EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWING SKILLS AND THANK YOU NOTES

Tracy Wishon
January 5, 2021
WHAT IS THE 1 THING YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER IN AN INTERVIEW?

How YOU show up
HOW DOES WHAT YOU WEAR IMPACT WHAT PEOPLE THINK ABOUT YOU?

You have only 1 opportunity to make a GREAT first impression!
WHAT TO WEAR: MEN

- Dark Professional Suit - Black, Blue or Gray
- Pressed shirt (solids)
- Tie - no crazy prints (tie optional)
- No earrings and cover body art
- Well groomed (facial hair, hair cut, personal hygiene)

In-person:
- Shined dress shoes
- Easy on the cologne
WOULD YOU HIRE BASED ON 1ST IMPRESSION?
WHAT TO WEAR: WOMEN

• Dark Professional Suit - pants or skirt AND JACKET
• Nice appropriate shirt - no see through or lace (stick to solids)
• Minimal jewelry (no distracting bangles or dangle earrings)
• Easy on the make-up

In Person
• Closed toed low to mid heels, 1-2 inches
• Groomed finger nails - clean, conservative polish
• Professional Bag/purse free of clutter
• Easy on the perfume
WOULD YOU HIRE BASED ON 1ST IMPRESSION?
PROFESSIONAL?
VIRTUAL INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

- Ensure you won’t be interrupted (a note on the door may be helpful)
- Clear the desk space, except for a notepad/padfolio and pen/pencil for notes
- Have a copy of your resume and any other notes ready for reference
- Set out a glass or bottle of water
- Check that your camera and audio is working
- Close any windows, tabs or applications on your computer that you’re not using
- Check your internet connection and make sure you’re not downloading anything in the background
- Set your phone to silent
- Check that the background behind you is neutral and free from clutter
- If you are using a virtual professional background, check to see it’s supported in platform
- Adjust the lights in the room; if things appear dark or dim, you may want to bring in an extra desk lamp to brighten the space

https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/video-interview-guide
RESOURCES TO HELP YOU PREPARE

Elevator Pitch

https://cdo.mit.edu/cdo-resources-to-help-you-prepare-for-interviews/
BEST PRACTICES FOR VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS

In Advance
- Know the tech platform
- Test your bandwidth, camera placement & audio
- Dress as you would for an in-person interview
- Print out your documents
- Have a resume pdf open in case you need to share in the chat

During the Interview
- Say hello and ask if they can hear you when you arrive.
- Be aware of your nonverbals
- Be aware of their nonverbals
- If your connection is weak, try turning off video, let the interviewer know in chat and give phone number as an alternative
- Be patient if you or your interviewer are interrupted or have tech issues

IS&T runs an equipment loan program where students can request a hotspot if you have inconsistent internet connectivity:
https://ist.mit.edu/loaner-equipment
ONCE YOU GET THERE

Virtual Interviewing
• Arrive 5-10 minutes before
• Check virtual background in platform
• Lighting
• Bring/send what they ask for: application, writing sample, etc.
• Eye contact, Confidence, Smile 😊

In person
• Arrive 15 MINUTES before the interview - parking, restroom
• Always be nice to the receptionist - she/he can make or break you!
• Firm hand shake with everyone
• Bring a pad folio, pen, 5 copies of your resume AND the job description
THINGS TO REMEMBER

• Professional Attire = CLEAN, PRESSES, Well Fitted Suit
• The company wants to remember YOU not the_________!!!
Be Prepared, Do Your Research
## Conduct Effective Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Job Description</th>
<th>Interviewers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• History</td>
<td>• Mission</td>
<td>• Required skills</td>
<td>• LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changes and</td>
<td>• Structure</td>
<td>(Need to have)</td>
<td>• Google</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenges</td>
<td>• Products</td>
<td>• Responsibilities</td>
<td>• Company website</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Key players</td>
<td>• Growth</td>
<td>(Day to day)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• News</td>
<td>• Competitors</td>
<td>• Nice to have</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Career trajectory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KNOW THE INTERVIEW GOALS

