



Office of Career Opportunities

Eight Interview Tips

Before the Interview

1. **Assess Yourself**

Know your strengths and weaknesses before you walk in the door. Never expect an employer to tell you where you might fit in an organization—you should already know.

2. **Read Employer Literature**

You should have some knowledge of company policies, employment opportunities, products, and services. Look for a chance in the interview to communicate what you know about the organization and position.

3. **Verify the Particulars**

Find out the exact time and place of the interview. Arrive at least five minutes early. There is no excuse for being late, ever! Learn the interviewer's name and its proper pronunciation, as well as his or her title.

During the Interview

4. **Sell Yourself**

Don't just answer the question. Illustrate your personal qualities and strongest abilities with examples from your past. Try to address any underlying questions you think the employer might have about your suitability for the job.

5. **Dwell on the Positive**

Should the recruiter ask about past failures or shortcomings, try to explain circumstances rather than give excuses or blame others. You'll create a better impression by being honest and candid.

6. **Non-verbal Communication**

Watch what you're doing while you're talking. Nervous hands and feet can distract the interviewer's attention. By sitting up straight you will appear poised and confident throughout the interview. The way you dress will communicate a particular message, too. Think conservative.

7. **Ask Questions – When Indicated**

Ask meaningful questions at the appropriate time in the interview. Find out, for instance, what the job responsibilities are, how training is provided, what advancement opportunities are available, how much travel is involved, what other individuals or departments you would work with most, how job performance is measured, etc.

After the Interview

8. **Follow-up**

Provide whatever credentials, references, or transcripts are requested by the prospective employer as soon as possible. Be sure to write down the name, title, and address of the recruiter. You may want to consider a brief, typed letter of appreciation for the interview opportunity.

skill definitions (continued)...

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|---|--|
| 12. Commitment to Task | To start and persist with specific courses of action while exhibiting high motivation and a sense of urgency; willing to commit to long hours of work and make personal sacrifice in order to reach goals. |
| 13. Interaction | To communicate with others in a warm and helpful manner while simultaneously building credibility and rapport. |
| 14. Perceptivity | To interpret verbal and non-verbal behavior; to develop accurate perception and understanding of others' feelings, needs, values, and opinions; to be sensitive to and aware of personality differences and conflicts. |
| 15. Organization and Planning | To organize or schedule people or tasks; to develop realistic action plans while being sensitive to time constraints and resource availability. |
| 16. Creativity | To develop unique and novel solutions to problems; use intuition and a new way of thinking to give birth to new ideas; to present information in an attention-getting and interesting manner. |
| 17. Versatility | To modify one's own behavioral style to respond to the needs of others while maintaining one's own objectives and sense of dignity. |
| 18. Reading the System | To recognize and use information about organizational climate and key individuals to accomplish legitimate organizational goals; be aware of the importance of timing, politics, and group processes in managing change. |
| 19. Team Building | To work with people in such a manner as to build high morale and group commitments to goals and objectives. |
| 20. Decision Making and Problem Solving | To take action in solving problems while exhibiting sound judgment and a realistic understanding of issues; to use reason, even when dealing with emotional topics. |
| 21. Leadership | To influence the actions and opinions of others in a desired direction; to exhibit judgment in leading others to worthwhile objectives. |



.....**what happens**..... during the interview?

The interviewing process can be scary if you don't know what to expect. All interviews fit a general pattern. While each interview will differ, all will share three common characteristics: the beginning, middle, and conclusion.

The typical interview will last 30 minutes, although some may be longer. A typical structure is as follows:

- Five minutes—small talk
- Fifteen minutes—a *mutual* discussion of your background and credentials as they relate to the needs of the employer
- Five minutes—asks you for questions
- Five minutes—conclusion of interview

As you can see, there is not a lot of time to state your case. The employer may try to do most of the talking. When you do respond to questions or ask your own, your statements should be concise and organized without being too brief.

