



Close the Deal

STEP 4: Understand Different Types of Interviews.





Most people approach interviews with strong emotions including fear, anxiety, and even terror. Some even experience physical symptoms such as perspiring or feeling faint. It can be helpful to understand that determining the right fit for the position is not left up entirely to the employer. You, too, are deciding whether or not you feel that this is the best position for your needs.

Keep in mind that your resume outlined your skills, experiences, and qualifications, thus making the interview a key factor in determining the other side of the hiring equation -- whether or not both parties believe there is a good personality fit. The interview is really just a chance for you to get to know one another.

There are many types of interviews including one-on-one, panel, serial, behavioral, or peer. Most people expect a one-on-one meeting, but you should ask in advance how many people you will be meeting with, their job titles and roles within the organization. By knowing exactly what to expect, you will be better prepared to provide your best possible presentation. The following are several common interview scenarios that you may encounter during your search.

Types of Interviews

➔ Human Resources Screening

Having Human Resources representatives screen interview prospects gives employers the opportunity to evaluate all potential candidates on the same basis. This evaluation usually includes a review of previous employment, focusing on dates of employment, job descriptions and reports... the factual information. Human Resources staff members are usually more familiar with the specific technical requirements of the position, than they are with the particulars of the job they are screening for. In a Human Resources screening, you need to be able to outline and clarify your work and/or related experience in a clear and concise fashion without getting into too much technical detail in your functional area.

➔ Traditional Interviews

This is the most common interview scenario and is basically a meeting between you and one company representative. During a traditional interview you most likely will meet a hiring manager and key people whose job responsibilities are directly impacted by the position being filled. Traditional interviews often include questions, which require you to "sell yourself." Questions like, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" or "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" are frequently included as part of many traditional interviews.

➔ Behavioral Interviews

Increasingly, organizations are relying on behavioral interviewing techniques as a critical part of their selection process. Behavioral interviews are based on the assumption that the best predictor of future behavior (and performance) is past behavior. Behavioral interviewing is an approach, which allows employers to assess the job-related competencies of candidates in a structured and predictive manner.

Behavioral interviewing requires the interviewer to ask a pre-defined set of questions (often organized around core competencies), which challenge candidates to describe, in specific detail, how they have handled similar situations in the past.

As an example, in a customer service related position, one of the interview questions may be, "Describe how you dealt with a particularly difficult, or angry customer." One of the many benefits of behavioral interviewing is that someone with limited work experience could also respond to these items based on his or her "life experiences." For example, you may describe customer service skills exhibited while working as a volunteer during a fund raising event.

From a qualified candidate's perspective, taking part in a behavioral interview is the best situation you could ask for. You have an opportunity to discuss the behaviors that you have successfully exhibited in the past.

Even when an interviewer employs "traditional" interview questions, you can still utilize behavioral interviewing approaches by providing behavioral examples to traditional questions. For example, if you are asked to talk about job-related strengths, you could answer the question directly and then provide an example of how you successfully exhibited that strength in the past. This offers you a chance to emphasize more clearly what you have to offer.

➔ Panel Interviews

The interviewing panel is usually made up of some combination of managers, peers, and subordinates. This type of interview generally takes longer and is sometimes more uncomfortable than the one-on-one scenario, because you are the primary focus of a number of people.



In a panel interview, take the initiative to personally greet each company representative with a warm greeting and handshake if possible. You may also want to provide each of them with a copy of your resume if they do not have one already. When answering questions be sure to start your answer with eye contact with the person who asked the question, and then as you proceed with your answer, move your gaze to others at the table to include them in the conversation. Be sure not to overlook eye contact with those in the room who do not actively engage in questioning. They would not be there if their opinions were not valued.

➔ Serial Interviews

Serial interviews are also called “beauty pageants”, because they require you to go from one person to the next in one-on-one meetings, with each person asking you questions. You will find that many of the questions are similar so be consistent with your answers. These people will be meeting in a group session once you leave; to discuss your potential fit and will likely uncover any inconsistencies.

➔ Peer Interviews

After several formal interviews with an organization, you may be asked to return to meet with people who would potentially be your peers. This type of meeting is designed to be less formal, giving everyone a chance to get to know one another on a personal basis. It is important that you not fall into the trap of thinking that you have already been selected and that this is a welcome meeting.



Some candidates do well throughout the hiring process, only to blow it by letting their guard down in this informal setting and showing sides of their personality that the company finds less than ideal. Stay on your toes until you are filling out your new hire paperwork.

➔ Lunch Interviews

Lunch interviews, like panel interviews, can include more than one interviewer. There is added complexity because you will need to be able to eat while you talk. You may also be evaluated on your social etiquette and manners at this time, especially if you may potentially be expected to entertain clients.

Order foods that are easy to eat and that are not messy. Don't concentrate on eating but on asking and answering questions. You can eat later. The opportunity to interview generally ends when the lunch does, so remember why you are there.

