



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

# JOB SEARCH GUIDE

CAREER SERVICES, HELPING YOU BECOME CAREER READY.





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# HANDSHAKE

Career Services, Fort Hays State University  
Sheridan Hall 214, (785) 628-4260, [careers@fhsu.edu](mailto:careers@fhsu.edu)

Increase your visibility to potential employers by beginning your job search with Handshake. With Handshake, your resumé is uploaded to the Web and can be made available to employers. When you become a part of Handshake through Career Services, you boost your chances to succeed in the final, critical link in the education process—getting a job! Visit our site and use our services to look sharp and get hired!

What is Handshake?

It is a FREE easy-to-use system that allows you to:

- Post your resumé for employers to view.
- Access nationwide full-time jobs and internships based on your majors and interests.
- Find part-time Jobs for Tigers listings in the Hays area.
- Register for career fairs, workshops, and other events.
- Schedule appointments with Career Service staff.
- Opt to receive email notifications when new vacancies are posted.
- Manage multiple resúmes and cover letters.
- View various job search handouts located in the Resources section of your account.
- Much more!

Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors, graduate students and alumni are highly encouraged to utilize Handshake!

Activate your account by logging in with your TigerNet ID. Make full use of your Handshake account by using it throughout your college years and after, not just during your senior year.

How do I access my account?

Visit [fhsu.joinhandshake.com](http://fhsu.joinhandshake.com). Login with your TigerNet ID.

Instructions on uploading your resumé are available online at [fhsu.edu/career/Handshake](http://fhsu.edu/career/Handshake).



# A JOB-SEARCH CHECKLIST

## FOR LIBERAL ARTS STUDENTS

The job search can feel overwhelming, so break it into manageable steps. The good news is you don't have to do every step in order. For example, you can start working on your resumé before you identify a clear career path. Just start checking off as many of these activities as you can, and you'll find yourself on the way to a great opportunity.

You can receive assistance for every one of these steps through the Fort Hays State University Career Services office. And you don't have to do it all during business hours—start by checking our Website [www.fhsu.edu/career](http://www.fhsu.edu/career) for lots of links and helpful information.

### KNOW YOURSELF.

- I have identified my personal strengths, skills, interests and values.
- I have made a list of possible job titles/fields of interest.
- I can name two or three careers/jobs I plan to pursue.

### KNOW WHERE YOU WANT TO WORK.

- I have researched organizations or companies that might hire someone with my skills, interests and background.
- I have researched potential career fields: typical entry-level jobs, typical salaries, best geographic location for jobs.
- I have identified the top three geographic areas where I'd like to live and work.
- I have identified 10 potential employers for the type of work I'm seeking.

### GET READY FOR THE SEARCH.

- I have activated my Handshake account.
- I have had my resumé and cover letter(s) reviewed by a professional in the field or a staff member at Career Services.
- I have prepared a portfolio or work samples to highlight my experience, skills and talent.
- I have developed my 30-second speech for short encounters with employers.
- I have analyzed my education and developed my "liberal arts story" for employers.
- I have identified three individuals who will serve as my references.

### GET READY FOR THE SEARCH CONTINUED.

- I have prepared for interviews by practicing my responses to typical questions and/or doing a mock interview.
- I have an interview suit that is appropriate for the field in which I plan to work.
- I have professional-sounding answering machine/voice mail message in case an employer calls.
- I have a neutral/professional e-mail address to give to employers.

### START SEARCHING.

- I have uploaded my resumé(s) to Handshake.
- I regularly check the career center website for career opportunities. I read the appropriate job-search resources for my field(s) of interest.
- I have a system for keeping track of my contacts, interviews and other job-search activities.
- I follow up on every interesting job link immediately.
- I have developed a list of potential networking contacts and keep in touch with them.
- I keep a copy of my resumé next to my phone in case I receive a call from an employer.
- I follow-up each cover letter with a phone call or e-mail to the employer requesting a job interview.
- I send thank you letters or e-mails to every person who interviews me.

# RESUMÉ CHECKLIST

Writing a resumé can be difficult. It may be hard to know if you formatted your resumé correctly, if you included all the necessary information, or if you have too much information. Before Career Services sends your resumé to employers, schedule an appointment with a Career Services staff member to critique and approve your resumé. Prior to meeting with a staff member, it is important for you to review this checklist and revise your resumé yourself. If there is anything you are unsure about during revision, you may discuss these things when you talk with a staff member. For a more detailed explanation and examples of resumé formats, refer to the resumé handout from Career Services available online at <http://www.fhsu.edu/career/resume>.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- \_\_ A resumé is a marketing tool, not a comprehensive job history. Include only those things that will help you get what you want, leave off those things that will not.
- \_\_ List your strongest qualifications first.
- \_\_ Do not use personal pronouns such as “me” or “I.”
- \_\_ Do not include a reference list or a cover letter as part of your resumé—these should be maintained as separate documents.
- \_\_ Use consistent and proper punctuation. Run a spell check and proofread thoroughly.

## SPECIFIC RESUMÉ CATEGORIES

**Contact Information:** Include the following contact information:

- \_\_ Name in a font as large or larger than the largest font in the resumé so that it stands out.
- \_\_ Current address. No need to list permanent address unless the employer should contact you there.
- \_\_ Home phone number/cell phone number. Be sure to have an answer machine in working order with a professional message recorded.
- \_\_ E-mail address. Many employers make contact through e-mail and you need to appear to be computer literate.
- \_\_ Links to social media or LinkedIn, if you have one, and only if content is appropriate for employer viewing.

