

# MOCK INTERVIEW

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# Practice Makes Perfect

*Mock Interviews Can Help You Prepare for Your “Real” Interview*

## WHAT IS A MOCK INTERVIEW?

- A mock interview, also known as a practice interview, is a simulation of an actual job interview. It provides you with an opportunity to practice for an interview and receive feedback.
- A mock interview helps you learn how to answer difficult questions, develop interview strategies, improve your communication skills, and reduce your stress before an actual job interview.
- A mock interview is practice for the real thing, and we all know practice makes perfect.

## HOW TO SCHEDULE/PREPARE FOR A MOCK INTERVIEW:

- Be sure to take your mock interview as seriously as you would an actual interview.
- Review the tips and suggestions highlighted throughout this guidebook.
- Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early, and

bring your resume and any other materials you would bring to a real interview.

- Be sure to dress in professional interview attire.

## PURPOSE:

- Mock interviews are a great way to become familiar with

commonly asked interview questions and interview etiquette.

- Mock interviews allow you to practice and improve your interviewing skills and effectiveness.
- Mock interviews teach you how to market your skills and qualifications.

## VIDEOTAPE:

Your mock interviewer can record your interview. After the interview you will have an opportunity to watch the recording with your interviewer, to ensure that you are making the most effective presentation of your skills, abilities, and professionalism.

# What to Expect: Start to Finish

Your mock interview experience begins the moment that an interviewer greets you in the waiting area. You should start with a firm handshake and an appropriate greeting of the interviewer, using his or her name.

You and your interviewer will go into an interview room. The mock interview itself will last approximately 20 minutes, and the interview is then discussed and critiqued for approximately 30 minutes.

At the end of the mock interview you have the opportunity to talk with the interviewer about any particular questions or concerns you have about the interviewing process. Furthermore, you will receive honest and helpful feedback from your interviewer.



## PREPARE YOURSELF

- Interviews can be a very intimidating task if you are unprepared.
- Preparation and practice are key ingredients to a successful interview!
- You must be able to talk about yourself with confidence.
- Exploring and understanding your personality and work outlook allows you to answer interview questions as effectively as possible.
- It is vital to understand your attributes and personality so that you can convey those positive qualities to an interviewer.
- A worksheet is provided in order to help identify different aspects of your character (see page 39). When answering the questions be sure to also analyze the information on your resume, and ask others who know you well.

## KNOW THE FACTS

Be sure you are fully prepared for interviews by completing the worksheets on pages 39 and 40 in this book.

## YOU WILL BE EVALUATED ON THE FOLLOWING:

**Preparation:** Prepare questions for your interviewer and research the position and the company or organization for which you are interviewing.

**Appearance:** Dress appropriately for the interview.

**Attitude:** Your attitude toward work and working with others is crucial in the hiring process. Be sure to convey an attitude that is enthusiastic, sincere, and genuine.

**Body Language:** During the interview, be aware of your eye contact, subtle use of hands while speaking, good posture, etc.

**Greeting/Introduction:** We recommend that you stand to greet your interviewer with a handshake, using his or her name. Also, make good eye contact with the interviewer, smile, and be professional.

**Oral Communication:** Speak clearly and concisely. Try to think out your response before answering a question.

**Responses to the Interview Questions:** Do your research, and **practice, practice, practice!** Know your skills, and be able to express them to the interviewer.

*MNTC's Employment Services helped me focus my resume, and gave me the interview skills I needed that allowed me to get a job that I am truly happy doing."*

— Shirlene G.

# Know Thy Self

## 1. Character traits or skills I have that are job related:

\*List of traits can be found on our website.

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## 2. Examples of experiences I have had that demonstrate the above traits/skills:

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## 3. List three to five accomplishments that would be of interest to the person interviewing me:

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## 4. What are the three most important things I want the interviewer to know about me?

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## 5. What concerns might an employer have about me and what will alleviate those concerns?

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# Know the Employer

- Do your homework!  
Be prepared for an interviewer to ask questions about his/her organization.
- Researching the company/organization shows genuine interest in the career opportunity, and it allows you to gain valuable information.
- By learning about the company/organization, you are able to see if it is a place where you would like to find employment.
- Also, this time spent will help generate questions to ask the employer during the interview process.
- The Internet has a lot of information to offer, and is a good place to start your research.
- A worksheet is provided with questions to begin your company research (see page 40).
- The worksheet will prepare you for possible questions that employers may ask.