It Starts Before You Even Say Hello

The typical interview starts before you even get into the interview room. The recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified. You are expected to shake the recruiter's hand upon being introduced. Don't be afraid to extend your hand first. This shows assertiveness.

It's a good idea to arrive 10-15 minutes early. You can use the time to relax and verify the interview location. It gets easier later. It may mean counting to ten slowly or wiping your hands on a handkerchief to keep them dry.

How's Your Small Talk Vocabulary

Many recruiters will begin the interview with some small talk. Topics may range from the weather to sports and will rarely focus on anything that brings out your skills. Nonetheless, you are still being evaluated.

Recruiters are trained to evaluate candidates on many different points. They may be judging how well you communicate on an informal basis. This means you must do more than smile and nod.



The Recruiter Has the Floor

The main part of the interview starts when the recruiter begins discussing the organization. If the recruiter uses vague generalities about the position and you want more specific information, ask questions. Be sure you have a clear understanding of the job and the company.

As the interview turns to talk about your qualifications, be prepared to deal with aspects of your background that could be construed as negative, i.e., low grade point average, no participation in outside activities, no related work experience. It is up to you to convince the recruiter that although these points appear negative, positive attributes can be found in them. A low GPA could stem from having to fully support yourself through college; you might have no related work experience, but plenty of experience that shows you to be a loyal and valued employee.

Many times recruiters will ask why you chose the major you did or what your career goals are. These questions are designed to determine your goal direction. Employers seek people who have direction and motivation. This can be demonstrated by your answers to these innocent-sounding questions.

It's Your Turn to Ask Questions

When the recruiter asks, "Now do you have any questions?" it's important to have a few ready. Dr. C. Randall Powell, author of *Career Planning Today*, suggests some excellent strategies for dealing with this issue. He says questions should elicit positive responses from the employer. Also, the questions should bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization. →

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By asking intelligent, well-thought-out questions, you show the employer you are serious about the organization and need more information. It also indicates to the recruiter that you have done your homework.

The Close Counts, Too

The interview isn't over until you walk out the door. The conclusion of the interview usually lasts five minutes and is very important. During this time the recruiter is assessing your overall performance.

It is important to remain enthusiastic and courteous. Often the conclusion of the interview is indicated when the recruiter stands up.

Shake the recruiter's hand and thank him or her for considering you. Being forthright is a quality that most employers will respect, indicating that you feel you have presented your case and the decision is now up to the employer.

Expect the Unexpected

During the interview, you may be asked some unusual questions. Don't be too surprised. Many times questions are asked simply to see how you react. For example, surprise questions could range from, "Tell me a joke" to "What time period would you like to have lived in?" These are not the kind of questions for which you can prepare in advance. Your reaction time and the response you give will be evaluated by the employer, but there's no way to anticipate questions like these.

While these questions are not always used, they are intended to force you to react under some stress and pressure. The best advice is to think and give a natural response. Whenever possible, relate your answers to something positive about yourself and to the job for which you are interviewing.

Evaluations Made by Recruiters

The employer will be observing and evaluating you during the

interview. Erwin S. Stanton, author of *Successful Personnel Recruiting and Selection*, indicates some evaluations made by the employer during the interview include:

1. How mentally alert and responsive is the job candidate?
2. Is the applicant able to draw proper inferences and conclusions during the course of the interview?
3. Does the applicant demonstrate a degree of intellectual depth when communicating, or is his/her thinking shallow and lacking depth?
4. Has the candidate used good judgment and common sense regarding life planning up to this point?
5. What is applicant's capacity for problem-solving activities?
6. How well does candidate respond to stress and pressure? ♦

advice from the experts: interviewing tips from on-campus recruiters

Research organizations in advance of interviews—Since most on-campus interviews are relatively short, it is important that you use this time to sell yourself to an employer. Don't waste this opportunity by spending too much time on issues that could have been answered by reading the company's literature and/or viewing its Web site. Displaying your knowledge about a potential

employer will greatly enhance your chances of interview success.

