early instead of traditional 10 minute rule

Types of Interview Questions

➢ Qualification – Straight forward questions about your experience, background, personality traits.
  o What can you tell me about yourself?
  o Why are you interested in our organization?
  o What are your career plans?
  o What do you see yourself doing in 5 years?
  o Why should I hire you?
  o What are your greatest strengths? Weaknesses?

➢ Behavioral – Popular questions based on the premise that past behavior best predicts future behavior.
  o When working on a team project, have you ever dealt with a strong disagreement among team members? What did you do?
  o Tell me about a time when you had to be assertive.
  o Tell me about a time when you’ve presented complex information. How did you get your point across?
  o Describe a time when you used persuasion to convince someone to see things your way.
  o Tell me about the projects you initiated. What prompted you to begin them?
  o Describe your leadership style and give me an example of a situation where you successfully led a group.
  o Give me an example of your ability to build motivation in your coworkers, classmates, or a volunteer committee.
  o How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give me an example.
  o Describe a time when you were faced with an obstacle. What did you do?
  o What is the most creative thing you have ever done?
  o Give an example of when you had to make a difficult decision. How did you approach it? What criteria did you use?

➢ Technical/Case – Questions related to concepts from your coursework, industry knowledge, or specific skills.
  o These questions will vary depending upon the industry.
  o Often you won’t know the answer, but you need to make an attempt. Remember the interviewer is evaluation you on how you approach an answer.
  o If it is a difficult question, ask for more time. If you do not have an answer, let the interviewer know you really don’t have an answer. It is better to be honest than to make something up.
What to Wear

**MEN:**
- Solid color, conservative suit
- Conservative tie
- Dark socks, professional shoes (NO WHITE SOCKS!)
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Easy on the aftershave!
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Portfolio or briefcase
- Conservative watch (optional)

**WOMEN:**
- Solid color, conservative suit
- Skirt okay, if knee-length
- Coordinated blouse
- Closed-toe and closed heel shoes
- Limited jewelry
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Tan or light hosiery/Dark trouser socks
- Sparse make-up & perfume
- Manicured nails
- Portfolio or briefcase

STAR Method

- **Situation** – Describe the situation you were in.
- **Task** – What goal were you working towards?
- **Action** – Describe the actions you took to address the situation.
  - Most important part of your answer
  - Important to include multiple actions and thoughtful processes you took to solve the problem
- **Result** – Describe the outcome of your actions.

Etiquette Tips for Interviews

- Be on time! Even better, arrive 10 minutes early
- **DO NOT:** chew gum, wear excessive jewelry, or wear too much fragrance
- Take out excessive piercings (especially tongue rings)
- Style your hair neatly and keep it off your face (no outrageous hair color)
- **DO NOT** put your belongings on the interview desk
- Turn your cell phone off completely
- Be respectful to everyone in the office
- Alert references that they may be contacted
Sample question and answer: “Can you describe a time when you showed initiative?”

**Situation — Task**

“I am a member of the student organization, XYZ. Last year, during the first three weeks of the fall semester, our president stopped showing up and wasn’t communicating with the officers. Nothing was happening at general meetings, attendance was dropping, and the group was starting to fragment. I began to be disheartened because the fall is normally an exciting time for our club—new members join, football season is here, and fun Homecoming activities happening. I remembered how the year before, in helping plan and build our organization’s parade float, I had a lot of fun with the other students. The whole process really made me feel connected to the club and helped me make lots of friends, but with the way things were going now, I quickly realized there wasn’t much enthusiasm for such a big project.

Even though I wasn’t an officer, I felt like I needed to do something to help. I thought a group Homecoming project to building a float would be a good way to help the group reconnect with each other.”

**Actions**

“I asked the group’s vice president and secretary to a meeting at the Union to talk about the float. At the meeting, I started with positive comments about our club’s history and reputation and how they were the basis for me joining. I mentioned that being a part of Homecoming activities last year was, so far, the highlight of my college experience. I then shared my worry that, because of the unproductive meetings, we wouldn’t be able to pull everyone together for a float entry. I told them that I would be glad to take the lead in managing the float, and the officers thanked me. At the next general meeting, I spoke to the group about how excited I was to help organize the float and even shared a few fun ideas that went along well with the Homecoming theme. I also reached out personally to the members who had stopped attending meetings and convinced them to help out on the float. In order to get more people to our building meetings, I convinced the treasurer to give us a little extra money for games and food. I figured that would help everyone who came have a great time with their friends.”

**Results**

“Getting a little more money for fun activities helped bring more people out to help build the float. That, along with the vice president taking over the general meetings, made everyone feel like we were back on track as a group. Our float did not win any prizes that year, but we had more people work on it than ever before and more people volunteer to ride on the float and represent our group. I enjoyed being a leader on this project, and now I am thinking about running for an officer position next year.”

Keeping this detailed sample response in mind, make some notes that you could build on when answering the following question in an interview:

**“Tell me about a time you had to work with a team to complete a project.”**

Hint: Detail the steps you took to learn and tell how you applied what you learned.

**Situation/Task:**

**Action:**

**Result:**
Skill Competencies

Communication - Clearly conveying information and ideas through a variety of media to individuals or groups in a manner that engages the audience and helps them understand and retain the message.

Adaptability - Maintaining effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work tasks or the work environment.

Planning & Project Management - Effectively managing one's time and resources to ensure that work is completed efficiently; prioritizing projects.

Safety Awareness – Working in a manner that minimizes the potential for an accident; identifying and correcting conditions that affect employee safety; upholding safety standards.

Quality Orientation - Accomplishing tasks by considering all areas involved, no matter how small; showing concern for all aspects of the job; accurately checking processes and tasks; being watchful over a period of time.

Teamwork - Actively participating as a member of a team to move the team toward the completion of goals; putting team needs/goals ahead of personal needs/goals.

Continuous Learning - Regularly creating and taking advantage of learning opportunities; using newly-gained knowledge and skills and learning through their application.

Analysis & Judgment - Identifying and understanding issues, problems, and opportunities; comparing data from different sources to draw conclusions; using effective approaches for choosing a course of action or developing appropriate solutions.

Customer Focus - Making customers and their needs a primary focus of one's actions; developing and sustaining productive customer relationships.

Demonstrative Actions

Giving presentations; speaking with customers; leading meetings; drafting procedures; listening to various ideas and asking relevant questions; using multiple platforms to reach different audiences and learning styles.

Adjusting to new responsibilities at work; completing tasks of continuously-changing priority levels; preparing for last-minute meetings and deadlines.

Balancing classes and employment; scheduling deadlines for a group project; managing people or resources for events; calendaring future exams.

Operating power equipment in a safe way; preparing for potential problems; developing and following lab processes and procedures; following ISU’s Risk Management processes.

Completing course projects requiring close attention to detail; exploring all options before making a decision; researching new science and techniques; seeking out faculty input.

Completing collaborative projects during internship/co-op; participating in student organizations; working on group course projects; being an active member of Greek organizations; making decisions within a group.

Taking classes; completing certifications/trainings; job-shadowing; participating in extra-curricular activities and webinars; volunteering to learn new procedures at work; reading tech blogs; watching TED talks.

Developing an understanding of a problem and identifying various solutions; troubleshooting a piece of equipment; researching design ideas and constraints; using data and surveys instead of a small sample or anecdote as a basis for change.

Working in sales or retail positions; serving as Career Fair ambassador; adapting and compromising for customer wishes; implementing training learned at jobs; understanding a customer’s needs and quality/cost expectations.