**Objective – Optional:**

- \_\_ If you choose to write an objective, be sure it is geared toward how your skills will benefit the company, not how the company can benefit from your experience. For example, instead of “Searching for position that will use my background and education and provide potential for promotion. Try: “Seeking position related to a year of experience in public relations and bachelor’s degree in marketing. Consistently recognized as a person who goes above and beyond.”
- \_\_ Specify industry and/or job title or area of interest. See example above.

**Education:**

- \_\_ Put your education section in reverse chronological order directly after your job objective, especially when searching for an internship, unless your experience is more important.
- \_\_ Spell out degrees, i.e., Bachelor of Science not B.S.
- \_\_ Put month and year of graduation. Do not put exact dates. Do not put “expected” or “projected” graduation. If your graduating in May 2022, put May 2022.
- \_\_ Emphasize your degree by placing it before your university and in bold. Do not bold your institution.
- \_\_ Include GPA if it is 3.0 or above, use GPA abbreviation not G.P.A., and do not go to more than the 2nd decimal place, i.e., 3.25 not 3.249.
- \_\_ Do not include high school unless you attended a prestigious private school that might be recognized.
- \_\_ If you financed your education, say so. For example: “Maintained a 3.5 GPA while working full-time to pay 75% of tuition.”

# RESUMÉ CHECKLIST

CONTINUED

## Experience:

- \_\_ List your experience in reverse chronological order.
- \_\_ Include full and part-time jobs, paid or unpaid internships or practicums and volunteer work, especially if it's your desired job.
- \_\_ Do not include whether the jobs were full or part time.
- \_\_ Put past employment experience in past tense.
- \_\_ Put present employment experience in present tense.
- \_\_ Include month and year or just years of employment, not exact dates.
- \_\_ Include only city and state for employer location, not complete address.
- \_\_ Include numbers to quantify experience where possible, for example, number of employees supervised, size of budget managed, number of workshops taught or projects coordinated, dollar amount saved by your ingenuity.
- \_\_ Be consistent with use of periods. Either use them or don't use them on every phrase or sentence.
- \_\_ Accentuate skills that relate to job target and major – listing the most important skills and accomplishments first.
- \_\_ Focus your descriptions on what you accomplished and how you made yourself valuable to past employers rather than your responsibilities. Instead of: "Responsibilities included implementation of policies and procedures, training of new employees, interfacing with subordinates and vendors." Try: "Worked with staff and to increase product turnover by 15% and sales by 23%. Trained 14 new employees, five of whom were rapidly promoted."

## Computer Skills:

- \_\_ Include a section on computer skills, unless you have none.

## Language Skills:

- \_\_ Include if applicable.
- \_\_ Non-native English speakers should not include English. This is assumed.

## OPTIONAL CATEGORIES

Include some of the following categories in addition to those listed above if you have limited experience: Honors, Course Projects, Volunteer or Community Activities, Interests, and Availability.

# A GUIDE TO THE REFERENCE PAGE

Prospective employers check references to validate your skills and abilities for a particular position. The employer's goal when contacting one of your references is to gain some additional insight about your work ethics and capabilities. Your job in obtaining references is to make sure they present the very best about your attributes and abilities. Employers will vary in their requirements regarding the number and type of references you provide, as well as when they request reference information.

## BASIC GUIDELINES

- Identify potential individuals to use as references early in your college career. Get to know your professors and advisors and let them get to know you. Impress them!
- Do not offer anyone's name as a reference unless you have that person's explicit permission to do so.
- Your potential list of references should include a balance of academic, employer and personal references.
- Plan to acquire three to five references. If you are applying for several different positions, you may need to select which references best support your abilities for each position.
- Do not ask someone to serve as a reference if you are not confident in their ability to write or respond positively in a timely manner to a prospective employer.
- Do not list references on your resumé. Indicate "References Available Upon Request" at the bottom, if room allows. Otherwise, this is understood. Include a reference page only if it has been requested.

## WHEN ASKING SOMEONE TO SERVE AS A REFERENCE

- Ask for permission. For example, "Would you be willing to serve as a reference for me as I pursue my job search?"
- Tell them why you want them to be one of your references. Emphasize what they know about your skills and abilities?
- Tell them what career path you are pursuing and what information you feel would be valuable for them to share with a prospective employer.
- Tell them when you need the reference. Give them adequate time to write a letter of recommendation, preferably two weeks. You must need letters of recommendation at the time you apply for a position or they may be requested at a later time during the employment process. If you are asking the individual to mail a letter of recommendation, be sure to provide them with a self-addressed envelope or a correct e-mail address.
- When possible, provide your reference contact with a description of the job you are applying for and how you feel you meet or exceed that criteria. Make sure they know what you expect from their recommendation. For example, ask for insight into your professional growth in a certain area.
- Thank them. A definite word of thanks or a written note is the correct follow-up. Keep them posted throughout your employment process. A call from a prospective employer should not be a surprise to any of your references. It should be expected so they are adequately prepared to respond with facts and specific examples about your abilities. Be sure to let them know your final destination or whether you are still active in the job search process.
- Make sure your references know if you have had a name change since your affiliation with them.



# A GUIDE TO THE REFERENCE PAGE

The following are several examples of how to list reference names, addresses and contact information on your reference page. Formatting of this document should be similar to your resumé, using the same font style, size and document layout.