Interviewer Goals:
- Relevant knowledge
- Problem solving skills
- Leadership abilities
- Collaboration
- Personality, cultural fit
- Technical skills

Your Goals:
- Develop rapport
- Share your skills, experience and enthusiasm in a positive way
- Have your questions answered
- Evaluate the overall fit, you are interviewing them too
“TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF”

• Professional Introduction Plus
  – Who you are, what you want and why- include accomplishments
  – Focus on more on your what, why and how it relates to the opportunity

• Tailor your strengths / achievements to job description/project

• Back-up statements with good examples / evidence

• Walk through your background and verbalize your decision making process

• Complement your resume

• Be brief and concise

• It can be roughly around 2-3 minutes
WHAT IS A BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW?

• Uses past behavior to predict future behavior
• Recruiters are looking for past work or project experience to evaluate your ability/skills
• Typically starts with “Tell me about a time when….”
  Or
• “Give me an example of…”
## STAR TECHNIQUE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SITUATION/TASK</strong></th>
<th><strong>ACTION</strong></th>
<th><strong>RESULTS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What was the <strong>Situation</strong> in which you were involved?</td>
<td>What <strong>Actions</strong> did <strong>YOU</strong> take?</td>
<td>What <strong>Results</strong> did you achieve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the <strong>Task</strong> you needed to accomplish?</td>
<td>~ 20%</td>
<td>~ 60%</td>
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</table>

They want to know what **You** did in about 4-5 sentences.
**CREATE YOUR STORIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relevant Experience and Knowledge</th>
<th>Analytical Challenges</th>
<th>Technical Knowledge</th>
<th>Communication Skills</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Analytics lab</td>
<td>- Analytics lab</td>
<td>- Academic courses</td>
<td>- TA / tutor position</td>
<td>- Student government, club, athletics activities</td>
<td>- Analytics lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>- RA role</td>
<td>- Undergraduate research or thesis</td>
<td>- developed relevant knowledge</td>
<td>- Publications</td>
<td>- Extracurricular involvement</td>
<td>- RA role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Specific internship assignments</td>
<td>- Kaggle competition</td>
<td>- Examples of professional experiences</td>
<td>- Admissions ambassador</td>
<td>- Oversaw company’s internal launch of new analytics tool</td>
<td>- Extracurricular involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Coursework</td>
<td>- Work experience</td>
<td>- that honed specific technical skills</td>
<td>- Presenting to Leadership to In ALab</td>
<td>- Community service</td>
<td>- Organizing treks, travel, events</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Projects</td>
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Write out your stories!
## Telling a STAR Story Exercise

<table>
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<th>Problem Solving Skills/Analytical Challenges</th>
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</table>

Tell me about a time when you were working on a team and you did not agree with the direction of the project. How did you handle this and what was the result?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

You will be sharing your answer with your Capstone Partner
SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Leadership and Teamwork

• What are the key characteristics of a great leader?
• Tell me about a time you brought about change.
• If I asked 5 classmates to describe you, what would they say?

Relevant Skills and Expertise

• What is the best example of a time your analytical skills were tested?
• What was the most challenging class you have ever taken?
• What are your 3 biggest strengths and 3 areas of development?

