

INTERNSHIP GUIDE:

Internship Search Strategies & Tips

Information On:

- ◆ interviewing strategies & questions
 - ◆ informational interviewing
 - ◆ research & development
 - ◆ cold calling
 - ◆ networking

... and so much more...

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Tips For Researching, Developing and Choosing Internships That Meet Your Career Goals

An internship is a short-term work experience in a professional environment where the emphasis is on learning vs. earning. You will learn new skills, gain insider contacts and references, as well as clarify or confirm your career goals.

Many employers expect to see evidence of at least two practical training opportunities on your resume – internship, volunteer position, part-time job – no matter what your major you should have experience related to your field of interest. Once you decide to build your resume with more than McJobs and campus activities, follow these steps:

- **Make an appointment to meet with a Career Advisor** (GSU 309 / X4287). Utilize the Career Services Office to assist in learning the details of the search process.
- **Discuss** with your faculty/academic advisor about how an internship can fit into your academic schedule.
- **Define your goals:** decide what type of internship you would like – begin your search with self-assessment and an inventory of your skills, values, and interests. Determine your geographic preferences and define the type of work you want to do within your field of interest (for example, if you want to work for a minor league baseball team, your focus could be in writing, media relations, promotions, sales, finance....) Determine what you hope to accomplish from this internship (for example, do you want to learn more about a career field? Develop specific skills? Choose a major? Make decisions concerning graduate or professional schools?) Think about the skills you would like to develop or refine.

Prospective employers will want to know about your career plans, your academic work and extracurricular activities, in addition to what attracted you to their line of work.

- **Research your internship prospects:** a good place to start – Career Services (GSU 309) for a list of online employer directories, internship links and occupational information. Review various sources of internship development including: friends, family, previous employers, professional organizations, faculty, employer databases, web resources, newspapers and journals, recruiting events (fairs, networking socials...). Always research the internship, company, industry... before you accept the invitation to interview.
- **Explore your options:** your internship search will take more time than you expect. Commit a few hours each week and note application deadlines. Securing an internship is your responsibility.

Internship Time Line

Fall Semester Internship	April application process
Spring Semester Internship	October application process
Summer Semester Internship	February-April application process

- **Develop your resume and cover letter:** have your resume critiqued by a CareerAdvisor – workshops and individual appointments are available should you need assistance).
- **Implement your internship campaign:**
 - Network: talk to friends, faculty, family, alumnae, former employers... Attend career/ internship fairs. Search the internet. Participate in an informational interview.
 - Career Services Library: the Library houses internship and industry-specific directories, various job/internship searching resources as well as online information and databases.
 - On-line directories and organizational web sites: identify employers of interest and go directly to the best public source of organizational information. Follow-up by e-mail or phone – “I would appreciate it if you would put me in touch with someone who might advise me regarding a potential internship within your company?”
- **Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up:** follow-up each resume and cover letter with a phone or email. Ensure your resume has been received and reiterate your interest in the position and continue to contact them each week until you know the next step in their hiring decision.
- **Develop your interviewing skills:** make an appointment with a Career Advisor to review your interviewing skills and/or participate in a mock interview. Review handouts, especially sample interviewing questions. Also, be prepared to ask your own questions and evaluate the internship during this process. Review the web site of any organization you intend to visit – even for informational interviewing. Be sure you know what they do and what challenges face them. Develop questions to ask during the interview (for example, will the internship allow me to do the type of work I’m interested in? How hands-on will it be? What types of projects have interns typically completed? May I speak with former or current interns? What kind of supervision will I receive?). Dress professionally. Express your enthusiasm for the internship. Ask, “What is the next step?” before you leave the interview. Clarify if the employer requires a transcript, list of references, application, or other documents – if so, send anything requested immediately. Send thank you notes, be patient, and follow-up again.

Questions to ask yourself when selecting an internship

1. What kind of experience will this internship provide and what skills will I develop?
2. Will my internship be targeted to a specific area? What area?
3. Do I prefer my internship to be with a large or small company?
4. Am I interested in this experience because it is convenient?
5. What are the professional responsibilities and expectations of my internship supervisor?
6. Will completing this internship broaden my knowledge in my field of interest and enable me to market myself more effectively upon graduation?
7. What is important to me upon completion of the internship? Developing a particular skill set? Being paid for my efforts? Narrowing my career focus? Employer name recognition on my resume?

