



SMU | HEGI FAMILY CAREER
DEVELOPMENT CENTER

SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

Your resume may get you in the door, but
your interviewing skills get you the job.

200 Hughes-Trigg Student Center
214-768-2266

<http://smu.edu/career/>

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INTERVIEW ASSISTANCE

The Hegi Family Career Development Center assists students with interview preparation by offering:

- Career Orientations
- Mock Interviews
- Interview Workshops

For more information, go to:

<http://www.smu.edu/career/>
214-768-2266

Hegi Family Career Development Center

Counselor-On-Duty Hours
Monday – Friday (appointments)
8:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
200 Hughes-Trigg Student Center

BBA Career Services

Counselor-On-Duty Hours
Monday - Thursday
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
254 Maguire Bldg., Cox School of Business

ARE YOU RIGHT FOR THE JOB?

Ultimately, that is what the interviewer is trying to determine. So, how can you convince him or her that you're the best person for the job? By knowing what you have to offer and what the company is seeking in the ideal candidate.

Below are five areas for you to review thoroughly in preparation to begin the interviewing process:

1. Career Goals & Interests

Projecting a sense of your career direction during the interview demonstrates planning and forethought. You may not know exactly what you will be doing in the next 5 to 10 years, but you can articulate what you want to do professionally along with your possible career paths.

2. Abilities & Skills

Employers seek many of the same abilities and skills whether they are in business, government or education. Know your abilities and the skills you have developed through course work and experiences (both paid and/or volunteer). Prepare to discuss the aspects of your background that qualify you for a specific position.

3. Strengths & Weaknesses

Know your strengths and weaknesses and be prepared to discuss them. Do not use a weakness that is not true for you. What employers want to know is how you are working on strengthening a particular weakness. NEVER end an interview question on a "weakness." Instead transition from a "weakness" to a "strength."

4. Your Successes

Employers will ask questions regarding your past performance and experience, so be familiar with your work experiences.

Be prepared to:

- Use specific examples related to your work experience, class projects, travel, activities, volunteer work, etc. to demonstrate you are experienced and qualified to do the job.
- Describe your duties and responsibilities in terms of accomplishments **and quantities, when possible.** For example, *"As you'll see on my resume, when I was the treasurer of XYZ club, I managed a budget of \$10,000."*
- Review the job description thoroughly and learn as much about the company and day-to-day responsibilities of the position as possible.

5. Knowledge of the Employer

Knowledge is power! Employers expect you to know about their company. Find out about:

- Products & Services
- Structure / Organization
- Competitors
- Customers
- Reputation
- Financial Status
- Recent Major Changes

By learning as much as possible about the employer, you will be able to ask more meaningful questions.

Sources for employer information include the following:

- Company & Industry Websites
- Annual Reports (library)
- Databases such as, Hoover's Online (library)
- SMU Career Services & Alumni
- Current Employees
- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Wetfeet Guides (www.wetfeet.com)
- Vault Guides (www.vault.com)

For more information, see the Career Center handout on Seeking Resources to Compile Employer Research.

APPEARANCE CHECKLIST

Did you know that it only takes 20 seconds to formulate an opinion? **You never get a second chance to make a positive first impression!** Use the following checklist to create a professional appearance for a great first impression.

MALES

Suit: Darker colors (grey or navy), two-piece recommended.

Shirt: Pressed, plain white t-shirt underneath.

Tie: Medium width, tied to hang at the tip of your belt buckle.

Shoes: Dark color and polished.

Socks: Should match your shoes.

FEMALES

Suit: Darker colors (grey, navy or black). Skirt length - just above knee or mid-calf, no mini skirts. Suit should be lined (nice material).

Blouse: Solid, light-colored (not too bold in color). Avoid busy patterns.

Hosiery: Nude or a darker color that coordinates with the skirt (bring an extra pair should a runner occur).