Define your career goals and the opportunities you want

One of the keys to making a successful sale is product knowledge. In the case of job interviews, that product is *you*. You need to perform a thorough self-evaluation well in advance of your interviews. Know what your strengths, weaknesses, skills, and

abilities are and be prepared to discuss them in the interview.

Be enthusiastic and sincere during your interview

It is important for you to convey a genuine sense of interest during the interview. You must appear eager and flexible, but not too rehearsed. Don't fixate on being nervous. Even seasoned pros can have the "interview jitters." →

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Be honest—Don't claim interest in an employer if you really do not intend to work for that organization. Don't lie on your resume or during the interview. While you should never draw attention to your weaknesses, don't attempt to hide a shortcoming by being untruthful. Learn how to deal with perceived (or real) weaknesses *before* your interviews by talking to a campus career services professional and/or

reading books on job interviewing techniques.

Be realistic—Carefully evaluate what an employer has to offer you...*and what you have to offer the employer.* Don't accept a position that isn't suited to you "just because you need a job." Also, do not set your starting salary expectations too high. Remember, the current state of the job market has kept salaries from rising. Don't be surprised if the average starting salary in your

career field actually decreases this year. If a starting salary seems inordinately low, but is for a position that you really want, you might be able to arrange for an early salary review. The goal at this stage is to get your foot in the door and build your experience, making your more marketable later.

Be Punctual—Above all, *never* be late for an interview! Aim to be 10-15 minutes early. ♦

Some of this material is adapted from *Recruiting Trends* by L. Patrick Scheetz, Ph.D., Collegiate Employment Research Institute. ©Michigan State University.

..... **are you ready for** a behavioral interview?

"Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn't carrying his or her weight." If this is one of the leading questions in your job interview, you could be in for a *behavioral interview*. Based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior, this style of interviewing is gaining wide acceptance among recruiters.

Today, more than ever, every hiring decision is critical. Behavioral interviewing is designed to minimize personal impressions that can affect the hiring decision. By focusing on the applicant's actions and behaviors, rather than subjective impressions that can sometimes be misleading, interviewers can make more accurate hiring decisions.

James F. Reder, manager of staff planning and college relations for Occidental Chemical Corporation in Dallas, says, "Although we have not conducted

any formal studies to determine whether retention or success on the job here has been affected, I feel our move to behavioral interviewing has been successful. It helps our recruiters concentrate questions on areas important to our candidates' success within Occidental." The company introduced behavioral interviewing in 1986 at several sites and has since implemented it companywide.

Behavioral vs. Traditional Interviews

If you have training or experience with traditional interviewing techniques, you may find the behavioral interview quite different in several ways:

- Instead of asking how you would behave in a particular situation, the interviewer will ask you to describe how you did behave.
- Expect the interviewer to question and probe (think of

"peeling the layers of an onion").

- The interviewer will ask you to provide details, and will not allow you to theorize or generalize about several events. Provide *one specific* example.
- The interviewer will be a more structured process that will concentrate on areas that are important to the interviewer, rather than allowing you to concentrate on areas that you may feel important.
- You may not get a chance to deliver any prepared stories.
- Most interviewers will be taking copious notes throughout the interview.

The behavioral interviewer has been trained to objectively collect and evaluate information, and works from a profile of desired behaviors that are needed for success on the job. Because the behaviors a candidate has demonstrated in previous similar→

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positions are likely to be repeated, you will be asked to share situations in which you may or may not have exhibited these behaviors. Your answers will be tested for accuracy and consistency.

If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous related experience, the interviewer will look for behaviors in situations similar to those of the target position:

“Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it.”

“Give an example of when you had to work with your hands to accomplish a task or project.”

“What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?”

Follow-up questions will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

“Can you give me an example?”

“What did you do?”

“What did you say?”

“What were you thinking?”

“How did you feel?”

“What was your role?”

“What was the result?”

You will notice an absence of such questions as, “Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses.”