## REFERENCES FOR JOHN B. JONES

Cassandra S. Smith  
President  
First Bank  
520 S. Main Street  
Hays, KS 67601  
(785) 628-0000  
csmith@bank.com

Morgan Freeman  
Vice President  
First Bank  
520 S. Main Street  
Hays, KS 67601  
(785) 628-0000  
mfreeman@bank.com

Dr. Joe Johnson  
Professor  
Department of Applied Business Studies  
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600 Park Street  
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(785) 628-0000  
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Dr. Sharon Hinkle  
Professor  
Department of English  
Fort Hays State University  
600 Park Street  
Hays, KS 67601  
(785) 628-0000  
shinkle@college.com

# DRESS TO IMPRESS

YOUR APPEARANCE REALLY MATTERS

A nice appearance is an investment in your career. Although it will not take the place of a good education or competence, it will enhance those requirements and increase your chances for getting ahead in the business world. An interviewer's decision not to hire a job applicant is usually made within the first 30 seconds of an interview. That's a lot of sizing up in a little time—mostly on the basis of appearance. Your looks, with or without appropriate business attire, will make up approximately 80% of that impression before you open your mouth. The right make up and hairstyle can make a person look more professional and not only increase his or her chance of being hired, but increase his or her starting salary by as much as 8% to 20%.

## BUSINESS CASUAL

Business casual is slightly less dressy than business professional dress. Women's casual wear may consist of slacks or a casual dress. Men could wear an open-collared shirt with a sports jacket with coordinated slacks. Jeans, shorts or T-shirts are not acceptable. When in doubt, dress to the conservative side.

## FORMAL & SEMI-FORMAL ATTIRE

Formal wear is generally not required; however, if the occasion arises, a "white tie" tuxedo and full ball gown is preferred. For semi-formal attire, women should wear a knee-length cocktail dress, a tea-length dress, or a long dress. Men should wear "black tie" apparel, which is a tuxedo or a dark suit.

## A FEW GENERAL TIPS

- Be clean and use unscented deodorant liberally.
- Arrive early. In a restroom, check your clothes, hair, hands, nails and face. Carry and use travel mouthwash.
- Take off your jacket prior to an interview or while traveling to keep it wrinkle free and to keep yourself cool.
- Hair should be neatly and recently cut and men's faces well shaven.
- Use cologne or perfume in moderation so that the smell is not overpowering.
- Nails should be well manicured and hands should be well moisturized.
- Carry breath mints with you, but do not use them during the interview.
- Do not chew gum.
- Glasses should not be tinted. It is important for an interviewer to make eye contact with you.
- Always carry extra copies of your resumé.
- Don't tap your feet, yawn, stare at the interviewer, touch your hair or otherwise appear nervous or bored.
- If you have a coat, umbrella, backpack, etc., ask if you may leave them with the receptionist or ask if there is a designated area for storage.
- Refrain from checking your phone. Have your phone on silent.

# BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL - WHAT TO WEAR

## MEN

For men, a pinstripe or plain colored suit, preferably dark gray, black or navy, is appropriate with a tasteful tie in a small pattern or stripe. Men should avoid choosing bright colors or mismatched pants and jacket for the interview. A conservative style suit worn with a white shirt is appropriate. Make sure the collar is comfortable, because unbuttoning your top button in an interview is not appropriate. Cotton or cotton/polyester blends are appropriate. An under-shirt is also a good idea.

Your neck tie should also be conservative in length, width (2 3/4 to 3 1/2), and design. The tip of your tie should just cover your belt buckle. Silk, 100%, is the best bet in terms of quality and ease of care. Bow ties and clip-on ties should not be worn. You want the interviewer focusing on your ideas, not your tie.

Shoes are important, too: always buy leather, preferably brown or black. Lace-up or slip-on styles are fine, but avoid wearing boots to most interviews. The socks you pair with your shoes should be dark and should complement the suit. Make sure to buy over-the-calf socks with good elastic to avoid the top of the sock showing if you cross your legs. Choose a belt to match your shoes closely; it should be plain and have a small, simple buckle.

Keep jewelry conservative. A good watch with a nice leather strap or metal band may be worn. One tasteful ring on a ring finger is appropriate. Earrings should not be worn during the interview. It is preferable that men do not have long hair; however, if you must have long hair, make sure it is neatly pulled back.

## WOMEN

Any suit pattern should be subtle; preferred colors are navy, any shade of gray, black, dark maroon or taupe. A light-colored polyester or silk blouse in white or cream is a good choice to pair with your suit, which has more leeway than a man's, but should still be conservative. Your skirt should be neither too long nor too short, falling within an inch or two of the knee either way. Pant suits are also generally accepted as appropriate dress by employers.

Your shoes should be leather, closed toe pumps with a low to medium heel, no taller than two inches. The best way to choose a shoe color is to have the shoe match or be darker than the hem color of your skirt. Brown or black shoes are always good options. Always make sure your hose are lighter than your shoes; in fact, try to match your skin tone. Check for runs carefully, and it wouldn't hurt to carry a spare pair in your purse.

Ideally, you should carry personal items in a pocket of your brief case to avoid any confusion with straps. Make sure the pocket can be sealed. Remember: if you take a briefcase, do not carry a purse. The color should match your shoes as closely as possible. For women, black shoes and bags are an excellent choice.

You may add one pair of small earrings, preferably studs, and you may wear a matching necklace and/or bracelet. One ring per hand is permissible, preferably on your ring fingers. Stay away from colorful or largely patterned scarves because they detract from your outfit. Stay away from drastic hair cuts that require a lot of hair products to stay in place or hair that is brightly colored. When painting your nails, try to stick with neutral or light shades of polish and medium-length nails. Makeup should be light and simple, with no bright colors. Try to stay away from bright lipstick, eye color and blush. Natural and subtle colors are most appropriate.

# UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF NETWORKING

## WHAT IS NETWORKING?

“Networking” is a word we often hear, but what exactly is it? And how do we go about doing it? There are numerous networks we can tap into and, if we need to, we can create our own networks. Networking is an activity we take part in every day. Each time we speak with our professors or talk with a classmate about an exam or a project, we are networking. Any time we ask our friends if they know someone who can help us in some way – with a ride or minding a pet or anything – we are networking. And note that in these situations we often want only information; this is similar to the networking we do when we’re job searching.

