

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEWING

Practice, practice, practice is the key to successful interviewing. A student going to a job interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing.

1. Research the organization and the position; understand what that particular FW group or unit focuses on. There is abundant information about most organizations and/or supervisors on the web. Use the information when answering questions

Question: *Why do you want to work for us?*

Answer: *I am interested in helping conserve native Lahontan trout and I saw on the web that you have been working in trout recovery for 10 years...or Learning the ODFW stream survey protocol will help me assess riparian condition throughout my career in fisheries.*

2. Prepare

- Have an opening line to break the ice (weather, parking on campus....)
- Be prepared to share a brief summary of your background (why you are interested in FW, what class level you are, what your professional interests/goals are, what volunteer or work experience you've had). DO NOT assume that the employer knows anything about you
- Prepare several specific "success stories" that you can use in the interview
- Make a list of your skills, key assets and unique strengths
- Be prepared to discuss a weakness, in a positive way (e.g. *I have sometimes over-committed because I am so excited about getting involved in wildlife science*)
- Be prepared to share past experiences where you:
 - 1) used your talents successfully,
 - 2) worked effectively in a group or team setting,
 - 3) communicated ideas or information effectively, and
 - 4) handled conflict successfully. Provide examples to give concrete evidence of your strengths and skills
(see STAR technique below)
- Be concise. You have 2-3 minutes for each question and most interviews last 20 minutes

3. Image

- Look neat, clean and well-groomed; dress the part which is typically business casual (khakis and button-down shirt) or field professional (clean newer blue jeans and button down shirt)
- Use a firm handshake and address the interviewer by name if possible
- Make comfortable eye contact and sit upright
- Relax and smile, have a sense of humor. Appear alert and interested. Be aware of your non-verbal behavior (fidgeting, etc.)
- Answer questions with enthusiasm and motivation. Avoid "ums...". When finished with answer, remain silent
- Be sure of yourself but not over-confident. Express your desire to learn

- Be sincere

4. Follow-Up

- Thank the interviewers for their time
- Ask them a relevant question about the position or the work they do, not about pay or logistics (e.g. *What is the single largest problem facing you now? How is the current trout recovery program going? What special challenges or problems are involved in this job? What have other students gained from this job?*)
- Ask if you can provide additional information if you feel did not effectively answer a previous question.
- Ask for a business card
- Write a thank you note, mentioning a key point in the interview so that the employer remembers you
- Use the thank-you note to reiterate your interest

STAR technique to providing concise examples

Think of examples as short, informative stories which connect on gut level and help the employer will remember you.

Situation: Explain the background for the example you provide

Task: What was the project, assignment, or problem?

Action: What specific steps did you take to complete the action

Result: Explain the finished product (By helping monitor the fyke trap at the North Fork, I was able to save the District Biologist from travelling to the site every day.

MOCK INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Tell me a little about yourself and your background.

What are your long-range career goals in the field of fisheries and wildlife?

What do you consider to be your strengths and why?

What do you consider to be your weaknesses and why?

Tell me about a time when you made a decision you were proud of.

Tell me about a time when you helped resolve a group problem.

Give an example of where you had to analyze a problem, determine possible solutions and implement a solution with little or no supervision.

Describe a time when you had a miscommunication with a coworker or staff member? How did you resolve the situation?

If we come to the end of this interview with two equally qualified candidates and you are one of them, what can you tell me that would convince me to select you?

Do you have any questions for me?