Shoes: Heel height - 1 to 2 inches. Solid color to match skirt or darker than skirt. Closed toe; no sandals.

OVERALL APPEARANCE

Hair: Should be trimmed or pulled away from face. Do not try a new style or cut the day before.

Jewelry: Wear small pieces. Do not wear dangle rings or charm bracelets. Earrings are not recommended for males.

Fragrances: Use perfumes and colognes sparingly. Some people are very sensitive to fragrances.

Hands: Wash your hands and make sure your nails are trimmed. Do not wear distracting nail polish colors.

Tattoos and body piercing: All distractions should be covered up.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

- Names:** Know how to pronounce the interviewer's name correctly. Get the names and titles of everyone you meet.
- Arrival:** Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. This gives you time to take care of last minute details and to relax and concentrate on the interview.
- Bring:** Extra resumes, reference lists, transcripts, notepad and pen, and any documents/items that illustrate your skills (see Show & Tell p. 6).
- Distractions:** Turn off cell phones and pagers before you enter the building.
- Handshake:** Give a firm handshake to both men and women before and after the interview.
- Manners:** Be personable, professional, and polite to *everyone* you meet.
- Body Language:** Maintain eye contact, sit up straight, avoid excessive gestures, but do not inhibit natural gesturing.
- Attitude & Honesty:** Be direct, sincere, and confident, yet not arrogant. Do not forget to smile!
- Speech/Language:** Speak clearly and be aware of your vocabulary and grammar. Avoid slang or over-used phrases. Do not mention personal problems or speak negatively of past employers.
- Questions:** If needed, ask for clarification before answering a question and take time to formulate an answer.
- Salary:** Do not bring up salary until an offer is extended. Familiarize yourself with starting salary information *prior* to the interview.
- Closure:** Ask about the next step in the process. Say you want the job, if you do, and show sincere interest.
- Business Cards:** Get business cards from everyone you meet in order to contact them for thank you letters and follow up questions.

INTERVIEW FORMATS

1. ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

On-campus interviews are usually a “first-round” or screening interview to determine if you have the skills and experience needed to perform the duties of the job and if you may be a good “fit” for the company. They are typically scheduled for either 30 or 45-minute intervals. Students registered with the Hegi Family Career Development Center have access to MustangTRAK/InterviewTRAK and can view information online about companies that conduct on-campus interviews. **For more information on how to register in MustangTRAK, contact the Career Center.**

2. PHONE INTERVIEWS

Many companies use phone interviews to pre-screen candidates. They are typically 20 minutes to an hour. You should be aware of the following:

- Interviewers may call you anytime and anywhere and expect to interview you on the spot. Either be prepared to converse professionally or we recommend you ask to schedule an interview at a more convenient time.
- You can refer to notes during the interview by having your documents laid out before you.
- Maintain professionalism. Dressing in business attire for the phone interview helps you feel more professional.
- Be aware of your voice tones. Since the interviewers cannot see your enthusiasm, they need to hear it in your voice.
- Without non-verbal cues it is more difficult to connect with the interviewer and harder to judge the progress of the interview.
- Difficult to distinguish between voices and interviewers, making it hard to address individuals.
- On a speakerphone only one side can speak at a time, and the delay makes it difficult to receive feedback.

Smile....

People can hear your smile even over the phone.

Do's and Don'ts in Phone Interviews

- **Do** prepare as you would for any interview, including dressing and acting professionally.
- **Do** practice (practice answering questions on the phone, set up a telephone mock interview).
- **Do** have a professional voicemail message to receive calls from employers.
- **Do** notify roommate(s) that you may receive calls from employers.
- **Do** ask to reschedule the interview for another time if you are unable to interview when you receive the call.
- **Do** arrange a time and a quiet place where noise and others won't intrude on your interview.
- **Don't** read from your notes...you don't want to sound like you're reading a script.
- **Don't** answer cell phone calls from unknown numbers if you can't interview at that moment (while driving, in class, at noisy restaurants, etc.). Let the call go to voice mail and return it at a more appropriate time.
- **Don't** allow any interruptions (deactivate or ignore call waiting, inform others of your phone interview).
- **Don't** forget to check the reception and batteries on the phone you plan to use.