## WHY IS NETWORKING IMPORTANT?

A broad base of acquaintances is helpful to the networking process because the weaker the tie you have to a person, the less likely you are to have very many overlapping acquaintances. A more developed relationship is beneficial when the help you need – such as a friend making an initial contact on your behalf or a professor writing a letter of recommendation – is more than simply information. Cultivate the casual acquaintance and maintain good ties with friends.

## WHAT ARE THE PURPOSES OF NETWORKING?

- To make others aware of your job search and your career focus.
- To open up additional lines of communication in the job market.
- To increase your knowledge about a particular field or industry.
- To find out more about potential employers.
- To discover hidden job opportunities.
- To open up the possibility of creating a job where none currently exists.

## PREPARING TO NETWORK

Stay in contact with your network. Send articles, notes, anything to keep connections open. They are your best sources for job leads when needed.

Core Networking Groups to use:

- Current or former co-workers.
- Clients and customers.
- Professional or trade organizations.
- People you meet in new settings-parties, trips.
- People who consider YOU a customer-doctor, accountant, financial advisor.
- Family, friends, acquaintances, neighbors.
- Fellow alumni or faculty members.
- Members of church or volunteer groups.

# UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF NETWORKING

CONTINUED

Remember the cliché, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.” Modify it to include who you CAN know. Think about who knows the people you know and how to include them in your network. Let your contact know of your successes in getting an interview or job based on a referral they gave. They will be more likely to do it again if they know you were well received.

## NETWORKING – FINAL THOUGHTS

Sixty percent to 86% of people get their jobs by networking (prospecting) or through personal contacts. Advertisements are generally for lower-paying jobs. So network! Let people know you are available for work. Consider the conversation as a mini-interview and put your best self out there for people to see.

# CAREER FAIR ESSENTIALS

## BEFORE THE CAREER FAIR

- You will want to have a resumé completed before the Career Fair. It is very helpful to have your resumé critiqued by the staff at Career Services to make sure it is perfect. Print your resumé on resumé stock paper and have enough copies to hand out.
- Research the organizations that interest you. You may view the companies attending each Career Fair by accessing the event through your Handshake account.
- Be prepared to ask questions of the representatives. Have a list of questions you want to ask and practice these questions before the fair.
- Try to identify specific experiences where you have demonstrated your strengths.
- Backing up all your skills with specific examples will make you a stronger candidate.

# CAREER FAIR ESSENTIALS

CONTINUED

## 5 THINGS TO TAKE TO A CAREER FAIR

1. Copies of your resumé (15-20) — The resumé needs to represent your knowledge, skills and abilities. It must look professional – easy to read format on plain white or cream-colored paper – and free of typos.
2. A smile, a strong handshake and a positive attitude — First impressions are important. Approach an employer, smile and offer your hand when you introduce yourself.
3. A 30-second sales pitch — Hand the recruiter a copy of your resumé and be prepared to expand on it quickly! Share basic information about yourself and your career interests.
4. Information about the organizations which will be attending — Gather information as you would for a job interview. To maximize the brief time you have with each employer, you need to know how your skills and interests match their needs.
5. Energy! — Career fairs require you to be on your feet moving from table to table for an hour or so. Each time you meet someone, be at your best and as refreshed as possible!

## QUESTIONS FOR REPRESENTATIVES AT A CAREER FAIR

- What kind of entry-level positions exist within your organization?
- Does your company hire on a continual basis or just at certain times of the year?
- How long does the hiring process take?
- What does your organization consider the most important qualities in an employee?
- What courses do you suggest in order to be a successful candidate?
- What made you choose this company?
- How long have you been with the company?

## SEND A LETTER/EMAIL AFTER THE CAREER FAIR

You can be sure that any letter/email you send following a career fair will be the exception rather than the norm. For that reason alone, be sure to send a letter/email 48 hours from the day of the career fair as a way of reminding the recruiter who you are. Mention something that you may have talked about.

Here is a sample letter:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

It was a pleasure meeting you at the FHSU Career Fair last week. You may remember me as the person who is also from Wichita.

As you requested, I have registered with Career Services and will be selecting an interview time slot with your organization. I will be graduating in May 20xx and hope to become part of your organization's team.

After you review my resumé, please let me know how you would like to proceed. If I do not hear from you during the week of \_\_\_\_\_, I will call you.

Sincerely,

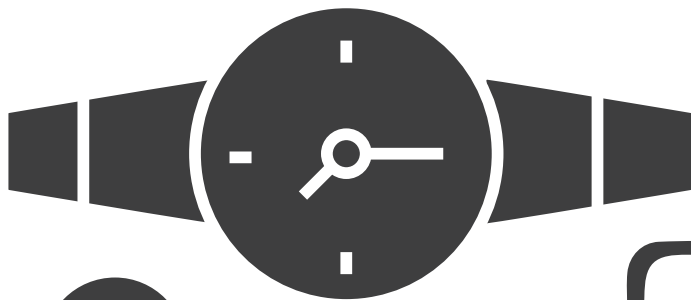
Name

# CAREER FAIR ESSENTIALS

CONTINUED

## FIVE THINGS NOT TO DO AT A CAREER FAIR

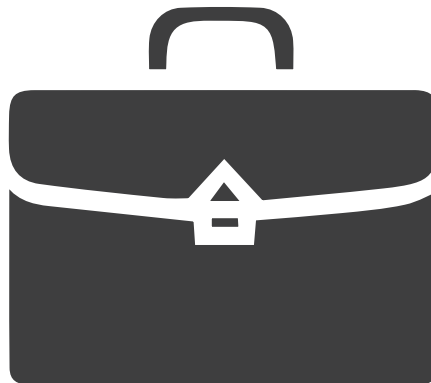
1. Don't cruise the booths with a group of friends – Interact with recruiters on your own. Make your own positive impression!
2. Don't carry your backpack, large purse or other paraphernalia with you – Carry your resumé in a professional-looking portfolio or small briefcase. It will keep your resumé neat and handy, and it gives you room for business cards from recruiters. Usually you can stow your coat, backpack or other gear in a coatroom.
3. Don't come dressed for basketball practice or any other extremely casual activity – a career fair is a professional activity, perhaps your first contact with a future employer.
4. Don't “wing it” with employers — Do your homework! Research the companies just as you would for an interview. You'll be able to focus on why you want to work for the organization and what you can do for them.
5. Don't come during the last half hour of the event – Many employers come a long distance to attend the fair and may need to leave early. If you come late, you may miss the organizations you wanted to contact!