- **Evaluate internship offers:** weigh factors such as job content, training, supervision, location, compensation, contacts, and prestige of the employer (but remember, a great name doesn't necessarily mean a great internship).

Internship Interviewing: 5 dimensions to help you evaluate offers

1. Training opportunities: "What sort of training do you provide to interns?". Company sponsored training will not only serve you well in your internship, but it will help you determine whether you've chosen a path that is right for you. Try to uncover as many specific examples of past behavior as possible.
 2. Exposure to senior management: "How much contact will I have with top executives?"
 3. A company-wide orientation: a good orientation will allow you to gauge the culture of the company and determine if your personality is in sync with its philosophy. A company-wide orientation is a holistic introduction to the entire organization – you may miss the big picture and never see how your department or function interacts with other areas of the company. A good orientation should also expose you to the economy's place within its industry and the US economy. Another goal is to meet interns in other disciplines. Network with these peers – they may be your business contacts, future customers, sounding boards and possibly even references.
 4. Break geographic barriers: some of the best internships are being offered in small towns, hundreds of miles away from large cities. Try to keep an open mind about location of internships. The work experience you gain will affect your career much more than the geography.
 5. Hiring data: "What percentage of interns have you hired on permanently after graduation and why?" Although the answer may be helpful, don't base your impression solely on this number.
- **Accept** the internship you are interested in pursuing. If registering for credit, make sure you have signed up for the appropriate course and discussed your decision with your advisor.
 - **Make the most of your internship experience!**

**An internship is a short-term work experience where the emphasis is on learning.
Make sure you choose one that fits your career goals.**

University of Hartford
www.hartford.edu/career

Making Contact With The Employer

Once you've:

- Identified your selling points and
- Focused on a target position or industry and
- Researched & identified a list of companies that are a good match,

you're ready to make contact with the employer.



CALL-WRITE-CALL Model

1. Call and verify the name and title of someone in the company who might be able to hire you.

- in order to do this you must inquire about a specific type of job – if you call and ask if they have any openings, you will not seem like a promising candidate.

"Hello, I'm..."

"I got your name from/by..."

"I'm interested in a position as ..."

"Who would be in charge of that department?"

- if you don't know anyone in the company at all, when you first call ask for someone by title, such as "I need to write a letter to your head of accounting. May I have the correct spelling of his or her name, please?"

2. Send a cover letter and resume to the decision maker.

- in the letter be sure to say that you're looking for a particular kind of job, and then state you'll be calling them within 48 hours.

- for sample cover letters and resumes, see Career Services, GSU 309 or visit www.hartford.edu/career

3. Call again, this time asking for the decision maker by name and title.

- if anyone asks why you're calling, you can truthfully say, "She's expecting my call."

- when you reach the decision maker, a sample script:

"Hello, I'm..."

"I got your name from/by..."

"I'm interested in ..."

"Would you have a moment to discuss this with me?"

Problems you might encounter:

• Gatekeepers

• suggestions on how to get around the gatekeeper:

1. call until you get through to the decision maker, at least once per day, at least 10 business days in a row.
2. call early, late, and during lunch time.
3. walk in and ask if the decision maker would have "just a moment" to speak with you.

• Objections

They say: "I'm too busy."

You say: "This will only take a moment"

They say: "We're not hiring"

You say: "That's ok, I know you know a lot of people in this field, and I just want to know what ideas, leads, or referrals you might have for me. This will only take a moment."

They say: "Send me a resume and I'll think about it."

You say: "Let me tell you what's on it" or "Do you have time available when we can review it together?"



• Voicemail

• leave your name and number and then say, "But you don't need to ring me back. I'll call you again." Then do so, until you reach them.

Source: www.jobsmart.org

Additional Tips Worth Mentioning

- **Setting/environment when placing your call is vital. Make sure you're in a quiet room away from distractions.**
- **Set realistic goals.**
- **Expect rejection but don't take it personally.**
- **Keep variety in your routine:**
 - Read about your career field
 - Make social contacts
 - Attend career fairs & professional development events
 - Vary phone contact with employer visits
 - Network



NETWORKING & INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING



Networking is the process of developing and maintaining relationships with people who work in your field or area of interest. It enables you to get information about the marketplace and broaden your circle of contacts and acquaintances. Some studies estimate that up to 75% of jobs are found through networking.

