



To be able to “sell” yourself sincerely and eloquently to the interviewer, think about and prepare anecdotes about your prior accomplishments. These anecdotes are often called PAR or OAR stories as they refer to: a Problem or Opportunity you have faced, Attacked and successfully Resolved. It’s advisable to write out at least eight of these anecdotes, so when faced with an interview question you’re able to offer a situation from past experience which confirms for the interviewer that you have what it takes to carry out the job responsibilities.

Plan

Prior to the interview, plan what you will wear, how you will accessorize, think about your hairstyle. Know how you will get there – the mode of transportation and the time it takes. Add an extra ten minutes to be sure you’re at the location early.

Prepare

During the interview, convey motivation by showing your enthusiasm and utilizing active listening skills, including paying close attention to the interviewer’s questions. Be sure to make a good impression on whomever you meet at the company – after all, people talk to each other! Answer interview questions with concrete examples (your PAR stories) based on your past experiences or training. By doing as much preparation as possible prior to the interview, you’ll go a long way towards alleviating some of the natural anxiety of the situation and be better able to take control of your performance.

There are a variety of interview styles and you should be prepared for all of them.

The most common has been the “generic” interview in which you’re asked standard questions about yourself, why you would like to work for the company and your past experiences.

Currently, the most prevalent interview style involves asking behaviourally-anchored questions. The “behavioural” interview is based on the premise that your past experiences are the best indicators of future performance. These types of questions provide you with an excellent opportunity to apply your PAR anecdotes.

At times you’ll have one-on-one interviews and at other times you might find yourself in a chain of interviews (one following another) or being interviewed by a panel. It’s advisable, if you’re not told when you’re called about attending the interview, to ask what the format will be.

The job interview normally has three phases. The initial questions about how you got there or the weather are “ice breakers” and not to be dwelt on with lengthy conversation. The next part is the important content portion which concentrates on evaluating you against the elements deemed essential for success on the job. The final stage is the wrap up. Prepare a couple of questions to ask at this point to indicate your interest, such as about the company’s future plans, or what a typical day looks like. Also be sure to confidently let the interviewer know that you have what is needed to carry out the job. If you’re not told, don’t forget to ask when a decision will be made.

After the Interview

Following the interview spend some time reflecting on the questions asked, where you did well and where you might have responded differently under ideal circumstances. Send a “thank you” note acknowledging the time the interviewer offered you, reiterate your enthusiasm in working for the company, reinforce responses you were proud of, emphasize the skills you bring to the company and attempt to correct possible interview errors. End by indicating that you will follow up.

INTERVIEW ESSENTIALS

- Dress appropriately - a notch above what someone else working at the company would wear on a daily basis.
- Perfect a firm, confident handshake.
- Eye contact equals honesty - look into the interviewer’s eyes until you can see their eye colour.
- Employers are typically seeking to know four things about you. That you:
 1. Understand the job that needs to be done;
 2. Know how to do the job ;
 3. Want to do the job – are motivated ;
 4. Will do the job better than someone else;
- Organizations hire for attitude and train for skill.
- Working is really about trading your skills for pay.
- When offered coffee or other drink it’s best to politely decline.
- It’s perfectly acceptable to repeat a question for clarification purposes and/or to take time to think about a response.
- Send a “thank you” note after the interview and follow up.

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