How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

- Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially involving course work, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning, and customer service.
- Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.
- Be sure each story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, i.e., be ready to describe the situation, your action, and the outcome or result. (S.H.A.R.E. acronym)
- Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable). Discuss what you learned from the experience.
- Be honest. Don’t embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- Be specific. Don’t generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.

A possible response for the question, “Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn’t pulling his or her weight” might go as follows: “I had been assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn’t showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally

met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team, and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn’t passing, so I found someone to help him out. We finished our project on time, and got a ‘B’ on it.”

The interviewer might then probe: “How did you feel when you confronted this person?” “Exactly what was the nature of the project?” “What was his responsibility as a team member?” “What was your role?” “At what point did you take it upon yourself to confront him?” You can see it is important that you not make up or “shade” information, and why you should have a clear memory of the entire incident.

Don’t Forget the Basics

Instead of feeling anxious or threatened by the prospect of a behavioral interview, remember the essential difference between the traditional interview and the behavioral interview: The traditional interviewer may allow you to project what you might or should do in a given situation, whereas the behavioral interviewer is looking for past actions only. It will always be important to put your best foot forward and make a good impression on the interviewer with appropriate attire, good grooming, a firm handshake, and direct eye contact. There is no substitute for promptness, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude. ♦

Situation. **H**indrance. **A**ction. **R**esult. **E**valuation.

questions asked by employers in interviews

Personal

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Describe your ideal job.
4. What can you offer us?
5. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
6. Can you name some weaknesses?
7. Define success. Failure.
8. Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
9. Who are your role models? Why?
10. What motivates you most in a job?
11. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor/supervisor/co-worker and how did you handle it?
12. Have you ever spoken before a group of people? How large?
13. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
14. What do you know about our organization (product or services)?
15. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
16. Do you plan to return to school for further education?
17. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
18. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
19. How would you describe yourself?
20. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
21. Why did you decide to seek a position with this company?
22. Define cooperation.
23. What major problem have you encountered, and how did you deal with it?
24. What have you done that shows initiative?
25. What qualifications do you have that will make you successful?
26. How do you handle rejection?
27. Have you done the best work you are capable of doing?

Education

28. Why did you choose your major?
29. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
30. In which campus activities did you participate?
31. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
32. Which elective classes did you like best? Least? Why?
33. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
34. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
35. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?
36. Describe your most rewarding college experience.
37. How has your college experience prepared you for this career?

Experience

38. Did you work while going to school? In what positions?
39. What did you learn from these work experiences?
40. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
41. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
42. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
43. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
44. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
45. How do you think a former professor/supervisor/coworker would describe your work?
46. What have you learned from the jobs you have held?
47. What is the most difficult situation you have faced?

Compatibility or "Fit"

48. What qualities should a successful manager possess?
49. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him or her.

50. What two or three qualities are most important to you in a job?
51. What criteria are you using to evaluate the company for which you hope to work?
52. Are you able to take instructions or criticism without feeling upset or hurt?
53. Would you be willing to take a drug test as a condition of employment?
54. Do you prefer working with others or alone?
55. What kind of people do you find it difficult to work with?
56. If you were hiring a graduate for this position, what qualities would you seek?

Career Goals

57. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
58. What kind of boss do you prefer?
59. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
60. What other types of positions are you considering?
61. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
62. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
63. How do you feel about working overtime or flextime?
64. How do you feel about traveling or relocating?
65. What are your long range career objectives?
66. Would you be willing to consider geographical locations other than your preference area?
67. What do you hope to be earning 2-5 years from now?