Objectives:

- ☑ To gather information about your industry in general and your target organization in particular
- ☑ To increase your number of contacts, obtain referrals and enlarge your network in order to get as many people involved in your job search as possible
- ☑ To practice your communication skills
- ☑ To gain exposure through brief meetings to gather information, so that if a position becomes available, your contact person will consider you

Many people feel uncomfortable about contacting others for information that could be useful in their job search because they don't wish to impose on others. However, if you make it clear that you are approaching contacts to gather information and receive advice, rather than asking for a job, most people will be willing to meet with you.

Start building your network by listing all the people you know. List can include:

Family	Neighbors
Friends	Friends of Friends
Past Employers	Professors/Advisors
Classmates	Alumni
Professionals (doctor, lawyer...)	

A network is meant to be "worked". This means repeated contacts will be made to network members. It is essential to have some method of keeping track of contacts both with the original network and with the expanded network as it grows.

Networking 101

Eight Steps to Effective Networking

1. **Identify your career objectives:** networking is a great way to gain information, but if you don't know what you're looking for neither will your contact.
2. **Create your contact database.**
3. **Do your homework:** do your research on each new contact – learn all you can about the contact and his/her world.
4. **Make the first move:** call, send a letter or email explaining who you are, your connection with the contact, and your purpose.
5. **Follow up:** never expect the contacts to call you.
6. **Run the interview:** be clear and honest about what your needs are.
7. **Send a thank-you note.**
8. **Maintain connections.**

Strategies

Start by contacting the people with whom you are most comfortable. Prepare your opening sentences and practice them before calling. A typical opening could be:

"Hi _____, thanks for taking/returning my call. _____ suggested I contact you because of your extensive experience in (career or industry). I am interested in finding out more information about the work you do. I'd like to make an appointment to meet with you briefly to hear your ideas and feedback about my strategy to market myself."

Before any informational interview, be sure to prepare a plan. Decide your purpose for conducting the meeting and identify the type of information you would like to obtain. Identify target occupations or employers by researching these areas thoroughly. Consider work environments, career areas and positions in particular organizations as potential areas to research.

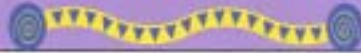
In addition to carefully planning the interview agenda, be sure to:

- ☑ Outline your employment goals and cite your accomplishments
- ☑ Mention your target industries and organizations – demonstrating that you have done your research
- ☑ Present your resume or strategy for marketing yourself and ask for feedback
- ☑ Seek names and referrals of key people you can contact
- ☑ Wear business attire
- ☑ Take notes during or after the interview so you can evaluate the information you receive
- ☑ Ask for names of additional people you can contact for information
- ☑ Express appreciation for the interview and strictly adhere to the time schedule
- ☑ Ask for a business card so you can have the exact spelling of the person's name and his/her title
- ☑ Send a thank you note as follow up

After the interview, take some time to evaluate your findings. Use this information to help refine your career interests and objectives. You also can use the network you have developed for potential contacts to whom you can send your resume when you are ready to apply for specific jobs.

Remember to call your contacts periodically to maintain the relationship and keep your name in their minds. If your contacts have agreed, send them an updated copy of your resume after you have incorporated their suggestions. Notify your main contacts when you accept a job, even if they did not directly help you find the position. Continue to network even after you have landed the job.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING (Interviewing for Information)



... the best way to find out about a job and to get a job is through people...



Informational Interviewing:

- ⊙ helps you to further refine your knowledge and understanding of the field you are exploring
- ⊙ enables you to develop social skills related to feeling comfortable and knowledgeable while you're being interviewed
- ⊙ creates the setting to develop contacts
- ⊙ is based on the premise that you have already read much of the written information related to a specific type of job
- ⊙ is NOT a job interview! It is to help you define your career options and research companies where you may want to work
- ⊙ is a meeting of usually 15-20 minutes with a person who has hands-on experience in the area you want to know more about

The Goal:

- ★ collect information
- ★ make contacts
- ★ determine whether you have made an appropriate match between your personal needs and your career goals

The Process:

1. identify an organization, job title, career path or person of interest to you . Do research so that you can speak intelligently to your contact
2. give a quick summary of who you are and what you want – ask them if this is a good time
3. confirm the person's job title by asking
4. sound enthusiastic
5. refer to the research you've already reviewed about this field or company
6. ask if you can have a specific amount of time to interview this person (15-20 minutes)
7. try to arrange the interview at the person's work site, so you can determine firsthand how it might feel to work there
8. listen attentively and respond with intelligent questions or comments
9. keep to your agreed upon time frame

10. dress professionally
11. be courteous and thank your interviewee, as well as follow up with a thank-you note

During the meeting you may ask for referrals and, if the person has time, a resume critique.

