

# Purpose and Agenda

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**Purpose:** Provide you with tools and tips so you can improve your performance your during interviews

## **Agenda:**

1. About interviews
2. Positive mental state
3. Prepare for the interview
4. During the Interview
5. After the Interview
6. Exercise
7. Share experience
8. Takeaways

# About Interviews

Reasons behind interviews



The better the question. The better the answer.  
The better the world works.



# About interviews

## What is an interview?

*A meeting at which a person who is interested in getting a job or admitted in a post-secondary institution is asked questions to learn how well the person would be able to do it*

Meeting = Conversation

## Why interviews?

### Job Interviews

- ✓ Accurately assess competency, fit and motivation.
- ✓ To see if the candidate meets the requirements for the role
- ✓ Assess verbal communication skills
- ✓ Clarify the job role and responsibilities



### Post-Secondary Education

- ✓ Opportunity to learn more about you and your interests
- ✓ Knowledge about the career you are about to embark
- ✓ Assess ability to communicate clearly by verbally articulating your thoughts and ideas
- ✓ In-class discussion and collaboration are fundamental activities of the programs



Your objective is to convince the person that you are the best person

# Develop and Maintain a Winning Interview Mindset

Positive mental state



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# Positive mental state

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- ▶ It is critically important that you have a **positive upbeat emotional state** when you are going into an interview
- ▶ Think of this whole **experience as a positive thing** or at least an **interesting one**
- ▶ **Be present** and act like there is nothing else in the world you would rather be doing than talking to this person right now.



## Visualization exercise to get you on a positive mental frame before the interview

1. Close your eyes
2. Imagine that everything is going well
3. This interviewer liking you
4. The interviewer seems happy and offers you a job at the end of the interview / admit you into the program you applied for
5. You are incredibly happy with it
6. **Open your eyes and go for it!**

# Prepare your Interview

Roll up your sleeves and prepare well  
for your interview



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## How to prepare for a successful interview?

### 1. Research the company

- ▶ Spend at least 1 hour on their website
- ▶ Know exactly what they do, their values and relevant recent changes
- ▶ Think about how you can contribute to their mission

### 2. Review one more time the job post

- ▶ Identify the required and preferred qualifications
- ▶ Know the main responsibilities of the job

### 3. Know your resume

- ▶ Be prepared with descriptions of any volunteering as well as other experiences that prove your abilities (e.g. school clubs, family responsibilities)
- ▶ Remember start and completion dates

### 4. Prepare for most common questions

Reflect on the following questions (suggest writing the highlights of your responses):

- ▶ Tell me about yourself.
- ▶ What are you looking for in a position?
- ▶ What makes you the best candidate for this job?
- ▶ What has been your biggest achievement so far?
- ▶ When could you start working if you were selected for this role?
- ▶ What is your salary expectation?
- ▶ Do you have any specific questions about this role?



## How to prepare for a successful interview?

### 4. Practice interviewing

- ▶ Why? To practice how you will respond to them
- ▶ Mock Interviews with a trusted friend or with your parents
- ▶ Record a video and find ways to improve how you communicate (verbal and non-verbal)

### 5. Choose your interview attire

- ▶ Clothes are free of wrinkles and stains and they fit correctly.
- ▶ If unsure of the dress code, it is best to dress more professionally

### 6. Plan logistics

- ▶ Search the day before how to get to the location
  - ▶ Google maps search or go directly to the location
- ▶ Do not get on time, get there early!
  - ▶ Show up from 10 to 15 minutes earlier
- ▶ Print copies of your resume and references



# Post-Secondary Institution Interview Preparation

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## How to prepare for a successful interview?

### 1. Go over your application package

- ▶ Read again and internalize your personal profile

### 2. Review the institution's website and the program you applied for

- ▶ Find what is that you like the most about the program?
- ▶ Why did you choose the institution?
- ▶ Read about the things that the institution values the most in candidates

### 4. Review the instructions

- ▶ Date and time
- ▶ Format of the interview (in-person, pre-recorded video, virtual)
- ▶ Download and install any software, if needed

### 5. Take time to reflect

- ▶ Think about past challenges, achievements, strengths, and beliefs.
- ▶ Focus on what you learned from experiences

### 6. Rehearse your interview

- ▶ Record your interview, self assessed your performance and find ways to improve

# Virtual Interviews Preparation



## How to prepare for virtual interviews?

### 1. Test your technology beforehand

- ▶ Check the day before:
  - ▶ Internet
  - ▶ Camera, microphone, audio
  - ▶ Download any necessary software
  - ▶ Battery 100% or PC plugged

### 2. Limit distractions

- ▶ Find a quiet location
- ▶ Room that is clean and professional-looking
- ▶ Place your computer on a table or desk instead of your lap or couch
- ▶ Close all other browser windows and programs
- ▶ Silence all audible alarms and alerts
- ▶ Make sure there's good lighting in front of you
- ▶ Pets in a designated room



### 3. Wear professional attire

- ▶ Dress the same as you would in a face-to-face interview

# During the Interview



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# During the interview

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## Job Interview

- ▶ Make a good impression right away by being nice, pleasant, respectful, and cheery to everyone
- ▶ Shake hands, look them in the face and thank them for their time.
- ▶ Address the interviewer in a slightly formal way (e.g. Mr. Morris)
- ▶ Stay cool - manage your emotions
- ▶ Sound conversational and confident
- ▶ Win them over with authenticity and positivity
- ▶ Respond truthfully
- ▶ Keep your answers concise and to the point
- ▶ Do not speak negatively about any previous experience
- ▶ Ask questions to show interest
- ▶ Ask for next steps

## Post-Secondary Education

- ▶ Be clear, insightful, and complete
- ▶ Be genuine and unscripted
- ▶ Show your enthusiasm about the program and institution
- ▶ Demonstrate professionalism and maturity
- ▶ Confirm that you have understood the questions asked by providing relevant responses.
- ▶ Open questions, meaning that there isn't one correct answer.