BE DEPENDABLE



BE PRESENTABLE



BE ORGANIZED

# GETTING HIRED

## TOP INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What do you know about our company?
3. Why do you want to work for us?
4. What unique qualities or abilities would you bring to this job?
5. What are your major strengths and weaknesses?
6. Tell me about a time you failed at something and what you did afterwards?
7. Tell me about a time when you worked on a team project. What was your relative position on the team? Were you satisfied with your contribution?
8. Think back to a situation in which you had to resolve a conflict. Tell me how you did it.
9. Tell me about a project you had either at work or school. Describe in detail how you managed it and what was the outcome.
10. Have you any questions for us?

## THE NUMBER ONE INTERVIEW QUESTION... “TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF”

Throughout your job search and especially when you are in a job interview, you need to be able to introduce yourself in a powerful way to people who don't know you. What you say at that moment will set the tone for the rest of your interaction. To do this most effectively, you need to develop a powerful introduction.

Your introduction is like a 30-second commercial. It provides just enough information to make the listener want to know more about you and sets a professional tone for the rest of your interaction.

An introduction is composed of four distinct parts and a follow-up question:

- Your education and credentials.
- Your experience in the field (work experience, internship experience, volunteer work).
- Your strengths.
- An open-ended probing question about the company's needs, problems and challenges.



# GETTING HIRED

CONTINUED

## DEVELOP YOUR INTRODUCTION

Here's an example:

“Let me tell you about myself. I hold a bachelor’s degree in biology from Fort Hays State University with a minor in management. I have a year and a half experience in the field through a summer internship with Kansas Wildlife and Parks and part-time work experience with the Fort Hays State University Biology Department. I have discovered that I enjoy both field-related activities and lab work challenges. I chose this field because I enjoy the outdoors as well as solving problems through lab analysis. I am a hands-on person and I like getting into the thick of things and dealing with tangible, concrete issues. What challenges exist for management development positions in your organization?”

Your greeting:

Let me tell you about myself. I hold a \_\_\_\_\_ degree

in \_\_\_\_\_ from Fort Hays State University (is your

minor/certificate in \_\_\_\_\_ related?). I have \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ experience in the field through \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

I have discovered that I enjoy \_\_\_\_\_.

I chose this field because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Now ask your first question—even if they told you to hold your questions until later. For example, “Is there anything in particular you would like to know about my background?”

# BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING:

PAST PREDICTS FUTURE

Although the term “par” is very familiar to golfers, it is perhaps not as familiar to candidates conducting a job search. For many individuals, the interview process is a daunting one, complete with a series of questions one hopes to answer to the interviewer’s satisfaction. Many employers today are using a behavior-based interview (BBI) approach based on the premise that past behavior (performance) predicts future behavior (performance). A complete answer is “PAR for the Course.” Your answer to a behavior-based question must explain the task or Problem for which you were responsible, the specific Action you took, and the Results of your action. Your answer must contain all of these components to be a PAR answer.

Employers still use a more traditional approach in certain situations, so you can still plan to be asked about your strengths, weaknesses, academic preparation, and interest in the organization. These questions may come up frequently in initial prescreening interviews. While they are valid questions, they do not probe as deep as behavior-based questions. Behavior-based questions require you to provide specific examples from your past to illustrate how you have dealt with certain situations. Based upon the position, employer questions may touch up on such areas as teamwork, conflict resolution, cultural diversity, customer service, time management and leadership. For the candidate, past performance examples may come from work experience, internships, academic work, volunteer service, activities, hobbies, family life, and other areas of ones background.

## **So what are some examples of behavior-based questions?**

**You may be asked some variations of the following questions:**

- Give me an example of a time when you served in a leadership role and some member of the team was not handling his or her responsibilities. How did you address this situation?
- Describe a time when you had multiple tasks to accomplish and deadlines were approaching. How did you prioritize what needed to be accomplished first?
- We all deal with difficult situations. Tell me about a time when you had to deal with conflict. How did you handle it?

These questions illustrate the fact that you cannot come into the interview without sufficient preparation. Where as a traditional interview might include a question asking you to share several strengths you possess, the BBI equivalent of this question requires you to provide specific examples of how you demonstrated these strengths.

This approach has become the norm rather than the exception. While many companies still use a combination of more traditional questions and BBI questions, the trend is definitely toward the BBI approach. Employers have embraced this approach in an attempt to select the most qualified candidates to meet their staffing needs. This approach is more objective than the traditional interview because candidates are not providing hypothetical responses to situations but real-life examples of how they have handled these situations.

# BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING:

PAST PREDICTS FUTURE CONTINUED

**So how do you prepare for a behavior-based interview? The following steps outline an effective way in which to prepare:**

- Analyze the type of positions for which you are applying. What skills are required by employers?
- Analyze your own background. What skills do you have that relate to your job objective?
- Identify examples from your past experience where you demonstrated those skills. Concentrate on developing complete PAR answers.
- Whenever possible, quantify your results. Numbers or specifics help to make your case.
- Be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned. What did you do then?
- Before starting the interview process, identify several of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points (with demonstrated PAR stories) during the interview.

