

# Interviewing

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# Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to:

- Describe different types of interviews.
- Provide tips on:
  - Pre-interview preparation
  - What to do during the interview
  - Commonly asked interview questions
  - Post interview actions



# Interviews

Interviews give companies and individuals the opportunity to trade information and determine if there is a common mutual fit for both parties.

A favorable interview and a well-designed resume increase your opportunity to earn a position. Unlike some instances in the military, you are not **placed** in a position you've earned — instead you must compete for the position.

**Note:** The interviewing process can take a few days to multiple months to complete.



# Types of interviews

Just as positions vary from company to company, so too do the different types of interview. To be fully prepared, you should be familiar with and knowledgeable of the following types of interviews:

**Traditional interviews** ask a series of basic questions about the candidate and sometimes questions about experience.

**Behavioral interviewing** is a technique where an applicant is asked to describe past behavior. Doing so helps to identify how the candidate would perform in a given situation. Behavioral interviews may also include a blend of traditional questions.

**Group interviews** are used to understand how candidates behave and stand out among the other candidates.

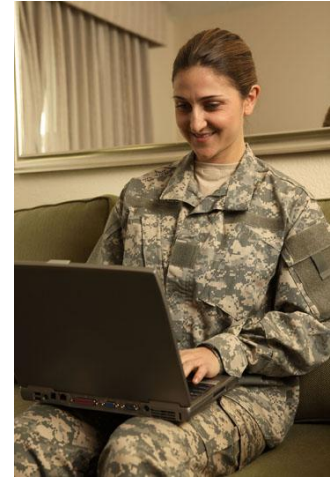
**Job fairs** are a key opportunity for job seekers and the employers to interact personally. It is your chance to create a memorable first impression. [Review](#) the Bank of America sponsored job fairs to learn more.

**Note:** In some instances, a behavioral or skills-based assessment (similar to a screening) may be required before a candidate is eligible for an interview.

## Before the interview: Screening

Screening is a method used by some companies to filter the best fit candidates. Some positions require screening to determine if a candidate possesses the minimally acceptable qualifications for a position.

The screening process may be in-person or automated through a series of questions (targeted at availability of hours, experience or salary to name a few) and typically occurs prior to entering the official hiring process.



# Before the interview: Preparation

Before you interview for a position, whether on the phone, in person or during a career fair or informational session, you should:

- **Research the position and company** — Identify how the position fits within the larger company. Look into whether the company provides informational sessions or marketing materials that showcase the company's talents and scope.
- **Identify your skills/accomplishments** — Create a list of your top five qualities that match the needs of the position.
  - **Note:** Preview the [Showcasing Your Skills on a Resume](#) self-study guide for additional support with highlighting skills.
- **Practice** — Rehearse your responses to commonly asked interview questions (discussed later on), as well as situational (behavioral) type questions.
- **For phone interviews** — Ensure you will be in a place with no distractions and you are able to hear well.
- **Rest** — Be sure to get a good night's sleep the night before the interview.

# Before the interview: Preparation, continued

Follow these tips for things to **do** before the interview:

## Things to do before the interview

- Make sure to bring:
  - Address and name of contact
  - Notepad and pen
  - Copies of your resume and letter(s) of recommendation
  - List of questions you want answered during the interview
- Turn off your phone and/or other technology devices.
- Prep yourself to translate your military experience into a civilian setting.
- Write down key numbers, such as how many troops you led, the size of the payroll you ran or the amount of money allocated to your unit.
  - Example: Led five men in the maintenance of \$200M worth of equipment.

# Before the interview: Preparation, continued

Follow these tips for things to **avoid** before the interview:

## Things to avoid before the interview

- Tobacco products (Be careful of the effects of using tobacco before an interview; it may leave an unpleasant odor.)
- Perfume/cologne (Make sure it is not overpowering as many people are allergic to certain scents.)
- Food or drink of any kind
- Clothing that exposes piercings or tattoos
- Bringing friends or family to the interview
- Use of the 24-hour clock, military terms and acronyms
- Stiff or rigid body language



# During the interview: Preparation

Interviews offer you a chance to showcase your skills/accomplishments and prove to employers the value you offer their company. During the interview, it is important to:

- **Dress neatly and professionally** — Refer to the [Dress for Success Quick Reference Card](#).
- **Make a good first impression** — Arrive five minutes early; however, don't arrive too early (more than 15 minutes before the interview). (Remember the interview starts as soon as you walk into the building.)
- **Show energy** — Smile, retain eye contact and shake hands firmly (but not aggressively).
- **Stay calm** — Listen carefully before you answer each question and pause to think before providing a brief and honest answer.
- **Interact with the interviewer** — Ask the interviewer about the position and the company. Choose your questions based on the tone of the interview.
- **Be natural / be yourself** — Try to see the people interviewing you as equals. You should limit the use of “Yes, ma’am” and “No, sir” when answering questions.



# Commonly asked questions

Most of the interview will consist of the interviewer asking you questions. As you respond, be sure to speak positively about previous employment and/or employers.

Commonly asked questions	Preparation for response
“Why do you want to work here?”	In response, having researched the position and the company, name several reasons why it is a good fit for you.
“What are your strengths?”	Highlight your strengths, such as being responsible, dedicated, hard-working, eagerness to learn, calm under pressure and so forth. Tie your strengths into the needs of the position.
“What are your weaknesses?”	Talk about how you overcame a difficult situation and what you learned from it. Do not give a negative answer, such as, “I have a problem focusing on boring tasks.”
“Why should you be selected over other candidates?”	Acknowledge that there are other qualified candidates interviewing for the same position and explain what sets you apart. Again, make specific reference to how your qualifications match the position.

**Ask yourself:** What additional questions might an interviewer have?

# After the interview: Preparation

When the question portion of the interview is complete, it is important to remember the interview process is not over. The steps you take at the end of an interview, or immediately after the interview, are equally as important as the interview itself.

Make sure you:

- Inquire about next steps (such as additional interviews).
- Ask when the employer plans to make a decision and when you can anticipate hearing back.
- Ask for a business card or contact information so that you can follow up.
- Thank the employer for their time and interest — smile and shake hands.
- Always follow up with a (proofread) thank you note (refer to the [Thank-You Notes Quick Reference Card](#)).

Dear Mr. Smith,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I really appreciated learning more about your company and the position. I am confident that my skills and experience will be a good fit for your team, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Thanks again,  
Joe Jones

# Final tips

Interviews are not only a chance for the company to get to know you, but also for you to get to know the company.

In summary:

- Prepare — do your research.
- Arrive on time and look professional.
- Be ready to discuss information provided on your application or resume.
- The interviewing/screening process is your opportunity to compete for a position.
- Give brief, but specific, answers using relevant examples.
- Avoid discussing personal issues.
- Make the most of your chance to ask questions. Prepare questions, in advance.
- Be aware of your tone of voice and body language.
- Be positive and smile.
- Follow up with a thank you note.
- Be patient, as the interviewing process takes time.



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