Before you begin interviewing, think about these questions and possible responses and discuss them with a career advisor. Conduct mock interviews and be sure you are able to communicate clear, unrehearsed answers to interviewers. ♦

guide to appropriate pre-employment inquiries

ACCEPTABLE	SUBJECT	UNACCEPTABLE
<p>“Have you worked for this company under a different name?” “Have you ever been convicted of a crime under a different name?” Applicant’s place of residence How long applicant has been a resident of this state or city</p>	<p>name</p> <p>address or residence</p> <p>birthplace</p>	<p>Former name of applicant whose name has been changed by court order or otherwise.</p> <p>Birthplace of applicant Birthplace of applicant’s parents, spouse, or other relatives Requirements that applicant submit a birth certificate, naturalization or baptismal record</p>
<p>“Can you, after employment, submit a work permit if under 18?” “Are you over 18 years of age?” “If hired, can you furnish proof of age?” OR Statement that hire is subject to verification that applicant’s age meets legal requirements</p>	<p>age</p>	<p>Questions which tend to identify applicants 40 to 64 years of age</p>
<p>Statement by employer of regular days, hours or shift to be worked</p>	<p>religion</p> <p>workdays and shifts</p>	<p>Applicant’s religious denomination or affiliation, church, parish, pastor or religious holidays observed “Do you attend religious services or a house of worship?” Applicant may not be told: “This is a Catholic/Protestant/Jewish/Atheist organization.</p>
<p>Statement that photograph may be required <i>after</i> employment</p>	<p>race or color</p> <p>photograph</p>	<p>Complexion, color of skin, or other questions directly or indirectly indicating race or color</p> <p>Requirement that applicant affix a photograph to the application Request applicant, at his/her option, to submit photograph Requirement of photograph after interview but before hiring</p>
<p>Statement by employer that <i>if hired</i>, applicant may be required to submit proof of authorization to work in the U.S.</p>	<p>citizenship</p>	<p>Whether applicant, parents or spouse are naturalized or native-born U.S. citizens Date when applicant, parents or spouse acquired U.S. citizenship Requirement that applicant produce naturalization papers or first papers Whether applicant’s parents or spouse are citizens of the U.S.</p>
<p>Languages applicant reads, speaks or writes fluently</p>	<p>national origin or ancestry</p>	<p>Applicant’s nationality, lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent or parentage Date of arrival in U.S. or port of entry; how long a resident Nationality of applicant’s parents or spouse; maiden name of applicant’s wife or mother Languages commonly used by applicant, “What is your mother tongue?” How applicant acquired ability to read, write or speak a foreign language</p>
<p>Applicant’s academic, vocational or professional education; schools attended</p>	<p>education</p>	<p>Date last attended high school</p>
<p>Applicant’s work experience Applicant’s military experience in armed forces of U.S., state militia (U.S.), or in a particular branch of the U.S. armed forces</p>	<p>experience</p>	<p>Applicant’s military experience (general) Type of military discharge</p>
<p>“Have you ever been <i>convicted</i> of any crime? If so, when, where, and disposition of case?”</p>	<p>character</p>	<p>“Have you ever been arrested?”</p>
<p>Names of applicant’s relatives already employed by this company Name and address of parent or guardian <i>if applicant is a minor</i></p>	<p>relatives</p>	<p>Marital status or number of dependents Name of address of relative, spouse or children of adult applicant “With whom do you reside?” “Do you live with your parents?”</p>
<p>Name and address of person to be notified in case of accident or emergency</p>	<p>emergency contact</p>	<p>Name and address of relative to be notified in case of accident or emergency</p>
<p>Organizations, clubs, professional societies or other associations of which applicant is a member, excluding any which indicate the race, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry of its members</p>	<p>organizations</p>	<p>List all organizations, clubs, societies and lodges to which you belong</p>
<p>“By whom were you referred for a position here?”</p>	<p>references</p>	<p>Requirement of submission of a religious reference</p>
<p>“Can you perform all of the duties outlined in the job description?” Statement by employer that all job offers are contingent on passing a physical examination</p>	<p>physical condition</p>	<p>“Do you have any physical disabilities?” Questions on general medical condition Inquiries as to receipt of workmen’s compensation</p>

topics for questioning the employer

..... during an interview:

Successful interviews rely upon the active participation of both the interviewer and you, the interviewee. When asked by the interviewer if you have any questions, this is a clear sign that the interview is drawing to a close. You now have one more chance to make a favorable impression by asking well thought-out questions. You need to ask questions to get as much detailed information on company needs and the job, so that you can determine if you will be comfortable with that organization. Your company research will assist you in preparing questions. You may also create questions from any of the following topics:

1. Opportunities for growth
2. Typical career paths and realistic time frames for advancement
3. Performance evaluation process and promotional opportunities
4. Typical first year assignments
5. Initial and future training programs
6. Type and length of training required
7. Company's "personality" and management style
8. Policy on promotion
9. Expectations of new hires
10. Interviewer's own experience with organization
11. Qualities needed in new hires
12. Characteristics of person successful with company
13. Description of work environment
14. Departmental structure
15. Future growth plans
16. Challenging facets of job
17. Organization's stability and fiscal soundness
18. Differences from competition
19. Organization's strengths and weaknesses
20. Industry trends and potential effect on company

Dressing for the workplace

Depending on your current fashion statement, whether it be the latest trends for the club scene or merely college senior casual, venturing into the world of work may be cause for a drastic shift in your wardrobe.

Some of your individualism, at least from 9 to 5, might have to be shelved, or kept in the closet. In most business and technical settings, when it comes to your appearance, conservative and conformity are the order.

Each company will have its own guidelines, so it is important to know your future or potential employer before you meet them. How liberal or conservative is the dress code? Don't try to set any new standards, especially in the interview. When in doubt, it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy. For men and women, a suit is the best bet.

Some guidelines:

Men

- A two-piece suit will suffice in most instances.
- Solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics are safer than bold prints and patterns.
- Bright ties bring focus to the face, but a simple pattern is best for an interview. (A tip for larger men: use a double Windsor knot to minimize a bulky appearance.)
- Wear polished shoes with socks high enough so no skin is visible when you sit down and cross your legs.

Women

- A suit with a knee-length skirt and a tailored blouse is most appropriate.

- Although even the most conservative organizations allow more feminine looks these days, accessories should be kept simple. Basic pumps, modest jewelry, and natural makeup help to present a professional look.
- Pants are more acceptable now but are not recommended for interviews or unless you're positive that they would be appropriate.

Staying Within a Budget

For recent graduates just entering professional life, additions to wardrobes, or complete overhauls, are likely needed. However, limited funds can be an obstacle. Image consultant Christine Lazzarini suggests "capsule wardrobing." For example, by mixing and matching, she says an eight-piece capsule wardrobe can generate up to 28 ensembles.

Before shopping, Lazzarini advises establishing a budget, 50 percent of which should be targeted for accessories. For women, "even a brightly colored jacket could be considered an accessory when it makes an outfit you already have look entirely different."

The most important piece in any wardrobe is a jacket that is versatile and can work with a number of other pieces, according to one fashion expert. This applies to men and women. "If you focus on a suit, buy one with a jacket which may be used with other skirts or trousers," said a national women's fashion director for a

major retailer. "Then add a black turtleneck or a white shirt. These are the fashion basics that you can build on."

A navy or black blazer for men can work well with a few different gabardine pants. Although this kind of ensemble would be just as expensive as a single suit, it does offer more versatility.

One accessory recommended by company representatives is a briefcase. "When I see one," says one recruiter, "it definitely adds to the candidate's stature. It is a symbol to me which indicates that the individual has done some research and is probably going to be able to give me whatever I ask for. In other words, it shows that he or she is prepared."

A Final Check

And, of course, your appearance is only as good as your grooming. For interviews especially, create a final checklist for yourself:

- Make sure your hair is neat
- Use makeup conservatively
- No runs in stockings
- Shoes polished (some suggest wearing sneakers on the way to an interview and changing before you enter the interview site)
- Women should avoid excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing earrings
- No missing buttons, crooked ties, or lint

You want your experience and qualifications to shine. Your appearance should enhance your presentation, not overwhelm it. ♦

casually speaking: the new office wardrobe

Relaxed workplace attire is becoming the norm, not the exception. At many companies across the nation, “Casual Friday” has spread to the rest of the week. This is great news for new graduates.