Example:

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a student at the University of Hartford. I got your name from the Career Advising Network. You're in a line of work that I'm interested in and I was hoping that you could help me gain some insights into the profession. I'm sure that my questions could be answered in a 10-15 minute informational interview.

Sample Informational Interview Questions:

What sets the company apart or distinguishes it from others in the same industry?

What are the projections for future development or new directions?

What are the qualifications for entry-level and experienced positions?

What are some examples of projects currently under way and problems currently being solved?

What is a typical week like?

Is there pressure? Routine? Variety? How much supervision is there? Do flexible work schedules exist?

What opportunities are available for advanced and/or on-the-job training? Is there a tuition reimbursement plan?

What other benefits are available? (Profit sharing, Child care facilities, Personal health services)

What suggestions do you have for an individual wishing to enter this field?

Could you refer me to someone else for more information about opportunities in this field?

How did you get into this field?

What percentage of your time is spent doing what?

What are the skills that are most important for a position in this field?

Why did you decide to work for this company? What do you like most about this company?

What do you like and dislike about working in this industry?

How is the economy affecting this industry?

What are the professional associations related to this industry?

What advice would you give to me?

What related occupations might I investigate?



INTERVIEWING TIPS



1. Practice (practice, practice) interviewing prior to your interview – this includes researching the company (product lines, industry trends, competitors...) Suggestions: Mock and informational interviewing.
2. Image vs. Content: what you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Dress and carry yourself professionally.
3. Be on time (10-15 minutes early). Know the interviewer's name and how to pronounce it. Know the company. Know your career goals and the position you are interviewing for. Use a firm grip when shaking hands and smile. When concerned about whether to shake hands or sit, follow the interviewer's lead. Maintain appropriate eye contact, posture, and voice tone. Avoid nervous mannerisms.
4. Let the interviewer take the lead in the conversation. Listen carefully to the interviewer's questions. Silence is ok - it adds reflection and thought.
5. Emphasize your qualifications - never say "I need a job" or "I'll do anything." Discuss matters only related to the job.
6. Give specific examples to communicate your skills: prepare 5 or more success stories (instances when you used those skills successfully – include concrete, quantifiable data and provide specific details). Bring a show & tell item (portfolio, writing samples...) Emphasize what you can do for the organization. Maintain a conversational flow. Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question. Don't apologize or offer excuses for shortcomings (low GPA) – strive to keep the focus on the positive. Be enthusiastic, sincere, honest and realistic. Keep answers brief and concise (2-3 min per question).
7. Ask the interviewer questions based on your research about the position and organization. Be prepared with a list of questions covering things you want to know about the job, company, its policies and practices. Don't ask about benefits or salary – wait for an offer to discuss it.
8. Put yourself on their team – "As a member of _____, I would carefully analyze _____ and _____." Show that you are thinking like a member of the team.
9. In concluding the interview, be alert to signals from the interviewer that it's time to end the session. Express a desire for the position and inquire about future contact/next steps to the hiring process. Thank the interviewer for his/her time and consideration and let him/her know that you are looking forward to hearing from him/her. Ask for a business card.
10. Make notes immediately following the interview for future reference and to improve your interviewing technique. Note any follow up action you should take and put it on your calendar.
11. Send a follow up thank-you letter immediately (within 24 hours) after the interview. Restate your skills and stress what you can do for the company.