3. SECOND ROUND INTERVIEWS

Second round interviews indicate you are a serious candidate and the employer would like to learn more about you. They are most often held at the employer's site so you can meet co-workers and assess the work setting. Be prepared to talk with people from various levels individually or in small groups. Ask about the duration of the interview so you know what to expect and are well rested and prepared.

4. ON-SITE INTERVIEWS

On-site interviews may occur in either the first or second round of interviewing and are held at the employer's location. You are responsible for finding out all the details of the interview, so ask questions when the employer calls to set up the interview.

Preparing for the On-Site Interview
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1. **Arrangements:** Respond promptly to the interview invitation. Document the name and phone number for your point of contact. Inquire about the interview agenda & format (for example, is it a group or one-on-one interview?).
2. **Time & Place:** Get specific directions on where to meet. Verify the date, start and end time of the interview.
3. **Contacts:** Document and bring the names and phone numbers of those who you may be meeting when you arrive. Also get the names and titles of people who will participate in the interview.
4. **Expenses:** Out-of-town site interviews are expensive. Never go on an interview for the sake of the trip. Employers may or may not pay your expenses, so verify who will handle your trip expenses and arrangements.
5. **Manners Matter!** Be professional and polite with everyone you meet regardless of his or her position.

6. **Dining Etiquette:** On-site interviews may include meals or receptions. Select food that is easy to eat. When ordering food, ask the employer for recommendations. Let the price of the food he/she suggests guide you. Do not drink alcohol, even if offered. For an opportunity to develop and practice your etiquette skills, attend the Business Etiquette Dinner offered each fall.
7. **Close the Interview:** Do not leave the interview without closure. If you're interested in the position, let the interviewer know. Also, never leave the interview without thanking the employer for the opportunity and inquiring about the next step in their process.
8. **Thank You Notes:** Write thank-you letters to the person(s) who will be making the hiring decision and to those who participated in the interview. Ideally, the letter should be sent within 24 hours of the interview. Letters may be sent in typed, written, or in e-mail form. You will have to be the judge of which format is best, depending on the company and their time frame.

5. DECLINING AN INTERVIEW INVITATION

There may be a time when you apply for a position and then realize later that you are no longer interested. If that company contacts you for an interview, you need to follow-up with them and let them know that you are no longer interested, especially if you might want to work for them later in life.

When declining an interview invitation, a decline letter is the most appropriate course of action. The letter should be short and sweet. View Page 13 for an example of a decline letter.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Employers ask a variety of questions to determine if you are a good match for their company. Knowing the types of questions asked is a huge advantage, as you think about and prepare to discuss your skills, qualifications and experience. Remember, no matter what type of interview questions employers ask, they want to know that you have the skills they seek.

TOP 10 SKILLS EMPLOYERS SEEK

1. Verbal & Written Communication
2. Honesty/Integrity
3. Teamwork
4. Interpersonal
5. Strong Work Ethic
6. Motivation/Initiative
7. Flexibility/Adaptability
8. Analytical/Problem-solving
9. Computer/Technical (job/industry specific)
10. Organization/Multi-tasking

1. STANDARD

Most employers will start the interview with traditional questions about your education, work experience, career interests, etc. They expect you to relay specific, factual information.

2. BEHAVIORAL

Employers from ALL sectors use Behavioral Questions. The purpose is to gather information about your past behavior, knowledge, and motivation to use as an indicator of how you may perform in the future. Employers want specific examples of times you have successfully demonstrated a key skill or characteristic.