For Men ♂

1. A two- or three-button linen suit in a neutral color
2. Cotton chinos or nice khaki pants, with or without pleats
3. A black blazer in wool and/or cashmere, or in a lighter-weight fabric such as wool crepe
4. High-quality crew-neck or turtleneck sweaters (cashmere, merino wool or one of the new cotton blends)
5. Long-sleeved sport shirts worn without a tie
6. Corduroy slacks
7. Casual vests
8. Patterned or colored socks in a heavier knit than dress socks
9. Lightweight denim or chambray shirts paired with fun, stylish neckties
10. Loafers or other shoes that bridge the gap between casual and dress

Stay Away From...

1. Shorts and sandals
2. T-shirts with words or pictures
3. Worn-out jeans (and any jeans at more conservative companies)
4. “MTV” – punk, metal, or hip-hop-looks
5. Athletic wear-sweats, gym shoes, baseball caps, team logo jackets
6. Anything that’s damaged, threadbare or not impeccably clean
7. Dress shirts worn as casual shirts

For Women ♀

1. At least one linen or silk-blend suit (either skirted or with slacks) to form a foundation for your wardrobe
2. Chinos or other high-quality, tailored cotton slacks
3. Lightweight cardigan, crew-neck or “twin-set” sweaters
4. Casual skirts in a modest length (consider corduroy, knit or suede)
5. Cotton polo-style shirts
6. Crisp cotton dress shirts
7. Vests in interesting fabrics
8. Appropriate costume jewelry (tasteful folk/ethnic pieces are nice)
9. A belt in exotic leather (or good simulation) can really dress up a casual outfit
10. Comfortable, low-heeled shoes—especially a conservative loafer or pump

Stay Away From...

1. Workout wear as office wear
2. Size extremes—ultra-baggy pants and/or too-small and cropped T-shirts or sweaters
3. “Club” or other too-provocative attire (save that green vinyl mini for Saturday night)
4. Leggings in place of pants or skirts
5. Casual shorts—tailored shorts are slightly more acceptable
6. Cheaply made clothing (go for quality, not quantity)
7. Open-toed sandals and gym shoes

job search letters

Components of a Thank You Letter

Your Address
City, State, ZIP
Date

Name and title of interviewer
Address
City, State, ZIP

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for the interview on (date) at (location or university). I am very interested in the (position, kind of work) and hope that the interest is mutual.

I am enthusiastic about the prospect of joining your organization. (Describe what about the organization is sparking your interest.) My (name your background, skills, or educational emphasis) would enable me to make the transition to a position in your firm with relative ease.

OPTIONAL PARAGRAPH:

Enclosed is (anything which would strengthen your candidacy for the position). (Tell why you are enclosing this item and how it relates.)

If you have any questions, please call me at (area code/phone number). I look forward to the opportunity to discuss further (name opportunities) at (name of employer).

Sincerely,

Enclosure(s) (Include if applicable)

Thank You Letter

3701 Old Mill Road
Decatur, GA 30214
April 6, 20XX

Ms. Yuni Kim
Executive Vice President
Worldwide Automation & Control, Inc.
1127 Nelson Drive
Chicago, IL 60602

Dear Ms. Kim:

Thank you for taking the time to interview me at Georgia Tech on April 5. I enjoyed talking with you and learning more about the mechanical design position with Worldwide.

As you recall from our interview, I have had experience as an intern with Honeywell IAC. I have also taken advanced classes in material engineering at Georgia Tech. I greatly enjoy this career field and wish to apply my interest and knowledge to Worldwide Automation & Control.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to interview with you. I look forward to speaking with you again soon.

Sincerely,

James Davis

James Davis

Enclosure(s) (Include if applicable)