

Job Searching and Interviews

Ellen Pate

Director of Career Services

Southern Wesleyan University

<http://www.swu.edu/careerservices>

864-644-5149

epate@swu.edu

How can Career Services help me?

- 1- How to initiate a job search
- 2- Some of the most frequently asked questions at interviews
- 3- What should you know about your potential employer
- 4- What kinds of questions can you ask?

Consider Your Strategy

- Participate in **Mock Interviews or Virtual Interviews**. Find instructions here:

[Practice Interview on Career Beam](#)

- Establish your [SWU Career Link](#) account
 - access internships & work opportunities
 - Post résumé for employer review

Top 5 Career Beam Tips for Interviews

- **1. Use Stories - They're Memorable!**
- **2. Relate Answers to the Position!**
- **3. Build Rapport!**
- **4. Be Positive!**
- **5. Be Brief!**

1. Use Stories - They're Memorable!

- Review your resume bullets and identify great accomplishment stories that relate to each bullet. Be able to tell the potential employer the background of the situation, the actions you took to address/remedy the situation, and the positive results you achieved (remember the acronym STAR - Situation, Task/Goal, Actions, Results - in developing your stories and always include that information.) Commit your resume to memory (along with the accomplishment stories to go with them) and always have an extra copy or two with you during the interview.

2. Relate Answers to the Position!

- Tell the Interviewer how your background and experience will benefit the employer and fulfill their needs/solve their problems. Find ways to incorporate in your answers how you meet the job requirements or are able to take on the job responsibilities based on your prior education and experiences.

3. Build Rapport!

- It is just as important for you to get the Interviewer talking and sharing information as it is for you to be prepared to answer questions and share information. Be prepared to ASK questions of the Interviewer regarding the company, the products/services, the department, the position, the job responsibilities, etc. The more you can get the Interviewer to share with you, the more quickly you will build rapport with them (remember - people hire people they like).

4. Be Positive!

- Don't volunteer negative information with the Interviewer and never talk negatively about a prior employer or job. If you are asked a question that requires negative information like 'what is your greatest weakness,' take 10% of the time to share the weakness and spend 90% of your answer on what you've done to overcome the issue or weakness. Everyone makes mistakes and has weaknesses - it's what we do to overcome them that sets us apart!

5. Be Brief!

- The span of attention for most people is about 2 minutes, so craft your answers to stay within that timeframe. Continuously watch for visual clues from the Interviewer that indicate his/her attention and interest. If attention appears to be waning, wrap up your answer or pause and ask if you can provide more detail.

Four Common Interview Questions

- *Q: Tell me about yourself.*
- Q: What is your greatest strength (weakness)?
- Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?
- Q: Why should we hire you?

Q: *Tell me about yourself.*

- **TIP:** This is frequently the first question an Interviewer will ask. BE PREPARED! You'll want to be able to respond in 1-2 minutes with a clear summary of your background, experiences, and goals. You can refer to your summary paragraph on your resume or to your pitch/positioning statement for help in developing a quick, succinct overview/response.
- Keep in mind you are in the interview to discuss business (the open position) - and only business - don't talk about your personal life unless specifically asked. Make sure that your answer will present your skills/abilities/strengths/goals that relate to the position you are seeking. Include how these skills/abilities, etc. match the employer's current needs. Since this question is probably the single most asked question, develop a good, polished response. The question is designed to get you to talk. If you are well prepared, when you start talking and opening up, the interview will become less stressful and you will become more relaxed.

Q: What is your greatest strength (weakness)?

- **TIP:** When stating your greatest strengths, reiterate one of your most current/significant accomplishments that relate to the position you're discussing. Use a real life story to illustrate the strength described the Background of the situation, the Action you took and the positive Results you achieved.
- On the question of weakness, you should spend as little time as possible talking about the weakness and the majority of the time talking about how you've overcome the weakness. Weaknesses should always be developmental (things you can take a course or get more experience to improve) and not behavioral or personality based. Make sure the weakness you use is dated (old, you've overcome it) and **unrelated** to the position or its requirements. Always pause before answering a weakness question.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years?

- **TIP:** Before you script an answer to this question, think about what it is you hope to achieve from the current position and where you see yourself progressing next. Are you looking for advancement; to expand your knowledge; or something else?
- You might say something like *"After accomplishing the goals of this position, I would hope to grow into a role with more responsibility/variety/opportunity to learn and grow"* or *"In five years I would love to be in a position/role with the following types of responsibilities..."* You want your answer to convey your desire to advance in some way, shape or form - whether that is through promotion, expanded responsibilities, training in new areas, etc.