TYPICAL BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Describe a time when you demonstrated _____ skill?
- Describe a situation when...?
- How/Why did you...?
- What were the circumstances surrounding...?
- What was your specific role in the project?
- What were the steps you took to...?

ANSWERING BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

A good approach to answering these types of questions is referred to as the S/TAR approach, in which your answers contain the following:

- Situation/Task you faced (briefly describe).
- Action you took (what did you do?).
- Results of your actions.

Think of specific examples of projects or situations that help to illustrate your strengths, how you overcome obstacles, and the key skills/characteristics the employer is seeking. Plan how you would describe the Situation/Task, the Action you took and the Results of your action for each example.

Examples may come from:

- Academics
- Jobs/Internships
- Activities
- Volunteer/Community Service

SHOW AND TELL:

If your past experience can be visually illustrated, prepare a notebook (portfolio) of samples of your work to take with you. A portfolio may contain writing samples, projects, reports, photography, graphics, certificates, marketing/advertising materials, etc.

3. STRESS/PRESSURE

Stress interview questions are used by client-centered businesses, like consulting, investment banking firms, or sales whose clients may challenge you in similar ways. Employers want to see if you remain cool in the face of adversity and think well on your feet. Basically, the interviewer intentionally challenges you to create tension. You might be told that your extracurricular activities sound shallow or your G.P.A. isn't high enough. The interviewer puts you on the defensive to see how you respond to uncomfortable or difficult interpersonal situations. Stay calm. Listen to the interviewer. Don't argue. Use concrete examples to address the question.

4. ANALYTICAL

Analytical interview questions, or brainteasers, are used to explore your ability to analyze and use logic. *Remember, there is no one correct answer; it is how you approach the questions.* The employer may even ask you to develop alternate solutions to the same question. Logically describe your assumptions/thought processes as you address the question.

TIPS FOR ANSWERING ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS:

- Use round numbers: Don't get bogged down in exact numbers. Select numbers you can easily multiply or divide.
- Think out loud: The interviewer wants to know how you arrived at your conclusion and will probably ask you to describe your thought process.
- Don't be afraid to ask "stupid" questions: If there is some fact that you need to know to answer the question and you don't know it, either make up a reasonable number or ask the interviewer.

EXAMPLE SOLUTION TO AN ANALYTICAL QUESTION:

How many blue cars are there in the U.S.?

Remember: the most important thing is the process you use, rather than the actual numbers.

Do the problem in a 2-step process:

1. Figure out the number of cars in the country (250 million people, average of 0.5 cars per person = 125 million cars).
2. Take a wild guess as to the subset of cars that are blue (30% of cars are blue, so 30% of 125 = 37.5 million).

These are very difficult questions that few people get completely right. Basically, the interviewer is gauging your reaction when challenged. Do you calmly admit lack of subject knowledge, ramble, get frustrated, or lose your composure?

5. TECHNICAL

Primarily used by employers in engineering and technology related industries. They are based on Behavioral and Analytical interviewing techniques with a more technical emphasis. Employers ask questions about where and how you have applied your technical expertise. Use the S/TAR system mentioned earlier to answer

these questions. The analytical questions require greater math, computer or technical knowledge, but they are still designed to see the process you use to work through a problem.

6. CASE STUDY

Consulting and investment banking firms most often use case study interviews to determine your ability to logically analyze a business problem in a one-on-one interview setting.

WHY THE CASE?

Consulting is a rigorous profession that requires working with a variety of personalities and situations. Typically, consultants spend over 90 percent of their time traveling to client locations and working directly with clients and teams within the firm. This reality places a premium on "presenting well". Consultants must possess strong analytical and communication skills while remaining composed, alert, and helpful. Consulting firms test these skills and qualities by using the case study interview.

WHAT IS A "CASE"?

A case interview is an interactive, role-playing process. The interviewer poses a business problem and then typically asks, "What would you do? How would you approach this issue?" The interview proceeds as an open dialogue between you and the interviewer, with the interviewer guiding the discussion. You are expected to analyze the situation and ask questions to move through the problem toward making a recommendation.