# Employer Facts

*This guide will help you prepare and show your potential employer you took the initiative to get to know them.*

1. How long has the organization been in operation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How large or small is the organization? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Is it a public or private organization? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Has the organization been in the news lately? For what reason(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are the services/products/programs this organization provides? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Who are its competitors? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How is it doing relative to its competitors? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What are the organization's mission, vision, and core values? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What else is the organization known for (e.g., community involvement, supportive of families, relaxed atmosphere, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What challenges/difficulties does this organization face? How can I help solve them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Company assigned to research:** \_\_\_\_\_



# Behavior-Based Interviewing

## WHAT IS BEHAVIOR-BASED INTERVIEWING?

Behavior interviewing is a new style of interviewing that more and more organizations are using in their hiring process. This method of asking questions focuses on using specific examples of past behavior as a means of predicting future behavior. The STAR Method will help you respond to these types of questions.

## S.T.A.R. METHOD

**Situation** Describe the situation.

**Task** What needed to be done?

**Action** What did you do?

**Results** What happened?

## IMPORTANT POINTS

- Responses need to be specific and detailed. Tell briefly about a situation that relates to the question. Include the task, what you did, and the positive result or outcome.
- The interviewer can ask more questions such as “What were you thinking at that point?” or “Lead me through your decision process.”
- Always listen carefully to the question, ask for clarification if necessary, and make sure you answer the question completely.
- When preparing for the interview, identify examples of situations where you have demonstrated the behaviors desired by a company/organization.
- Prepare success stories. The stories should represent your skills, qualities, and characteristics. Always give examples of your strengths and successes.
- Refresh your memory regarding your achievements in the past couple of years. Use examples from past internships, classes, activities, team involvement, community service, and work experience.
- In addition, you may use examples you are especially proud of, such as: winning a marathon race, exhibiting paintings in an art show, running for student government, etc.

# S.T.A.R. Method Worksheet

*To begin this exercise it will be helpful to identify your target job. Develop 10 S.T.A.R. scenarios keeping in mind the 10 qualities employers seek. Remember to be specific and quantify when you can.*

## 10 QUALITIES EMPLOYERS SEEK:

1. Interpersonal skills
2. Honesty and integrity
3. Teamwork
4. Communication skills
5. Strong work ethic
6. Motivation and initiative
7. Flexibility
8. Problem-solving skills
9. Technical skills
10. Organizational skills

**Your Target Job:** \_\_\_\_\_

### EXAMPLE:

**Question:** Tell me about a time when you provided exceptional customer service?

**Situation:** Discuss a specific situation or problem that you encountered.

“When I was working at Embassy Suites, I was responsible for booking reception rooms for special events. A woman called two weeks before her daughter’s wedding to cancel her reservation for the reception room due to a death in the family.”

**Task:** Explain the task that you had to complete or the ideas you used for resolving the problem.

“The customer was obviously very upset and I knew it was my job to carry out the proper procedures for canceling a room, as well as provide excellent customer service and put her mind at ease about the reception arrangements.”

**Action:** Tell specific actions which you took, steps you followed, obstacles you had to overcome, etc.

“Deposits are generally non-refundable due to the loss of revenue, but since the event was still 2 weeks away, I felt certain I could book another event. I checked with my manager to see if we could refund the customer’s deposit if I was able to do so. We were able to rebook the room with another event, return her full deposit, and I assured her we could reschedule the reception whenever the family was ready.”

**Result:** Highlight outcomes, goals achieved, accomplishments, etc.

“The customer wasn’t expecting to get any money back and was very surprised and relieved. She wrote a very nice thank-you letter to my manager complementing the way I handled the situation and my manager commended me for taking initiative with the customer.”

**Question #1:** Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #2:** Describe a time when you were asked to keep information confidential.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #3:** Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment when solving a problem.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #4:** Give me an example of an important goal which you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #5:** What have been some of your most creative ideas?

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_



**Question #6:** Tell us about a difficult experience you had in working with details.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #7:** Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #8:** Give an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #9:** Describe the most significant or creative presentation that you have had to complete.

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_

**Question #10:** What was your most difficult decision in the last 6 months? What made it difficult?

S \_\_\_\_\_  
T \_\_\_\_\_  
A \_\_\_\_\_  
R \_\_\_\_\_



# Close the Interview

*Wrap up the interview like a PRO!*

As the interview is winding down, the interviewer will inevitably ask if you have any questions. Not having any is an unacceptable position to take and will certainly ruin your chances of getting to the next step. Asking pertinent questions shows that you have prepared for the interview and are knowledgeable and interested. Prepare a list of questions and follow the five steps in the Call-Back Close, which will come in **“handy”** when you want to end your interview with confidence.

## APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What characteristics do the individuals who are successful in this position possess?
- Could you describe the normal daily routine for this position?
- Is there a training period? What does it involve? Are there opportunities for professional development?
- How would my performance be evaluated? How often? By whom?
- For a list of questions to ask employers, visit our website at [mntechnology.com/employmentservices](http://mntechnology.com/employmentservices).