Physical Attributes which influence an employer's opinion of a candidate's suitability for employment *

- nontraditional interview attire
- unusual hairstyles
- nontraditional hair color
- body piercing
- handshake
- obvious tattoos
- earrings on male recruits
- beard
- mustache

** level of influence varies by type of organization*

Top Skills & Qualities of the Perfect Candidate

1. communication skills (verbal and written)
2. teamwork skills (works well with others)
3. interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
4. motivation/initiative
5. strong work ethic
6. honesty/integrity
7. flexibility/adaptability



Job Outlook 2004

The Telephone Interview

- ◆ Most companies use them as a regular part of the hiring process
- ◆ Reasons for telephone interviews:
 1. "screening call" from HR
 2. "Ad Response" from hiring manager
 3. "In-depth" telephone interview
 4. "recruiter interview"
 5. "committee telephone interview"
- ◆ Tips to help you improve your odds: ideas to review prior to the interview
 1. concentrate less on your feelings of inadequacy and more on how to make the other person feel at ease
 2. smile over the phone
 3. know you are judged by the same criteria used in an in-person interview
 4. it's critical you speak succinctly about your past experiences and accomplishments
 5. "dead air" is your responsibility
 6. listening skills are essential
 7. get yourself situated
 8. don't talk about issues related to potential compensation, company benefits ...



Interview Etiquette

Meals, Manners & Interview Tips

Interviewing can be even more stressful when you are expected to eat and talk at the same time. One of the reasons employers take candidates out to lunch or dinner is to evaluate your social skills and to see if you can handle yourself gracefully under pressure.

Interview Dining Tips

- Check out the restaurant ahead of time. That way you'll know what's on the menu, what you might want to order, locate restrooms and available parking.
- Be polite. Remember to say "please" and "thank you" to your server and your host.
- Is the table full of utensils? Start at the outside and work your way in. Your salad fork will be on the far left, your entrée fork will be next to it. Your dessert spoon and fork will be above your plate.
- Liquids are on the right, solids on the left. For example, your water glass is on the right and your bread plate on the left.
- Put your napkin on your lap once everyone is seated. Keep elbows off the table, sit up straight and don't talk with your mouth full.

During The Meal

- Don't order messy food—pasta with lots of sauce, chicken with bones, ribs, big sandwiches.
- Don't order the most expensive entrée on the menu.
- Order food that is easy to cut into bite-size pieces.
- Eating soup: spoon it away from you.
- Break your dinner role into small pieces and eat it a piece at a time.
- If you need to leave the table, excuse yourself and leave your napkin on the seat or the arm of your chair.
- When finished, move your knife and fork to the "four o'clock" position so the server knows you're done.
- It is wise not to drink alcohol during an interview. Interviewing is tough enough without adding alcohol to the mix.
- Remember to try and relax, listen, and participate in the conversation.

After the meal, put your napkin on the table next to your plate. Let the prospective employer pick up the tab (bill & tip). Say "thank you" and follow up with a thank you note.

Source: www.about.com

INTERVIEWING QUESTIONS

Consider the employer's perspective when preparing and presenting yourself to a prospective employer. Be prepared to address:

- **Can you do the job** - be prepared to explain how your education and experience relate to the position.
- **Do you really want to work for this company** - be prepared to explain why. One of the biggest turn-offs for employers is applicants who aren't sure why they want to work for their company.
- **How interested are you in this kind of work** - employers can get an idea of your interest in a field by how focused your career plans are. Good indicators are how your previous positions (summer employment, leadership positions in on-campus organizations, internships, work experience) relate to your career plans.
- **Do you have a good work attitude** - how motivated, team oriented, and conscientious an employee will you be?
- **Will you fit into the company** - this is determined in a combination of your manner, background, and appearance. Questions a recruiter might ask to decide your fit: What kinds of people do you feel comfortable with? What kind of environment do you work best in?

Sample Questions:

1. How would you describe the ideal job for you?
2. Explain your understanding of this job's responsibilities.
3. In what ways have your previous positions prepared you to take on greater responsibility?
4. How would a previous employer describe you? How would you describe yourself?
5. Why did you apply for this position? What interests you most about this position?
6. What do you know about our company? Why are you interested in joining our organization?
7. How will this position help you to reach your short or long-term goals?
8. What is unique about yourself? What can you do for us that someone else cannot do?
9. What do you think were your previous supervisor's strengths? Weaknesses?
10. How will you establish a working relationship with the employees in this company?
11. What is your role as a group member? Define teamwork for me.
12. Recall for me a time when those around you were not being as honest or direct as they should have been. What did you do?
13. Sell me this pen.
14. Tell me about how you dealt with an angry or frustrated client/customer.