Rarely are interviewers seeking "one right answer"—rather, they are keenly interested in HOW you approach and think through the problem. Therefore, the interviewer is assessing the following skills:

- Analytical/Thought Process
- Attention to Detail/Organization
- Presentation/Delivery Style
- Confidence/Maturity / Energy
- Knowledge/Business Acumen
- Flexibility/Adaptive to Change

ADDRESSING CASE INTERVIEWS:

The most typical format entails the interviewer posing a business dilemma and offering some basic facts. The interviewer is the client and you are the consultant. You begin by verbally analyzing the situation, identifying key business issues, and then you ask open-ended or specific questions to uncover key information as you move toward a resolution or a recommendation.

TIPS FOR ANSWERING QUESTIONS:

The interviewer looks for three primary qualities: They are the ability 1) to solve problems, 2) to build working relationships, and 3) to produce results.

- **Think aloud;** the interviewer wants to know your reasoning/problem solving strategies.
- **Use rounded numbers** when discussing figures; don't get bogged down in exact figures.
- **Ask questions;** seek clarification, facts, understanding before proceeding.
- **Be organized** in your approach; think in terms of steps/processes.
- **Use common sense** and don't try to fit every case into a defined formula or answer.
- **Use facts and reasoning** to support your assumptions.
- **Take notes if needed;** write down key points or figures to remember.
- **Practice!!!**

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES & RESOURCES

Books: *The Insider's Guide to Management Consulting, Fast Track, Vault Case Interview Practice Guide* (Career Center Library and BIC)

Practice Cases on Company Web Sites: Bain & Company, Mercer Management Consulting, and McKinsey & Company

Workshop: "Ace the Case" offered by Bain & Company each fall

Online Resources: www.vault.com & www.wetfeet.com can be located through <http://proxy.libraries.smu.edu/login?url=http://www.netlibrary.com/>

MOST COMMONLY ASKED QUESTION

"TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF"

A question similar to "describe yourself" or "tell me about yourself" will most likely be the first question you will be asked.

This question may be asked of you in any professional situation, so you should have a *two-minute commercial* prepared at any point during your job search.

You want to sell yourself to an employer with a short and sweet statement of yourself. Your two-minute commercial should include the following:

1. Brief statement about yourself (30 seconds)
 - University/Major
 - Professional interests
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Travel/Study Abroad
2. Work experience/accomplishments (30-45 seconds)
 - Related work experience
 - Related coursework and projects
 - Leadership experience
 - Community service involvement
3. Why this job/this company? (30-45 seconds)
 - Why you are interested
 - Skills you can bring
 - Why you are the best person to hire
 - What you know about the company

Example "Elevator Speech:"

"For years I have known that financial planning for individuals and families is the field for me. I enjoy working with customers to explore their resources and work toward their goals. Through my coursework at SMU, information interviewing, and participation in the Finance Club, I understand the unique challenges of this field. I am eager to put my leadership and financial management skills to good use at your company."

To sharpen your two-minute commercial, visit a career counselor today!

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The list below will help you think about common standard and behavioral questions. Be sure you have practiced answering common questions asked by employers.

Personal

1. Tell me about yourself. (See pg. 8)
2. Why did you choose to interview with our company?
3. Describe your ideal job.
4. What can you offer us?
5. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses?
6. Define success. Define failure.
7. Who are your role models?
8. What motivates you most in a job?
9. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
10. What do you know about our organization (products or services)?
11. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years? (short and long-term goals)
12. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor/supervisor/co-worker and how did you handle it?
13. Tell me about a situation where you failed, what you learned from the experience, and how you changed.
14. Describe a time when you had to juggle many tasks at one time.
15. Describe a situation when you felt most proud of your work.
16. Describe a team situation when an individual did not pull his or her weight. What did you do and what were the outcomes?