Q: Why should we hire you?

- **TIP:** You should reiterate all the reasons that you are the type of applicant that the company is looking for - sell yourself to the interviewer. Repeat your professional experience, education, and training that directly relate to the position, showing the Interviewer how you are the perfect fit for the position. Use stories to convey your past accomplishments and how they relate to the position. Use your resume as your interview script. Cite quantitative accomplishments and integrate great accomplishment stories to illustrate your point.

Why Attend Career Fairs?

- **Underclassmen:** To research career opportunities and potential employers.
- **Upperclassmen:** To investigate possible internships and/or full-time jobs.
- **Official Job Interviews do NOT take place at the Career Fair.** This is simply an opportunity; for students to meet with and preview potential employers.

Attire

- Women: Pant Suit, Nice Skirt/Slacks and Blouse
- Men: Button-up Shirt and Slacks



Career Fair

Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Dress appropriately
- Speak clearly
- Maintain eye contact
- Ask intelligent questions
- Prepare a one-minute “commercial” about yourself to share with employers

DON'T

- Grab the giveaways from the table
- Ask basic questions that could be answered by reviewing company material (website/brochure)
- Show up during the last 10-15 minutes of the fair
- Expect a personal response if you give a company your resume

One Minute Commercial

Fill in the Blanks

My name is _____ and I'm a senior majoring in _____.
I am interested in _____ and enjoy _____ and _____.
Being involved in _____ has allowed me to develop _____ skills.
I would like to apply those skills as a _____ and contribute to _____.

One Minute Commercial

Simple and Direct

My name is John Smith and I'm a senior majoring in Exercise Science. I am interested in sports and enjoy talking with people about fitness and playing team sports. Being involved in athletics has allowed me to develop teamwork and leadership skills. I would like to apply those skills as a Sales Associate and contribute to the success of your store.

Employers Evaluate Candidates on the Following:

- Resume/Application/References
- Appearance/Attire
- Posture/Eye Contact
- Handshake
- Interview
- Nonverbal Communication
- Information from other Sources

facebook

twitter

You Tube

Top Skills & Qualities of the Perfect Candidate

- Communication Skills
- (verbal & written)
- Honesty/integrity
- Interpersonal skills
- Strong work ethic
- Teamwork skills
- Computer Skills
- Detail oriented
- Leadership Skills
- Analytical skills
- Motivation/ initiative
- Flexibility/ adaptability

Source: Job Outlook,

National Association of Colleges and Employers

Standards

- Font (Arial, Times New Roman, Tahoma)
- Type Size (10-12 point)
- Type Enhancements (Bold, *Italics*, Underline)
- Page Length (1 for entry level)
- Paper Color and Type (white, ivory, light gray)
- Graphics (tasteful and conservative)
- White Space (plenty of it)
- First Person (Drop the “I”)
- Accuracy and Perfection – Proofreading
- Resume and Cover Letter should visually harmonize and compliment
- FOR RESUME SAMPLES GO TO
 - [Optimal Resume Samples](#)

Your Appearance

- A job applicant's **dress and grooming** are important and sometimes even **critical factors** in an employer's hiring decision.
- **95%** of employers interviewed said a jobseeker's **personal appearance** affected the employer's opinion of that applicant's suitability for a job.
- **91%** said they believed **dress and grooming** reflected the applicant's attitude towards the company.
- **61%** said **dress and grooming** had an effect on subsequent promotions as well.

What is your impression?



What is your impression?



What is your impression?



What is your impression?



