

Preparing for Interviews

Maximize your interview success by incorporating these key steps into your preparation process.



6 Step Interview Prep Plan

1. *Research the Organization.*

- Study your prospective employers.
- It is imperative that you have knowledge of an organization's policies, operations, company structure, mission, products and services.

2. *Investigate the organization's culture.*

- Approximately 20 percent of the interview time will be spent verifying you have the necessary skill set, the remaining 80 percent will be spent determining if you'll fit in with the team.
- Do a little soul searching. In order to evaluate an organization, you first have to decide what's most important to you.
- Utilize online resources to identify organizations known for certain values. A LinkedIn search will identify career professionals, specifically SBU alumni, who might offer perspective on an organization's culture.

3. *Compare your skills and qualifications to specific job requirements*

- Analyze the job description for knowledge, skills and abilities required.
- Examine the hierarchy to determine where the position fits within the organization.
- Compare what the employer is seeking to your qualifications. This will help you develop your talking points for the interview.

4. *Practice your responses and prepare your questions.*

- Most interviews involve a combination of *resume-based and behavioral questions*.
- Create and then practice delivering succinct stories that answer typical interview questions, demonstrating that you possess the right skill sets and background for the role.
- When you don't have anything to ask your interviewers, it sends the signal you're not really interested in the role. Prepare at least 3–5 questions to ask during the interview process.

5. *Select your interview outfit.*

- Consider the company culture when choosing an outfit for your interview.
- Dress in good taste. When in doubt, dress conservatively.
- Plug in that iron. Make sure clothes are clean, neat and wrinkle-free.

6. *Plan what to bring.*

- A professional binder, notepad, and pen.
- Extra copies of your resume on quality paper along with a list of references
- A portfolio, with samples of your work, if relevant

PRE-INTERVIEW WORKSHEET

♦ EMPLOYER OVERVIEW

Preparing for an interview involves researching what the organization does. Visit the organization's website and social media presence to ensure that you understand the breadth and scope of what they do. Look for additional information about the employer including current news and recent press releases. Determine two current facts to cite and two questions to ask during the interview to demonstrate your interest in and knowledge of the company.

- ♦ FACT #1 _____
- ♦ FACT #2 _____
- ♦ QUESTION #1 _____
- ♦ QUESTION #2 _____

♦ JOB DESCRIPTION

Review the job description for the required or desired knowledge, skills and abilities that the employer is seeking. Compare your qualifications to their requirements. Develop up to four PROVE-IT statements that summarize your experience or knowledge in each area.

♦ EMPLOYER REQUIREMENTS

1. _____ 3. _____
2. _____ 4. _____

♦ PERSONAL PROVE-IT STATEMENT

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Utilize the **SOAR Technique** when developing your **PROVE-IT STATEMENTS**.

SITUATION or OBJECTIVE – Briefly describe the situation or objective to be achieved.

ACTION – Describe the specific actions you took to solve a problem or meet an objective.

RESULT – Explain the results you accomplished. Quantify results where you can.
Note any recognition you received..

For additional interviewing resources, including sample interview questions, visit The Career and Professional Readiness Center website at www.sbu.edu/cprc. To practice, schedule a mock interview with a CPRC career counselor.