Education

17. Why did you choose your major?
18. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
19. Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
20. In which campus activities did you participate?
21. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
22. Which elective classes did you like the best?
23. How does your college education or work experience relate to this job?
24. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?

25. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
26. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

Experience

27. What job-related skills have you developed?
28. What did you learn from past work experiences?
29. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
30. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
31. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
32. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
33. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind and what did you learn from it?
34. How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?
35. Have you ever done a presentation in front of a group of people? How large a group? What were your thoughts about your performance?
36. Tell me about a time when you were in a leadership position and what you accomplished.

Work Preferences

37. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
38. Do you prefer large or small organizations?
39. What other types of positions are you considering?
40. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
41. Are you able to work on several assignments at once (multi-tasking)?
42. How do you feel about working overtime?
43. How do you feel about travel?
44. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
45. Are you willing to work flextime?

GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

Always prepare at least **five questions** to ask an employer. The questions below will help you formulate some good questions. You also should prepare a few customized questions related to the employer and to the position. Remember - you don't have to wait until the end of the interview to ask questions about the firm, job or industry; follow the lead of the interviewer.

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS AT THE FIRST INTERVIEW:

1. Can you tell me more about your latest developments in _____?
2. With the recent changes in the economy, what are the main challenges facing your company?
3. What type of training can I expect?
4. Describe your/the company's management style.
5. What is the typical career path for someone in this position?
6. What are some opportunities for growth in this organization?
7. What is a typical day like for someone in this position?
8. How would you describe the culture of the office?
9. What qualities or skills are you looking for in the ideal candidate to fill this position?
10. What are the next steps in the process?

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS AT THE SECOND INTERVIEW:

1. Customized question based on the role of the person interviewing you (demonstrate your in-depth research/knowledge)
2. Why did you decide to work for this company?
3. I like to get a feel for the reporting structure of an organization. Describe the reporting structure here.
4. How would you describe the work environment in this office?
5. What are the procedures and timelines for formal and informal feedback/evaluation?
6. What are some key challenges I may face in this position?
7. How much travel might there be?
8. What opportunities for professional development are offered?
9. What current projects are underway?
10. What is the next step in the process?

SENSITIVE TOPICS

You should not initiate discussion on certain sensitive topics. Wait until the employer initiates the conversation either during the second interview or once you are made an offer.

1. Salary, vacation, leave and other compensation/benefits issues
2. Layoffs
3. Office space
4. Religion, politics, sexual orientation, or race/ethnic issues

ILLEGAL/INAPPROPRIATE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

TYPES OF ILLEGAL/INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS:

There are certain types of questions that an interviewer should not ask because of federal regulations. Questions related to these topics should have no bearing on your ability to do the job; therefore, they are considered inappropriate. Consider how you would respond to questions regarding:

- Marital status
- Family plans or number of children, ages and child care
- Physical or medical information
- Criminal records unless security clearance is necessary
- Your religion, race, or sexual orientation
- Rental or ownership of your home
- Spouse's occupation
- Your maiden name
- Age; e.g., "When did you graduate from high school?"

Thinking through these sorts of difficult questions can make all the difference in keeping your cool during an interview. When the interview is over, you can decide whether or not you think the employer acted deviously or simply made an honest mistake.

HOW TO RESPOND:

Using the following examples, how would you answer these inappropriate questions? Here are sample answers to help you craft an appropriate response.

Q: "How do you feel about working in a predominately white/African-American/Asian/Latino environment?"

A: "I enjoy working with skilled and diverse team members in a friendly, supportive environment."

Q: "Do you have any disabilities?"

A: "I can assure you that I am able to perform the essential functions of this job."

Q: "How would you feel about reporting to a younger supervisor?"

A: "My main goal is that my supervisor and I respect and support one another so that we can have a productive working relationship."

Q: "Will your fiancé/wife/husband object to you relocating?"