15. Tell me about an important goal you set for yourself recently. What have you done to reach it?
16. Describe a conflict between you and a previous supervisor and how you solved it.
17. Why did you choose your particular field of work? What qualification do you have that make you feel that you will be successful in your field? What personal characteristics are necessary for success in your chosen field?
18. Do you think that grades should be considered by employers? Why or why not? Is your GPA an accurate reflection of your abilities?
19. How do you think college contributed to your overall development? How has your college experience prepared you for a career in _____? What is the most important thing you have learned in your education?
20. An overwhelming, time-sensitive task has just been assigned to you. How do you plan strategy for meeting deadlines?
21. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career? What achievements have given you the most satisfaction?
22. Describe a situation in which you worked under a lot of pressure.
23. How would you describe your work ethic?
24. What do you think your employer's obligations are to you?
25. How do you define professionalism?
26. What do you believe are your strongest skills and aptitudes? How would they help you in this position?
27. Which characteristics of yours do you think need to be strengthened? Why?



TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

Many individuals freeze up when an interviewer says, "Tell me about yourself." This is a terrific opportunity to present your experience, skills and capabilities in a positive way. Below is a sample "Tell me about yourself" statement format:

My name is _____ and I am a senior at the University of Hartford majoring in _____ . Most recently I, _____ (talk about any experience related to the position you are seeking. This may include co-ops, internships, volunteer experience, summer jobs, class/club projects...) My areas of strength include _____, _____, _____ (highlight your skills that you know are essential to the position and desired by the employer.)

Questions To Ask Employers



1. What are the responsibilities and accountabilities of this position?
 2. How well is the position defined? Can its duties be expanded or changed?
 3. What is the history of the position? Why is it vacant?
 4. As you think about the position, what aspects of this job would you like to see performed better?
 5. What are the key challenges of this position?
 6. How would you describe the ideal candidate? What personal qualities, skills or experience would help someone do well in this position?
 7. What are the company's short and long range objectives?
 8. Where does the company excel? What are its limitations?
 9. How will I be evaluated, and in what time frames? What performance standards will be used?
 10. With whom would I be working? Who would be my supervisor? What is the department's environment like? Will I have the chance to meet people who would be my co-workers and tour the area where I would be working?
 11. When will a decision be made about this position? What is the next step in the decision-making process?
 12. What kinds of assignments might I expect within the first six months on the job?
 13. Does your company encourage professional development and/or further education? What types of learning opportunities are there?
 14. What do you like best about your job/company? How do you view this company as a place to work?
 15. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
 16. Is there a lot of team/project work?
 17. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position? Is a car provided?
 18. In what areas of the company do you expect growth? Does the company have plans to re-structure in the near future?
 19. What type of training do new employees receive? What are your expectations of new hires?
 20. Can you describe a typical work week in the department?
-

Company Name _____

Date _____ Interviewer _____

Important Points I Want To Cover

- ♥ _____
- ♥ _____
- ♥ _____
- ♥ _____
- ♥ _____

Questions I Want To Ask

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Notes/Next Steps

Thank You Note(s) Sent _____
date

Important Dates

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

HOW TO HANDLE MULTIPLE INTERVIEWS

As a part of the hiring process, you're likely to be interviewed by a number of people in an organization. This makes your job of preparing more difficult. Here are some techniques to help you prepare for team interviews.

- ◆ Learn How Each Person Fits Into The Organization And Tailor Your Comments Accordingly
- ◆ Research The Various Areas Of An Organization And Use This Information To Take Your Interview Conversations To A Deeper Level
- ◆ Vary What You Say To Each Person, Don't Just Repeat The Same Information To Each Interviewer – They May Compare Notes
- ◆ Offer Each Interviewer An Opportunity To Obtain Additional Information
- ◆ Comment Favorably On Prior Contacts – You May Tell Later Interviewers About Your Very Positive Reaction To What You Learned In Your First Interviews
- ◆ Thank Each For Their Time – At The End Of The Interview And With A Thank You Note
- ◆ Keep Up Your Energy Level And Enthusiasm
- ◆ Assume All Contacts Are Evaluative

Source: Career Opportunities News

TIPS ON HOW TO EXPLAIN POOR GRADES

The extent to which poor grades harm your chances of getting hired depends on how you explain those grades. Sample explanations that are accepted by recruiters:

- ◆ The class was outside of your major. Cite the grade yourself, then highlight how you plunged into the unfamiliar rather than playing it safe.
- ◆ You had genuine personal problems. Perhaps you had to work long hours to pay tuition, or your parents were getting divorced at the time. Explain that surviving that period demonstrates your maturity and perseverance, since you stuck to your academic duties despite the pressures and anxieties.
- ◆ You changed majors. If after several semesters – and some lousy grades you decided to become an accountant instead of a physicist, say so. It demonstrates your flexibility and self-awareness.
- ◆ Your grades improved. Getting off to a rocky start isn't unusual, so if you can point to a positive academic trend that followed, you'll show off your resiliency.
- ◆ Your leadership skills/activities are impressive. Accentuate skills you learned by heading class projects, captaining a team or running a campus publication. What recruiters will see is evidence of leadership, innovation and an ability to organize and manage time.

