

Career Advancement Program

How to “ace” an interview

How well you present yourself during your interview with your Host Organization is extremely important. Be sure to take the below tips into account when preparing for your interview!

Research the Host Organization you will be interning/training with

Research should always be your first step. Gathering background information on host organizations is a crucial element in successful interview preparation. You will need to be prepared to answer the questions "What do you know about our company?" and "Why do you want to intern or train here?" Knowing as much as possible about the company's past performance and future plans can make your interview more interactive and could be just the leg up you need in a competitive internship/training program market. Before the interview review the company's web site and don't be afraid to contact your prospective host organization to request details on the position you are interviewing for or to ask for company literature. Google the company to see what other information is available online.

Practice Makes Perfect

Practice makes perfect (or at least leads to improvement). Practice with a friend and record or videotape your responses so you can replay the interview and see how well you did. Prepare answers to commonly asked interview questions. Doing so will help you analyze your background and qualifications for the position.

Know what you have accomplished and what your strengths and weaknesses are

Behavior based interviewing is becoming more common. It is based on the premise that a candidate's past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Rather than the typical interview questions on your background and experience, you will need to be prepared to provide detailed responses including specific examples of your work experiences.

The best way to prepare is to think of examples where you have successfully used the skills you've acquired. Take the time to compile a list of responses to both types of questions and to itemize your skills, values, and interests as well as your strengths and weaknesses. Emphasize what you can do to benefit the company rather than just what you are interested in. Also prepare a list of questions you want to ask the interviewer. Remember, you aren't simply trying to get the internship/training program - you are also interviewing the host organization to assess whether this company and the position are a good fit for you.

Prepare For the Interview

It is very important to be on time for the interview. If you are interviewing via webcam, take some time beforehand to ensure that your computer, webcam and web service (i.e. Skype) are working properly. Know the interviewer's name and use it during the interview. For in person interviews, remember to bring an extra copy of your resume and a list of references.

Stay Calm

During the interview try to remain as calm as possible and take notes. Ask for clarification if you're not sure what's been asked and remember that it is perfectly acceptable to take a moment or two to frame your responses so you can be sure to fully answer the question.

End the interview with a thank you to the interviewer and reiterate your interest in the position. Then follow-up with a personal Thank You note restating your interest.

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