A: "Relocation will not be a problem for me." (assuming it is not)

Q: "Do you think your family will interfere with your job performance?"

A: "As you can see from my work history, I manage my time well. I am punctual and always complete my work assignments within an appropriate time frame."

If you feel that you have been asked a question that is illegal, unethical or inappropriate, immediately contact a career counselor and discuss the issues in confidence.

RESOURCES FOR ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND OTHER VARIOUS SITUATIONS

Books: *101 Great Answers to the Toughest Interview Questions*, *Delivering a Winning Job Interview: CliffsNotes*, *Naked at the Interview*, *National Business Employment Weekly: Interviewing (Wall Street Journal)*, and *Vault Case Interview Practice Guide* (Career Center Library and BIC)

Online Resources: www.jobsearch.com, www.rileyguide.com, & www.collegegrad.com

INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

A thank-you letter to the interviewer is expected and will always make a positive impression.

Mail it within 24 hours of the interview. If the company has not responded to you by the time they indicated, call to emphasize you are still interested and inquire if a decision has been made.

WHY SEND A THANK YOU LETTER?

Many employers have confessed to being influenced positively by receiving a thank you letter from a candidate. A letter:

- Demonstrates Respect
- Makes You Stand Out
- Reinforces Qualifications
- Can Include Points You Forgot to Make
- Demonstrates Communication Skills

WHAT TO INCLUDE:

- Thank the employer for his/her time
- Communicate your interest in the position
- Reiterate why you are the best person for the job
- Mention any topics or unique conversations that you had during the interview that might make you stand out from other candidates

Thank you letters should be handwritten or typed. If you learn that the employer is making a decision in a day or two, then e-mail may be your best option.

SAMPLE THANK-YOU LETTER

Box 751576
Southern Methodist University
Dallas, TX 75275

October 1, 2005

Mr. Andrew Miles
Personnel Director
ABC, Inc.
2000 Walnut Grove Lane
Dallas, TX 75000

Dear Mr. Miles:

It was a pleasure to meet you yesterday and learn more about ABC, Inc. The training program for your entry-level personnel staff is comprehensive and would provide a challenging opportunity. I believe my leadership experience and my educational background have prepared me for your management training program.

Thank you for an enjoyable interview. Please feel free to contact me at 214-768-3489 or by e-mail at kjones@mail.smu.edu. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[Sign name here]

John Doe

LETTERS OF ACCEPTANCE/DECLINE

When you are offered a position, it is recommended that you follow-up with a letter of acceptance or decline. The letter should be short and professional and should include the position offered, your acceptance or decline, and your plans for the future. See the examples below to help you craft an appropriate letter.

EXAMPLE ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Southern Methodist University
PO Box 1939
Dallas, TX 75275

December 2, 2003

Martha Matthews
President and CEO
Cyber Globe Industries
1000 Pilgrim's Highway
Austin, TX 70000

Dear Ms. Matthews:

I am writing to confirm receipt of your letter offering me a position in Cyber Globe Industries' management training program at an annual salary of \$XX,XXX. I am very pleased to accept the offer and am proud to have been selected for the program.

I will contact your office for details on when the training sessions begin. Thank you for the offer and for your consideration throughout the past few weeks.

Sincerely,

Shawna Banks

Shawna Banks

EXAMPLE DECLINE LETTER

Southern Methodist University
PO Box 1939
Dallas, TX 75275

December 2, 2003

Martha Matthews
President and CEO
Cyber Globe Industries
1000 Pilgrim's Highway
Austin, TX 70000

Dear Ms. Matthews:

I respectfully decline your offer for the Personnel Trainee position. I appreciate your interest and consideration but have elected to accept an offer from another firm.

I was very impressed with Cyber Globe Industries and hope to have further contact with the company as my career progresses.

Thank you again for your time.

Sincerely,

Shawna Banks

Shawna Banks