Employers do look at grades, still believing that your GPA is a measure of how well you've developed the skills they're hiring you to use in your job. A GPA can reflect your work habits but it can also reflect a lousy first or second year in college. Grades can be influenced by a host of factors and good recruiters realize this. GPA is important, to a degree, but if you can't demonstrate strong interpersonal skills, leadership or an ability to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, you won't be successful in the workforce.



Behavioral Interviews

Interviewers may ask you to describe/demonstrate specific examples of situations or behaviors that you have had in school or on the job. When answering such questions, it is important to explain the *situation*, give an *example*, and state the *result*. You must be able to talk about specific experiences when you demonstrated such competencies the employer is looking for. The purpose of a behavioral interview is to allow the interviewer to determine whether you possess the competencies to perform a particular job.

HOW TO PREPARE

- ◆ Determine what competencies the employer is looking for: read through the job description, research the company and the position title.
- ◆ Come up with examples of how you've demonstrated those competencies on past jobs, internships, co-ops, volunteer experiences, class/club projects...

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- ◆ Describe some actions you've taken in various jobs you've held which demonstrate you're an effective employee.
- ◆ Describe how you would apply your education and/or experience to this position. Give specific examples of what you would do and why.
- ◆ Describe for me things you have done in the past which demonstrate that you are a reliable employee.
- ◆ What is something you've done recently which demonstrates your initiative and willingness to work?
- ◆ Describe a situation where you and another person were having trouble communicating with each other. How did you resolve it?
- ◆ Think of a day when you had many things to do and describe how you scheduled your time.
- ◆ Describe working on a project with a team of people who didn't always see eye to eye.
- ◆ Give an example of when you had to make a decision quickly.
- ◆ Have you ever had a conflict with a customer, client, coworker or supervisor? What was the outcome?

For additional sample questions, visit Career Services at GSU 309 or www.hartford.edu/career

Dressing for the Workplace

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 businesses and technical settings, when it comes to your appearance, conservative and conformity are the order.

Each company will have its own guidelines, so it's 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's better to be conservative than too flashy. Your appearance should enhance your presentation, not overwhelm it.

MEN:

- Two piece suit
- Solid colors & tighter-woven fabrics are safer than bold prints or patterns
- Bright ties bring focus to the face, but a simple pattern is best for interviewing
- Wear polished shoes with sock high enough so no skin is visible when sitting

WOMEN:

- A suit with knee-length skirt and a tailored blouse or pant suit
- Accessories should be kept simple. Basic pumps and modest jewelry and makeup help to present a professional look

One accessory that is recommended by company representatives is a briefcase

A FINAL CHECK:

- Make sure your hair is neatly trimmed (good idea to stop in the restroom before your interview)
- Be VERY conservative with makeup (including nail polish), perfume, cologne, & aftershave
- No runs in stockings or holes in socks (make sure socks match suite color); shoes polished
- Avoid excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing pierced jewelry; watches are good!
- No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint

Illustration Samples

Business Casual for Women



Business Casual for Men



Sample Thank You Letter

Your Name
Address
City, State & Zip
Phone Number
Email Address

Date

Name of Interviewer
Title
Company Name
Address
City, State & Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. (last name of interviewer):

It was very enjoyable to speak with you yesterday about the management internship at Smith & Company. The internship, as you presented it, seems to be a very good match for my skills and interests. The creative approach to account management that you described confirmed my desire to work with you.

You were extremely thorough in explaining your company's trainee program. Now that I have a better idea what the position entails, I am even more certain that I would be an outstanding member of your team. My solid education in management and the fact that I am successfully working my way through college show a strong work ethic and determination, two qualities you said were essential to success at Smith & Company.

I appreciate the time you took to interview me. I am very interested in an internship with Smith & Company and I look forward to hearing from you about this position.