Personality and Passion

• Why did you choose the MBAn program?
• How do you find balance in your life?
• What accomplishment are you most proud of?
ALWAYS ASK QUESTIONS

- Have questions ready- never, ever say, I don’t have any questions!
- You can ask the same questions to each interviewer for consistency
- Write your questions out before the interview
- You are interviewing them as much as they are interviewing you

Experiences
Recent projects
Career transition

News
Product roll out
Latest acquisition

Work / life balance
Negative press
Compensation
Basic information
SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK

• What does this company value most?
• How will my success be evaluated/measured?
• In your opinion, what is the most challenging aspect of this role?
• What do you enjoy most about working for x company?
• What keeps you engaged?
• Do you have any concerns about my ability to be successful in this role?
INTERVIEW OVERVIEW

• Speak clearly and at a pace that’s easy to follow
• Listen carefully and answer the question that is asked
  - Remember you have 2 ears and 1 mouth - use them that way
• Show enthusiasm, energy, and personality
• Non-verbal body language- both yours and theirs
• Know what your resume says and what makes YOU the best candidate
• Take notes for your thank-you note
• Write out your questions
• Ask for business cards or get interviewers contact info
• Follow up with a thank-you note within 24 hours
THANK YOU NOTES

• Send within 24 hours of meeting/interview (email or handwritten)
• Identify yourself and provide context
• Be specific in your thank you
  – Reference your interaction, something specific only you discussed
  – Reaffirm why you are the best candidate for the position
• Be thoughtful about asking for something else
  – Ok to follow up if I have further questions?
• Check spelling and grammar
• If you met with multiple people, send different notes they do compare!
SAMPLE NETWORKING THANK-YOU EMAIL

Subject: Nice to have met you at MIT Sloan Analytics Career Night

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for coming to the MIT Sloan MBAn Career Night; I really enjoyed meeting you and our conversation. As you may recall, I will graduate in August 2021, and I am very interested in pursuing a career in Product Management.

I particularly enjoyed hearing about your role at Rue Guilt Group, and how you have grown your career. If there is anyone in your network who may be willing to share their perspective with me, I would greatly appreciate an introduction.

As promised, here is the link to the article I mentioned - [link here]. I would be happy to discuss this further with you at your convenience, either by phone or perhaps over a coffee.

Again, it was great to meet you – thank you for coming out to support our program.

Warm regards,
Sally

Sally Smith
Candidate for Master of Business Analytics, Class of 2020
MIT Sloan School of Management, Operations Research Center
Tel: +1 xxx-xxx-xxxx Email: name@mit.edu LinkedIn:
From: Student
Sent: Date
To: Interviewer
Subject: [Company] interview - thank you

Dear David,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I really enjoyed our conversation and left my interviews feeling even more excited about the prospect of joining [Company] as a [role]. I particularly enjoyed our discussion around the challenges facing the biotech industry, in light of recent legislation.

I believe that my ________________ skills and experiences are a great match for this role, and I sincerely hope to have the opportunity to join and contribute to your team. I also wanted to mention that I am open to roles in both New York and Boston.

Best regards,
Sally

Sally Smith
Candidate for Master of Business Analytics, Class of 2020
MIT Sloan School of Management / Operations Research Center
Tel: +1 xxx-xxx-xxxx Email: name@mit.edu  LinkedIn:
EMAIL ETIQUETTE REMINDERS

- Use a specific subject line
  - Convey your purpose for writing
- Write as you would a business letter
  - Include a greeting (Hello John, or Dear Tracy,)
  - Include a closing (Warm regards, your name) and a signature with contact information
- Keep it clear and brief
  - Essential information only
  - Edit, edit, and edit again
  - Read it out loud, step a way from it, print it and read it before you send it
CAPSTONE INTERVIEWING IN TEAMS

• Think about your team as a unit, as 1 person.
  • What are the strengths of your team?
  • Why are you stronger together?
  • Why did you choose your partner?
  • What do you (as a team) bring to each project?
  • Think about how you would approach the project based on previous projects, individually and then how you would approach them together.

Ask questions!! Game plan your top choices and practice, practice, practice!
It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently.

Warren Buffett
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

• Your CDO – MBAn Site
  – Sample interview questions
  – https://cdo.mit.edu/cdo-resources-to-help-you-prepare-for-interviews/

• Mock Behavioral Interviews
• Mock Technical Interviews
THANK YOU!

MIT Sloan Career Development Office
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Cambridge, MA 02142