## CALL-BACK CLOSE

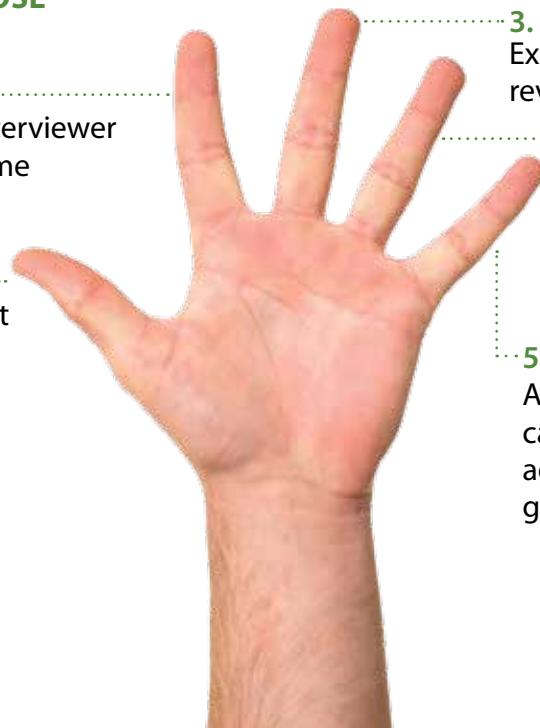
**2. INDEX** .....  
Thank the interviewer for his/her time

**1. THUMB** .....  
Ask Questions: At least three and not about salary

**3. MIDDLE** .....  
Express interest and review qualifications

**4. RING** .....  
Arrange a reason and a time to call back

**5. PINKY** .....  
Ask for a business card, say thanks again, and say good bye



# The Call Back Close Script



**Interviewer:** Do you have any questions you'd like to ask?



**Applicant:** Yes, I made a list of a few questions I wanted to be sure to ask. As a part of my research, I learned that your company has been in business for over 50 years. That is impressive! Are there offices located outside of Oklahoma City?



**Interviewer:** No, we're locally owned and have chosen to keep our operation here.



**Applicant:** I see. How long have you been with the company and, if you don't mind telling me, what do you think is the best part about working here?



**Interviewer:** Well, I've been here just over 12 years, and I like the way the company is run. It's a real "family" kind of business, and they treat their employees well.



**Applicant:** That's the kind of place I would like to work with! I do hope you'll consider me as a qualified applicant as you make your decision to hire. My training at Moore Norman Technology Center has prepared me to do just the job you have advertised, and I'm excited about the possibility of putting those skills to use in your company.



**Interviewer:** We have had a lot of applicants, but you've done well in this interview. We may be calling you back.



**Applicant:** That would be wonderful. I do want to thank you for taking time out of your day to interview me. It has been a great experience. Would there be a good time to call and check on the status of the position?



**Interviewer:** I imagine we will be ready to make a decision sometime after Wednesday of next week. You can call any time after that.



**Applicant:** Great. Well, I want to thank you again. By the way, do you have a business card?



**Interviewer:** Sure. Here you go.



**Applicant:** I look forward to hearing from you!

## Interview Checklist ✓

- Confirm the date, time, and location.
- Review the company's website and any other literature.
- Generate quality questions to ask based on what you've read and heard. Don't just ask questions for the sake of asking them. Make them count!
- Review your resume again to make sure everything is accurate and that you're prepared to answer any questions pertaining to it.
- Make sure your interview outfit is ironed, your hair is neat and your shoes are polished. For more information on appearances visit
- Prepare and practice your answers for possible interview questions.
- Do NOT be a "no-show."

# Interview Tips

- Have a positive attitude. Keep all of your answers as positive as possible and pay attention to your non-verbals (i.e. eye contact, voice projection, and posture).
- Express your qualifications. Create a list of adjectives to describe yourself. Think of examples that demonstrate these adjectives. Use these adjectives and examples to tell the employer about yourself.
- The first few minutes of the interview are the most important. This is when you really want to sell yourself and get the interviewer interested in you. Having a set agenda of what you want to get across during the interview will help you package yourself and your qualifications.
- Always try to relate what you are saying and how it can benefit the company/organization. Be familiar with the employer prior to the interview so you can know what type of person they seek and what the position requires.
- Show enthusiasm during the interview because only the top 10 to 20 percent of candidates do.



By failing to prepare,  
**you are preparing  
to fail.** — Benjamin Franklin

## Interview Do's and Don'ts

DO

- **DO PREPARE!**
- **DO** answer questions honestly, thoroughly, and sincerely.
- **DO** be polite, tactful, and sincere. Eye contact is also important, and a smile is a must.
- **DO** dress neatly, appropriately, and professionally.
- **DO** practice the closing suggested in this guide.
- **DO** have a small portfolio to keep pens, extra copies of resumes, and a reference sheet.

DON'T

- **DO NOT** try to tell the interviewer what you think he or she wants to hear.
- **DO NOT** display a negative or arrogant attitude.
- **DO NOT** be late.
- **DO NOT** forget to follow-up.
- **DO NOT** say negative things about past employers or experience.