Sincerely,

Your Signature
Your Name (typed)

Sample Thank You Letter

Your Name
Address
City, State & Zip
Phone Number
Email Address

Date

Name of Interviewer
Title
Company Name
Address
City, State & Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. (last name of interviewer):

Thank you for the time you took to interview me for the seminar leader position this morning. After our interview, I'm convinced that I have the three qualities you mentioned you were looking for in your workshop/seminar leaders.

During our meeting, you expressed some concern that I have not worked in a personnel department, however, I would like to stress that I have participated significantly in the hiring process for my sorority and have a solid record of achievement in my human resources classes.

As for your requirement for public-speaking experience, my experience as leader of new student orientation groups at my college for three years and outstanding grades in public-speaking classes qualify me nicely.

Finally, I have enclosed some writing samples to further demonstrate the third requirement, my communication skills.

Thank you again, Ms. Mellish, for this wonderful opportunity to interview for the seminar leader position. I promise I won't let you down if you give me the chance to show you what I can do. I eagerly await the next step in the process.

Sincerely,

Your Signature
Your Name (typed)

Source: Dynamic Cover Letters for New Graduates, Ten Speed Press, 1998, Katharine Hansen

Sample Cover Letter Guide

Your Name
Your Address (the address listed on your resume)
Your City, State & Zip
Your Telephone Number

Date

Name of Individual
Title of Individual
Company Name
Address
City, State & Zip

Dear Mr./Ms.(last name of individual):

First Paragraph: (Why you've chosen this employer/ position)

- State your purpose for writing, such as the specific position, the type of work or general vocational area in which you are interested in.
- Indicate where you learned of the opening, if appropriate.
- Talk about the employer in a positive, specific way.

Second Paragraph: (Why the employer should hire you)

- Elaborate on your interest in, or knowledge of, the job, the company, product or services.
- Discuss your qualifications and attributes which you think would be of greatest interest to the employer, as well as the job you're considering.
- Point out related experience and special training.
- Try not to repeat the same information that is in your resume. Rather, highlight or give examples as to how that information is relevant.

Third Paragraph: (What your next step is)

- Close by specifying area you are interested in.
- Indicate that you would like to meet the employer and that you will telephone to arrange a specific interview appointment at the employer's convenience.
- Be clear and assertive about your goal to generate a response.
- Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Handwritten Signature
Your Full Name (typed)

Comments: this outline can be modified to more effectively state your message. For example, you may have more than three paragraphs, you may use a bullet format, or you may include information in a different paragraph than the one suggested. Remember to be brief and to the point.

LUCY LUCKY

11 Nevernever Lane
West Hartford, CT 06117
(617) 222-1111 cell
Lucky@aol.com

July 26, 2004

Mr. Michael Smith, Director
Human Resources Department
Community Solutions, Inc.
136 Collins Street
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Mr. Smith:

With two years previous experience in client relations and customer service, I would bring more than the average intern to an internship in human resources at Community Solutions, Inc. My education in Business Management and Sociology at the University of Hartford have also provided me with knowledge and experience in the management and human services areas of human resources.

As a Medical Claims Services Representative for Peter Pan Partners, I gained solid experience in reviewing claims, explaining benefits and maintaining over 300 personnel files using Excel. In addition, I assisted with the new employee orientation process by preparing a one hour informational introduction presentation using PowerPoint. I would like to use the solid background of my experience and education to make a contribution to the employees of your company.

I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about a fall internship within your department. I will call you next week to confirm receipt of the enclosed resume and to schedule a meeting where we can discuss further my qualifications. Should you need additional information, I can be reached for the remainder of the summer at the number or email address listed above. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to our conversation.


Sincerely,

Lucy Lucky



A Sample of Websites to Assist
You
with Internship Development &
Research:

- www.hartford.edu/career
- www.internships.com
- www.wetfeet.com
- <http://online.onetcenter.org>
- www.retailology.com
- www.collegejournal.com
- www.rileyguide.com
- www.collegegrad.com
- www.rsinternships.com
- www.vault.com
- www.monstertrak.com *
- www.getthatgig.com
- www.campusinternships.com
- www.internships-USA.com *
- www.careersearch.net/hartford *
- www.acinet.org
- www.internsearch.com



* Must call Career Services X4287 for password; for additional sites and resources, visit Career Services, G-SU 309 or visit us online at www.hartford.edu/career