

Before stepping into an interview, be sure to practice, practice, practice. A job seeker going to a job interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing. Are you prepared to impress recruiters? Use these simple steps and suggestions to prepare for a successful interview.

## 1. Research the company, product lines, and competitors.

Research helps you decide whether you're interested in the company, and gives important data to refer to during the interview. Research...

- Company, Position, Product, Competitors

### Use the information when answering questions

**Question:** *Why do you want to work for this company?*

**Answer:** *As I understand the job, there's plenty of opportunity to be involved in both the planning of marketing strategies and the actual selling. Besides using my communication skills and knowledge of chemicals in direct selling, I believe I'm creative when it comes to marketing.*

### Use the information when asking questions

**Question:** *I am aware that you offer a comprehensive training program for new employees. What types of topics will be covered during training?*

## 2. Prepare

- Prepare five or more "success stories"
- Make a list of your skills and key assets
- Reflect on your unique strengths
- Reflect on past experiences where you used your talents successfully

## 3. Image

- Dress the part: suit or business casual, depending on position & type of company
- Firm handshake
- Strong eye contact and sit upright
- Avoid those "ums..."
- Place yourself "inside" the stories you relate

## 4. Give Examples

- Provide examples to give concrete evidence of your strengths and skills
- You have 2-3 minutes for each question generally in most 30 minute interviews.
- Be concise
- DO NOT assume that the employer knows anything about you
- End every answer, including discussion on a weakness, with a positive spin
- Include concrete, quantifiable data. AVOID generalities! Think of examples as short, informative stories. Stories connect on a gut level & the employer will remember you.

## STAR Technique: A guide to providing concise examples

<b>Situation:</b>	Explain the background for the example you provide
<b>Task:</b>	What was the project, assignment, or problem?
<b>Action:</b>	What specific steps did you take to complete the action
<b>Result:</b>	Explain the finished product (By creating a detailed training manual for new employees, I decreased training time by 33%)

## 5. Follow-Up

- Ask for a business card
- Write a thank you note, mentioning a key point in the interview so that the employer remembers you
- Use the thank-you note to reiterate your interest

### Phone Interviews: How do I Prepare?

- Dressing professionally may encourage professional attitude
  - When finished with answer, remain silent
  - Keep notes of success stories in front of you
- Take notes and jot down names for thank you notes

## Sample Questions Asked By Employers & Students

### Interest in Organization/Position:

- Why would you like to work for our organization?
- How did you become interested in this field?
- What interests you about this position?

### Describing yourself, your skills, and your strengths:

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you think it takes to be successful in this job?
- What skills have you developed that would prepare you for this job?
- In what ways could you make a positive contribution to our organization?
- What special skills could you contribute to our company?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strength? Your greatest weakness?
- Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
- What is your greatest accomplishment and why?
- Who are your role models? Why?
- What motivates you most in a job?
- Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
- Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
- In which campus activities did you participate?
- Which classes did you like best? Least? Why?

### Behavioral Interview Questions:

Past behavior predicts future behavior, so be specific!

- What was the toughest decision you had to make at a previous job?
- Tell me about the most difficult person you've had to communicate with.
- Tell me about a group project you were involved in. What was your role?
- Describe a recent work related problem and the actions you took to solve it.
- What is the biggest challenge you've faced in college and how did you deal with it?
- Tell me about a time when you had to resolve a conflict in a group situation.
- Tell me about a time when you followed through on a commitment, despite difficulties.
- Describe a situation where you had to do several tasks at the same time.

Put yourself on their team. Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer's name and products or services. For example, "As a member of \_\_\_\_\_, I would carefully analyze the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_." Show that you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful though not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.