



## INTERVIEW TIPS

Some best practices from  
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## Interview Tips

- Dress is more formal than career fair. Not unusual to dress with shirt/tie/slacks, skirts/blouses. More like formal workplace attire, even if you know their employees dress casual.
- Please remove your piercings and cover up the tattoos.
- Appear professional and work-ready.
- Arrive early.
- Turn off your cell phone. It's time to focus.
- Be a role model for the job.
- Be interested and interesting.

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## Interview Tips: Behavioral Questions

- "Tell me about yourself."
- The interviewer may not have read your resume and is really asking for the basics:
  - What year are you in school?
  - When do you graduate?
  - Are you looking for a full time job or an internship?
  - Do you have some recent, relevant experience?
- "What are your strengths and weaknesses?"
- I recommend Tom Rath's **Strengths Finder** – it is a survey that helps you discover and describe your strengths. Mine are "Learner", "Analytical", "Achiever." My weak spots are "Adaptability" and "Command."
- By reading the descriptions of the 34 strengths categories, you can probably determine which ones best describe your strengths.
- This paper has brief descriptions of the strength categories:
  - <http://strengths.gallup.com/private/Resources/CSFTechnicalReport031005.pdf>

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## Behavioral = Experience

- "Tell me what you did to handle a difficult person at work."
- "Tell me about a time you had to juggle 10 things at once and how you managed your time."
- "Tell me what you liked best/least about your last job."
- These type of questions are about You and reflect your life experience and maturity.
- Answer them honestly, from your own experiences, but without directly criticizing anyone.
- Practicing with a friend is very helpful!
- Don't answer questions about marital status, age, religion, race, etc. These should not come up anyway.
- Citizenship or work authorization is important to answer in most cases.

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## Interview Tips: Technical Questions

- Do your homework! Brush up on those basic lower-division classes to answer technical questions quickly.
- Be able to work simple problems in your field quickly and clearly on paper. Think out loud.
- Show you understand first principles and the basics, even if a formula or some syntax was a little incorrect. It is ok to ask questions!
- If you are asked a computer algorithm or programming question, it is intended to be answered in 5-10 minutes so it can't be too hard. Always start with a flow chart.
- Be prepared to talk about a lab or technical project you did alone or with a group. It is good to bring a diagram, sample code, or other brief summary.
- Software engineers -- run a demo of your code if time permits. Show-and-tell always impresses the interviewer!
- In group projects, be prepared to talk about your unique contribution and how you motivated / managed others to get the overall project completed.

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## Answer the question

- If you really don't know the answer, don't waste time. Honesty is way better than BS. The question may have come from courses you did not take.
- It is ok to relate the question to something very similar that you know better, but make it clear that you are not avoiding the answer.
- Show *how your mind works* in open-ended questions (logical vs. intuitive):
  - How many dentists are in the US?
  - Estimate the number of airline flights per day in the US.
  - How would you have prevented the nuclear reactor disaster at Fukushima?
- Watch the time – ask if you are ok on time if you think you are taking too long.

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### Interview Score Sheet: The Top Scores Win!



- **Qualifications** (able to talk about their qualifications for the position, strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments)
- **Work experience** (able to describe relevant work experience, list previous jobs, what they liked best and least from those jobs, and what they learned from their experience that helped to set their career goals)
- **Teamwork** (working in collaboration, dividing up the work, staying on a schedule, resolving conflicts)
- **Problem solving** (solving technical and open-ended questions)
- **Leadership and Communication skills** (speaking clearly and coherently, able to summarize, comfortable under pressure, ability to lead and motivate others to follow your plans or ideas)

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### Be interested

- Do your homework on the company you are interviewing with.
- **Write down** a few good questions about the company that you think the interviewer can answer:
  - Where is your company headed over the next few years?
  - Are your working hours fixed or flexible?
  - Do you have info on medical/dental benefits?
  - How much travel is expected in this job?
  - What is the typical career path in your company?
  - What are the next steps in the interview process?
- Send a thank-you note by the next day (email is preferred).

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### Interviewing over a meal

- ▶ If you are interviewing over a meal, don't eat much
  - You are there to talk, not to get filled up. It's ok to leave food on your plate. *Avoid alcohol even if others are drinking.* And no smoking.
  - Take small bites so your mouth is not full if you need to talk.
  - Watch your table manners but don't get paranoid about them.
  - Turn off your cell phone.
  - It might seem like everyone is relaxed and casual, but maintain your professionalism.

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### Review

- Remember that every time you meet a company representative *you are being interviewed!*
- Be mature, responsible and friendly.
  - Attend info sessions, career fairs, panel discussions, guest lectures, sponsored dinners, etc.
  - Build your network!

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### Good luck!



- Any Questions?

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