

Types of Interviews

- **Screening:** A preliminary interview either in person or by phone in which a company representative determines whether you have the basic qualifications to warrant a subsequent interview.
- **Traditional:** The traditional job interview uses broad-based questions such as, "Why do you want to work for this company?" and "Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses." Employers are looking for the answers to three questions: does the job-seeker have the skills and abilities to perform the job; does the job-seeker possess the enthusiasm and work ethic that the employer expects; and will the job-seeker be a team player and fit into the organization.
- **Structured Interview:** The interviewer explores certain predetermined areas using questions established prior to the interview. The interviewer has a written description of the experience, skills, and personality traits of an "ideal" candidate. Your experience and skills are compared to specific job tasks. This type of interview is very common and most traditional interviews are based on this format.
- **Unstructured Interview:** Although the interviewer is given a written description of the "ideal" candidate, in the unstructured interview, the interviewer is not given instructions on what specific areas to cover. This type of interview will usually feel more like a conversation where the interviewer and candidate take turns asking questions and providing information.
- **Behavioral:** The behavioral job interview is based on the theory that past performance is the best indicator of future behavior, and uses questions that probe specific past behaviors, such as: "Tell me about a time where you confronted an unexpected problem," "Tell me about an experience when you failed to achieve a goal," and "Give me a specific example of a time when you managed several projects at once." Job-seekers need to prepare for these interviews by recalling scenarios that fit the various types of behavioral interviewing questions. Expect interviewers to have several follow-up questions and probe for details that explore all aspects of a given situation or experience. Recent college grads with little work experience should focus on class projects and group situations that might lend themselves to these types of questions. Internship and volunteer work also might provide examples you could use. Job-seekers should frame their answers based on a four-part outline: (1) describe the situation, (2) discuss the actions you took, (3) relate the outcomes, and (4) specify what you learned from it.
- **Group or Panel:** Two or more company representatives may interview you simultaneously. Sometimes, one of the interviewers is designated to ask "stress" questions to see how you respond under pressure. A variation of this format is for two or more company representatives to interview a group of candidates at the same time.

- **Case:** The case interview is one in which you are introduced to a business dilemma facing a particular company. You are asked to analyze the situation, identify key business issues, and discuss how you would address the problems involved. Case interviews are designed to scrutinize the skills that are especially important in management consulting and related fields: quantitative skills, analytical skills, problem-solving ability, communications skills, creativity, flexibility, the ability to think quickly under pressure, listening skills, business acumen, keen insight, interpersonal skills, the ability to synthesize findings, professional demeanor, and powers of persuasion.
- **Multiple:** Multiple interviews are commonly used with professional jobs. This approach involves a series of interviews in which you meet individually with various representatives of the organization. In the initial interview, the representative usually attempts to get basic information on your skills and abilities. In subsequent interviews, the focus is on how you would perform the job in relation to the company's goals and objectives. After the interviews are completed, the interviewers meet and pool their information about your qualifications for the job.
- **Situational:** In situational interviewing, job-seekers are asked to respond to a specific situation they may face on the job, and some aspects of it are similar to behavioral interviews. These types of questions are designed to draw out more of your analytical and problem-solving skills, as well as how you handle problems with short notice and minimal preparation.
- **Stress:** The stress interviewing technique is typically used only for positions in which the job-seeker will be facing stress on the job, and the interviewer wants to see how well you can handle the pressure. The key to surviving stress interviews is to remain calm, keep a sense of humor, and avoid getting angry or defensive. The interviewer may try to stress you in one of several ways, such as asking four or five questions in a row, acting rude or sarcastic, disagreeing with you, or simply keeping you waiting for a long period. Don't take any of these actions personally. Simply stick to your agenda and showcase your skills and accomplishments calmly. Better, try taking back control of the interview by ignoring the stress.
- **STAR:** Companies use the STAR (Scenario/Topic, Action, Result) approach to evaluate candidates on their communication and analytical skills, as well as their judgment. Reviewing and evaluating past decisions and performances are paramount in this type of interview. When answering a question posed by an interviewer, you must assess the interviewer's goal in asking the question and answer accordingly. By using the STAR formula, you will be able to provide important information to the employer