# Body Language and Non-Verbal Communication



[Your body language may shape who you are | Amy Cuddy](#)

# Self-awareness of nonverbal cues

## Posture

- ▶ Upright posture communicates openness and strength of character
- ▶ Crossing of arms is very hostile and indicates unreceptiveness



## Eye contact

- ▶ Strong eye contact shows interest and confidence in their participation
- ▶ A candidate who avoids eye contact may be unable to drive processes or may have something to hide



## Hands

- ▶ Confident candidates may keep their hands in lap while occasionally using hand gestures
- ▶ Chopping or pointing motions exhibit aggressiveness



## Legs

- ▶ Restless legs could anticipate the candidate is uneasy
- ▶ Crossed legs may indicate that the candidate is disengaged



# Self-awareness of nonverbal cues

## Expression

- ▶ Excessive smiling, laughing and nodding appear patronizing
- ▶ Gazing aimlessly shows disinterest



## Attire

- ▶ Shows the candidates taste and judgment
- ▶ Awareness of professionalism



## Gestures

- ▶ Scratching an itch or biting fingernails may indicate nervousness
- ▶ Popping knuckles or twirling of hair could show signs of anxiety



## Manners

- ▶ Gum chewing, cell phone interruptions may indicate that the candidate is unsuitable
- ▶ Arriving late to an interview may show the candidate lacks punctuality



# After the Interview

Steps to do right after a job interview



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# What to do after the interview?

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## Job Interviews

### Send a thank you note

- ▶ Email or handwritten note within 24 hours of the interview.
- ▶ Express your appreciation for the opportunity to interview for the role and reiterate your interest in the position.

### Follow instructions

- ▶ If you were given any instructions, such as following up via email, follow them.
- ▶ Request clarification during your follow-up email.
- ▶ Send reference contact information

### Follow up

- ▶ **One week** after the interview and again after **two weeks**.

## Post-Secondary Institutions Admissions

- ▶ Be patient
- ▶ Check the admissions timelines dates

# Takeaways

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- An interview is really a conversation with another person(s) where you demonstrate your interest and capabilities for what you are applying for
- It is critically important that you have a positive upbeat emotional state when you are going into an interview
- Preparation is the best recipe to reduce your nerves during interviews
- Verbal and non-verbal communication is equally important
- Interview practice can boost your confidence during important interviews by helping you refine your interview skills
- Be yourself so you can have authentic conversations and showcase your full potential



# Annex 1. Checklist to evaluate your interviewing rehearseals

Fill in each box with either a Y (Yes) or N (No)

<i>Body</i>	Take:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Good Posture							
Good Eye Contact							
Appropriate Clothing							
Appropriate Hair							

<i>Movement</i>							
Good Face Movement/Expression							
Good Head Movement							
Hand Gestures							
Body Motion							
Moves Around the Room Naturally							
Voice volume							
Energy... Enthusiastic and Passionate							
Proper Breathing							
Variation In Tone/Conversational							
Pauses							
Speaking Speed							
Seems Confident							
Seems Comfortable							

<i>Message</i>							
Interesting Opening							
In the Moment, "Fresh"							
Verbal Tics (Ah, Um, Er, Like, Ya Know)							
Easy to Understand Message							
Good Transitions							
Boring							
Engaging							
Interacts with Audience							
Simple, Focused Message -- Identifiable Key Points							
Great Examples							
Relevant Stories							
Dialogue							
Good, Simple Words							
Changes Sentence Structure, Some Rhetorical Questions							
Biz Speak and Fillers, "Going Forward" "If You Will"							
Explains Benefits to Audience							
Calls for Action							
Strong Ending							

<i>PowerPoint</i>							
Good, Simple PowerPoint Slides							
Dumps Data Excessively							
Slide Management							
Worthwhile Pictures							
Utilizes Blank Screen							
Ignores Audience							

## Annex 2. Essential qualities that companies look for in candidates

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### Communication

- ▶ Communication skills are essential
- ▶ Attention to detail
- ▶ Capable of speaking their mind

### Positive attitude

- ▶ Linked to professionalism
- ▶ Carries over into the work place and into job performance

### Cooperation

- ▶ Ability to join a team and be part of the work family
- ▶ Teamwork is key to business success

### Goal-oriented

- ▶ Sees a new position as a challenge
- ▶ Fulfillment of a goal rather than means to a paycheck

### Flexibility

- ▶ Adapt to different circumstances and different people
- ▶ Ability to handle unforeseen events with calm and grace

### Dependability

- ▶ Complies with company rules and procedures
- ▶ Trustworthy with company resources
- ▶ Show up on time and give their all to every project

### Integrity

- ▶ Hand in hand with dependability
- ▶ Honest and upfront in all aspects of their employment

### Creativity

- ▶ Versatile team member
- ▶ Solve unexpected problems with confidence
- ▶ Apply skills to a variety of different situations

### Organization

- ▶ Exhibits strong organizational skills
- ▶ Doing many tasks at once does not mean doing them well

### Intelligence

- ▶ Confidence to think on their feet
- ▶ Always coming up with new ideas
- ▶ Innovative and adaptable to different surroundings