While behavior-based interviewing may appear to be very challenging, preparation has always been key to a successful interview. Preparation means knowing about the organization and its needs, evaluating your background and linking the two. If you do the quality preparation required for an interview, you will likely have a successful experience. While you may struggle on the golf course, there is no reason the same should be true in an interview. Just remember PAR (Problem, Action, Result)!

## SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Working with people from different backgrounds or cultures can be a real challenge. Have you had this experience?
- What are some of the most stressful aspects of your job? Why? How did you react to them?
- Describe a time when you faced a particularly demanding rush situation (emergency, deadline, etc.). How did you respond?
- Have you ever faced an ethical or value conflict in your job? Explain.
- Describe a situation in which you have seen another employee do something that you thought was inappropriate. What did you do?
- In what skill areas are you most proficient? Give an example of a project you have worked on that shows your expertise. What skill area do you see as needing further development?
- Give an example of a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. Why was this person difficult? How did you handle him/her?

# SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

CONTINUED

- What are some of your strengths in dealing with people? Tell me about a time when you used one of these strengths to resolve a conflict.
- Give me a recent example that best shows your ability to communicate effectively.
- Give me an example of a complex process/situation you had to describe to someone. What specifically did you do to make sure the information was clear?
- Listening is a valuable tool. Describe a time when good listening skills helped you overcome a communication problem.
- What has been the most challenging written assignment you have had? What made it challenging?
- How do you determine if the work you do is a quality job? What are some ways that you have improved the quality of your own work?
- Give an example of a team decision in which you were involved recently. What did you do to help the team reach the decision?
- Have you ever been in a group situation in which one of the members was unproductive or uncooperative? How did you handle it?
- Describe a time when you made a decision that was unpopular with the other members of your group. What was the end result?
- Describe a situation in which you identified a problem and explain how you resolved it (root cause investigation, recommending a countermeasure, follow-up, etc.).
- We all know that some problems just don't have solutions. Tell me about a problem you tried to solve but couldn't.
- Describe a situation that required you to handle multiple tasks at one time. What did you do?
- What is your procedure for keeping track of items that require your attention?
- We have all had times when we just couldn't complete everything on time. Describe when this has happened to you. What did you do?
- What has been one of the most difficult decisions you have had to make on the job? What facts did you consider? How long did it take you to decide?
- When (if ever) have you delayed making a decision to give more thought to the situation?
- Describe a time when you had to obtain information by asking several questions to other people. How did you know what to ask?
- Give an example of a time when you did more than was required in your job.
- How do you define leadership? Describe the most recent time when you displayed leadership on the job.
- Describe a situation in which you had to influence another peer to cooperate. What exactly did you do to accomplish this?

# TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Many organizations now use telephone interviewing at various points during the hiring process. It is important for you to be prepared for a telephone interview and be able to communicate effectively with the interviewer. Here are some telephone interviewing tips and sample telephone interviewing questions to help you prepare.

## TELEPHONE INTERVIEWING TIPS

### BE PREPARED

- Have a copy of your resumé, transcript and the job description in front of you during the interview.
- Keep a log of companies and titles of jobs applied for, which will help you be better prepared if you are called unexpectedly.
- Attend phone interview workshops and participate in mock phone interviews offered by your career center.
- Practice, practice, practice.

### BE PROFESSIONAL

- Record a professional message for your answering machine or voice mail.
- Have a “canned” response ready for a recruiter if you’re caught off guard. For example: “I am on my way out the door to class. I’m very interested in talking with you about this position. Can I arrange a time to call you back this afternoon?” This extra time will allow you to review the job description and other reference materials and prepare some questions for the interviewer.
- Turn off music or the TV during the interview.
- Do not eat, drink or chew gum.
- Do not type on your computer.
- Do not put an interviewer on hold to take call waiting.

### BE PERSONABLE

- Be enthusiastic – show interest in the position and the organization.
- Ask pertinent questions about the job and company, not just about salary, benefits and hours.
- Talk slowly and show self-confidence.
- Thank the interviewer for his or her time.

# SAMPLE TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## FOR AN INITIAL SCREENING

- Tell me about your most recent position.
- Who was your best boss, and why?
- What interests you about working at our company?
- Based on your research, what do you know about our organization?
- You applied for the position and you know what it entails—what are your salary expectations? What is your current salary?
- What is your understanding of the position?
- Why are you looking to leave your employer? Why did you leave your last employer?
- Are you currently authorized to work in the United States?
- What would you consider an acceptable amount of travel?
- In your opinion, what are the top three trends in the field today?
- Based on the description I have provided, what technical/nontechnical qualifications would you bring to this position?
- What questions do you have for me?