Posture and Eye Contact



Your HANDSHAKE



Your Nonverbal Messages Say A Lot

During the Interview



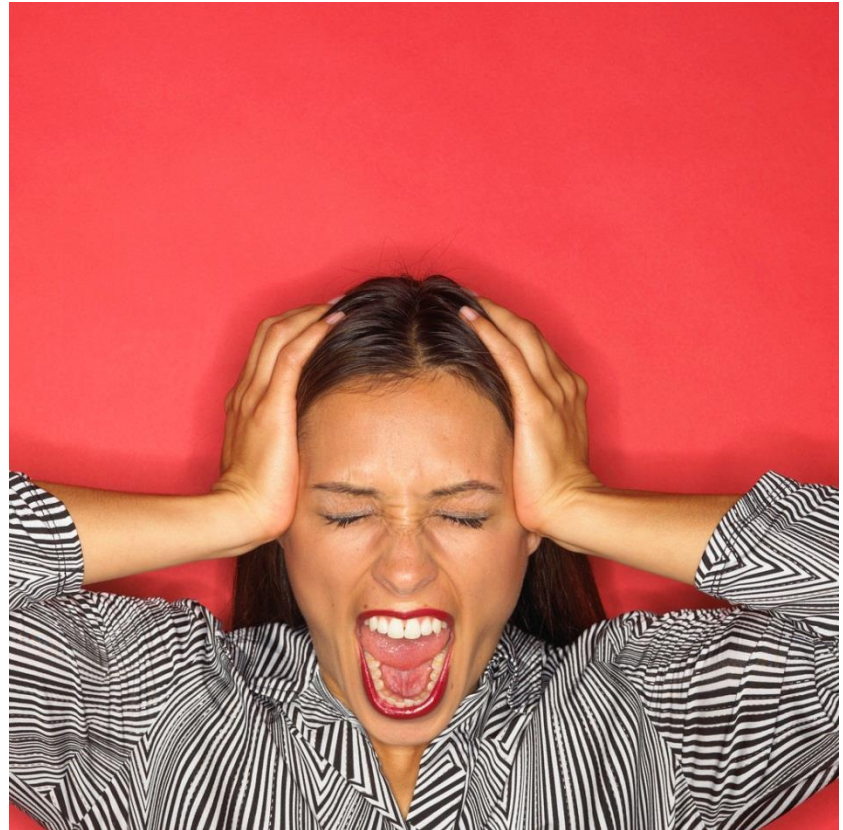
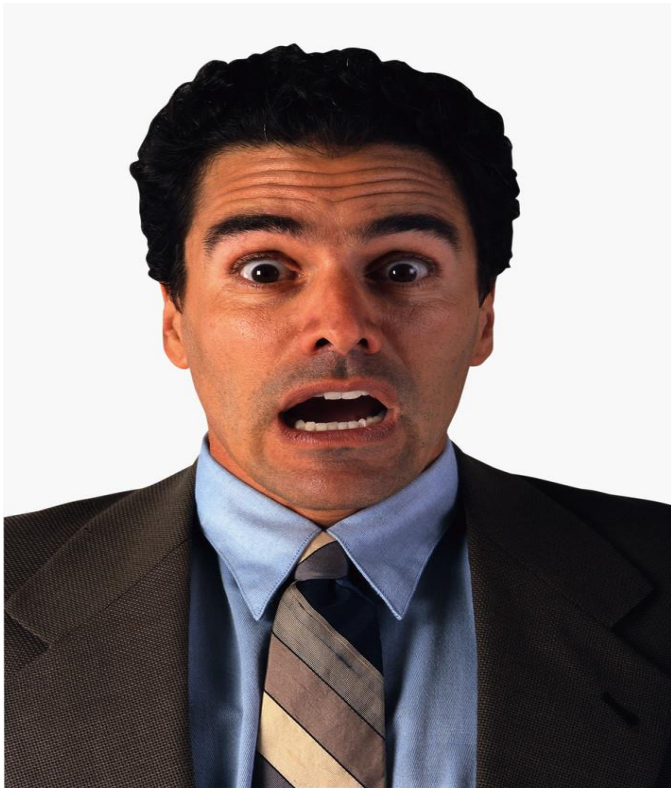
...and on the Job!



Information Employers Get from other Sources

What would we see if we
“Googled” you?

Did you really want the employer to
hear *that* outgoing voicemail
message?!



Notice the Difference

Text

dear mr. jones thank u 4
talking to me bout
summer jobs w/ jones,
inc. im xcited bout
workin there & ill send u
my resume soon.

Email

Dear Mr. Jones,

Thank you for taking time to
talk with me about summer
job opportunities with Jones,
Inc. I am excited about the
possibility of working there
and I will send you my
resume soon.

Sincerely,
Your Name

Thank You for Participating!

(2005). *Build a network for work and life*. [Video recording]. Indianapolis: Jist.

Farr, M.J. (2002). *The Quick Job Search* (3rd ed.). Indianapolis: Jist.

Ludden, V. (2004). *Job Search Workshop*. Presented to Indiana Wesleyan University Business Department, February, 2003.

Wetterau, N. (2005). *Job Search Strategies Workshop*. Presented at Indiana Wesleyan University, March, 2005.