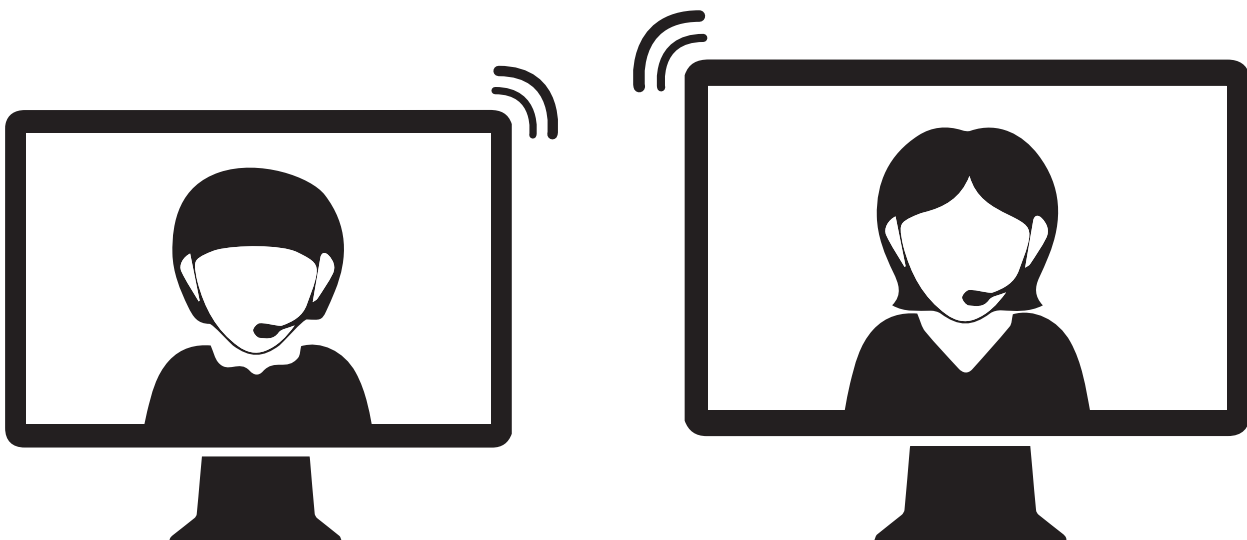
## FOR A BEHAVIORAL SCREENING

- What type of opportunity/position are you looking for? Describe your ideal job.
- What are you looking for in this position?
- What is your ideal work environment?
- How would your current employer/teacher/co-workers describe your work?
- What are your top three priorities or motivators?
- What areas in your career are you interested in further developing?
- Tell me about a time when you had to create something new or look at something from a different perspective.
- Where do you see yourself next year?
- Can you give an example of a time you worked in a team?
- How do you incorporate diversity into your professional practices?
- Tell me about the toughest customer, internal or external, you had to win over and how you did it.
- Tell me about a situation in which you were the underdog and stuck with it until you succeeded.
- Describe examples of how you acquired experience in X and how you have used this experience on the job.
- Identify two accomplishments you are most proud of.
- Why should I hire you?
- What else would you like me to know about you?

# ONLINE INTERVIEWING

More and more companies are opting for virtual interviews by phone, conference call, or videoconference rather than face to face interviews. Online interviews are similar, yet different, than face to face interviews but must be taken just as seriously as traditional interviews. Below are a few steps to guide you through the process of interviewing online.

- Find a quiet space for your interview free of disturbances. If you have children, have someone watch them so you are not interrupted during the interview. Keep your cell phone on silent. If in a location other than your home, put a “do not disturb” sign on the door.
- If you are using a designated site, arrive at the videoconference site early to allow time to get comfortable with the equipment and ensure everything is working properly.
- Practice speaking slowly and clearly in a well modulated voice. Avoid excessive movements and look straight into the monitor to make eye contact with your interviewer. With an interview like this, there will be a delay in receiving the audio and video.
- Appearance matters here just as much as in traditional interviews. Dress professionally and avoid bright colors and glittery jewelry. Use correct posture when sitting during the interview.
- You will be asked the same questions as in a face-to-face interview. Knowing information about the company and being prepared for questions is important in order to stand out. Be yourself, concentrate on the facts, and give clear examples.
- End your interview with a smile and ensure that all your videoconference equipment is turned off before making any comments or gestures. And like in any other interview, send a thank you note!





# THE SECOND INTERVIEW

## GETTING PREPARED

**The Invitation**– Candidates who are being seriously considered are frequently invited for a second interview in the home office or plant. If a company representative considers you to be a qualified candidate for employment, an invitation to continue with the process will be extended. You should acknowledge this invitation with minimum delay. In many cases, the invitation will include a number of alternative dates for your visit with the selection left up to you. You should choose a date that least conflicts with your schedule.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

**The Opportunity**– You should accept an invitation for an office visit only if you are seriously interested in the employer. Some students/alumni have commented on the difficulty of “staying fresh” for a series of interviews comprised of the same questions. There is no magic formula or special technique to suggest other than to keep telling yourself that to each member of the organization, the information you provide is new, and you should try not to get exasperated by repeat questions. In order to make the interview more dynamic and interesting, we recommend you ask questions that are specific to the department or individual with whom you are speaking. This not only gives you a broader range of topics to discuss, but provides you with valuable information about the organization which you will need in order to make a wise employment decision. Since the call-back interview is used to measure mutual fit, you should prepare yourself to become more integrally involved in the interview process.

**Expenses**– If the invitation does not mention expenses, contact the employer for clarification. Most employers pay all reasonable expenses incurred on visits, yet the company will expect you to use discretion in reporting your expenses. Keep records for transportation, food and lodging. If you are planning to visit more than one employer on the same trip, inform each of them and they will assist you in prorating your expenses. The following items are not considered to be normal expenses: entertainment, tours, alcoholic beverages, magazines, personal calls, valet expenses, flight insurance and excessive tips.

**The Interview**– The office or plant visit will be conducted in much the same way as your initial interview. Second interviews can vary in length from half an hour to a full day, including tours and meals with a variety of company employees. For most of us, talking with all of these people can be draining. Therefore, strategies such as taking notes when appropriate and timing your responses – delaying your questions and reaction – may help you to remember names as well as intelligent questions to ask later. During the interview, candidates may expect to discuss job responsibilities, personal qualifications, observe company operations, visit facilities where they might work, meet other personnel and perhaps tour the community.



# THE SECOND INTERVIEW

CONTINUED

**Business Etiquette**— It is not unusual to be taken out to lunch or dinner as part of your second interview. At such events it is essential to remember and practice everything you ever learned about table manners. Here are some book guidelines:

- Don't smoke or drink alcoholic beverages (even if invited).
- Order something that is easy to eat (avoid spaghetti, juicy hamburgers, etc.) and which is moderately priced.
- If wine is ordered by your host, have only one glass (if you drink).
- Remember, even though your luncheon host may not be your potential supervisor, you are still being scrutinized and sized up for a correct "fit."

## SALARY NEGOTIATION TIPS

### 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

1. Research your profession's salary range.
2. Select a target salary.
3. Don't initiate salary discussions.
4. When asked for your salary requirements, say they are negotiable.
5. When asked for your salary requirements, reply by asking the interviewer to share the position's salary range.
6. Discuss benefits separately from salary.
7. Analyze all benefit packages with a family member or friend, or with an insurance, investment or bank professional.
8. Consider the cost of living if you are moving to a new area.
9. In discussing why you deserve a substantial increase, use examples of your accomplishments that prove your value, not merely your experience.
10. Always assume a firm's first offer is negotiable and never accept an offer at the interview.

# SALARY NEGOTIATION TIPS

CONTINUED

## SEVEN STEPS TO PROFESSIONAL NEGOTIATION

1. Prepare what you say beforehand.
2. Seize control of the negotiation process.
3. Set your price.
4. Keep it professional, never personal.
5. Use positive language.
6. Consider performance-based compensation.
7. Get written confirmation.

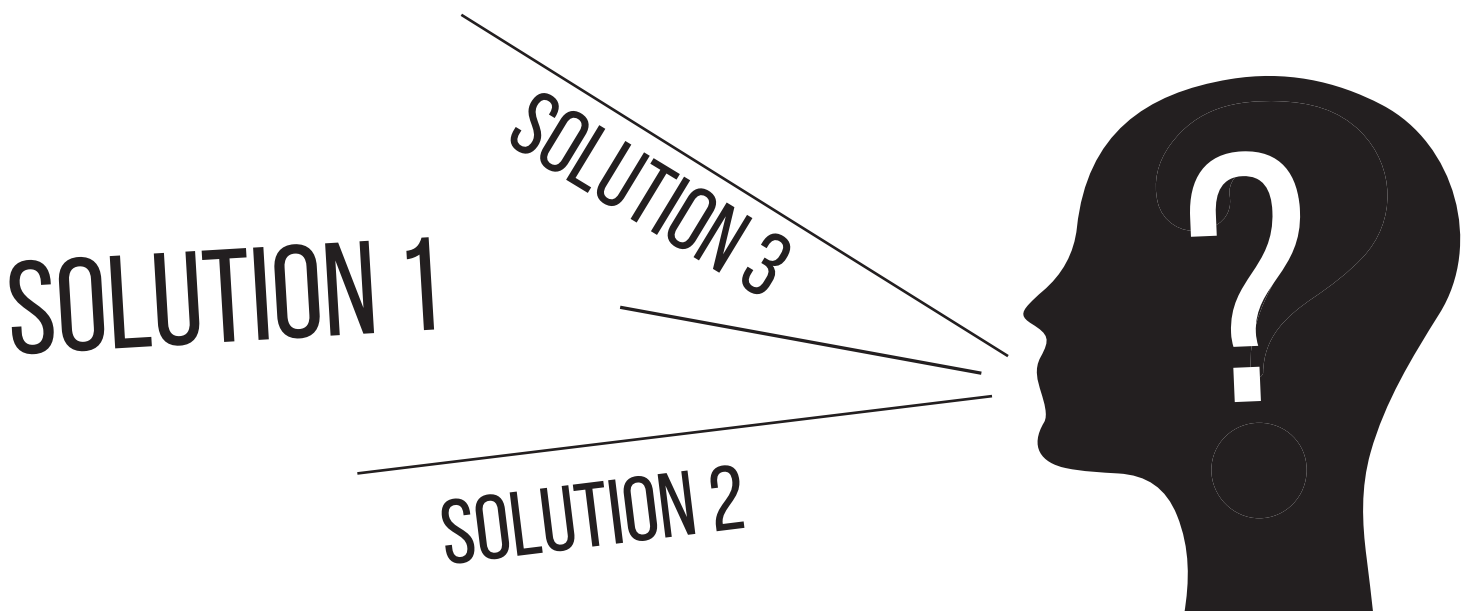
## MYTHS ABOUT NEGOTIATING SALARY OFFERS

- When responding to help-wanted ads, always provide salary information if it is requested.
- The best answer to the interview question, "What are your salary requirements?" is "My requirements are open and will be based on the job requirements."
- It is not necessary to secure a written employment offer before resigning your present position since a verbal contract is binding.
- If you accept a job immediately, you will be perceived as desperate.
- Your pay offer is likely to be lower if you were referred by a placement agency or an executive search firm rather than if you approached the company directly.
- All employment offers are negotiable, so do not accept the first figure that is mentioned.
- You can earn more money if you are paid a low base salary plus a commission than if you are paid a salary only.
- If asked for salary information before or at the beginning of an interview, say that you will discuss the topic once your mutual interest in the job is determined.
- If you are unemployed during a recession, do not expect to receive salary offers that exceed your previous income.
- If you accept a job, then receive a high offer from another firm, your employer will likely match the offer.

# WHAT TOP EMPLOYERS WANT/LOOK FOR

The National Association of Colleges and Employers surveyed over 600 employers who recruit on college campuses to indicate qualities they look for in new college graduates. Results from the survey indicate the following eight career-ready competencies.

- Communication skills
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Leadership skills
- Creativity and problem solving
- Professionalism and productivity
- Application of information technology
- Global perspective
- Career management



# NOTES



# NOTES









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