



IIT Stuart School of Business
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

INTERVIEWING GUIDE

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BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Research the company:

This element of the interview is often overlooked.

- Researching an industry and company will allow you to more fully demonstrate your enthusiasm for the job.
- Researching the company and industry will help you become knowledgeable about the critical skills and abilities employers are seeking. You will therefore be able to talk about your skills and experience in the context of that specific organization.
- Finally, researching the company helps you to determine if this is the kind of place where you want to spend 40 hours a week.

Interviewers are impressed when you have conducted thorough research about their organization and when you ask informed, intelligent questions about the industry, organization and position.

Prepare and practice:

The interview requires that you can articulately and convincingly speak about your skills, knowledge, experience and education. In order to do this, it is a good idea to sit down and take an inventory of your accomplishments and successes. Use the attached "Accomplishment Inventory" to begin to think about how each of your experiences has helped you develop a specific skill.

Once you have a list of your accomplishments in front of you and the skills they demonstrate, you should begin to look over the attached list of sample interview questions, think about and practice your response to these questions. First write out your responses; then try to practice them aloud. Have family and friends ask you some of the sample questions and practice your responses. Schedule a mock interview at the Career Management Center to practice your responses in a simulated interview situation.

Make sure you have the appropriate attire:

What you wear to an interview will not get you a job.

However, it is in your best interest to make sure that how you present yourself does not impede your job search. Making a good first impression and looking professional and neat will only increase your chances of a job offer and demonstrate to the employer that you are serious about your interest in the position. What you wear will not guarantee employment, but looking professional can be the difference between you and another equally qualified candidate. See the attached guidelines for what to wear to an interview.

Prepare questions to ask the interviewer:

Never go to an interview without preparing questions to ask the interviewer. Your knowledge of the profession and the information you gather through research and networking will help you formulate questions of high quality. Attached is a list of sample questions.

The details:

- Print maps and plan your transportation prior to your interview so that you will not have to worry about those details on the day of your interview. Overestimate the length of your commute.
- Print out some extra copies of your resume on high quality resume paper in case your interviewer(s) needs a copy. Prepare a portfolio with the resumes, a pen and some notebook paper to take along with you.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

The details:

- Arrive about 10 minutes before the interview.
- Do not be late. Lateness is a red signal to a potential employer about your work habits and responsibility (or lack thereof).
- Have a pen, notebook and resumes with you. Greet your interviewer by name, with a firm handshake and a smile. Address the interviewer formally (Mr. Or Ms.) unless you've been told otherwise.
- Wait for the interviewer to sit down before seating yourself.
- Do not chew gum.
- Maintain good posture.
- Obtain the interviewer's business card following the interview.

Sell yourself:

Make sure that the interviewer knows what you have to offer and how you can benefit the organization. If you just sit back and answer the interviewer's questions, you might miss the opportunity to talk about your most important strengths and skills. Of course it is important that you answer the questions asked by the interviewer. However, you may choose exactly how you respond to the questions and what experiences and accomplishments you choose to use as examples or points of reference. For example, the question, "What are your greatest strengths?" can be answered two ways:

- 1) I have excellent communication skills, OR
- 2) My communication skills. For example, while a student at Stuart, I noticed a communication gap between the faculty and the students. I devised and headed a committee of students and faculty to address the problem and come up with solutions. As a result of the committee, a monthly social hour was developed during which faculty and students could talk and network. In addition, I created a newsletter that both faculty and students contributed to in an effort to keep everyone abreast of the latest news, trends and policies.

The difference between response 1 and 2 is that response 1 does not give any evidence as to the individual's skills or abilities. Response 2 utilizes an example to demonstrate not only communication skills, but also shows that the candidate has leadership skills and possesses initiative.

While answering questions, keep your key message in mind and choose your responses based on that message. What is the most important information you want to convey about yourself? Answer the interviewer's questions with this in mind.

Be enthusiastic and sincere:

Enthusiasm is vital. Employers do not want to hire individuals who are not interested in the company or industry. Keep in mind, however, that employers will be turned off by insincerity. Do not gush over a job or company that you are not interested in.

Listen carefully to and be respectful of the interviewer:

Pay attention to the interviewer – look her/him in the eye when s/he is talking. If you do not understand what the interviewer is asking, do not be afraid to clarify or ask the interviewer to restate the question.

Should the interviewer ask you a difficult question, do not be defensive. Answer as best you can and be polite if the interviewer challenges you further.

Keep the interviewer's attention:

Your interviewer may be interviewing several people for this position and asking the same questions over and over again. Keep your interviewer from being bored or losing interest by maintaining eye contact, varying the tone and tempo of your voice, being enthusiastic, and asking questions of the interviewer, when appropriate. It is a good rule of thumb to match your own energy level to that of the interviewer.

Do not speak ill of past employers:

Badmouthing a previous employer or supervisor looks bad and can give a potential employer a negative impression of you. If you are asked about previous employers or managers, try to find the positives and focus on those. If there were no positives, focus as much as possible on the successes in that job instead of the conflicts.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Evaluate the interview and write down the questions you were asked:

Take a few moments to think about the interview and your performance. Write down the questions you were asked so that you can later practice your response to questions that may have stumped you.

Send A Thank You Letter:

Using the correct name and title of the person who interviewed you, write a brief thank you note. Emphasize your interest in the position and briefly mention anything you may have omitted in the interview. See the "Cover Letter Writing Guide" for assistance with a thank you letter.

Follow Up:

If you do not get a response soon after the date that the interviewer indicated, it is a good idea to call/email and inquire about the position and where the employer is in the hiring process.

SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT INVENTORY

Keep an ongoing, recorded history of your accomplishments. You can use this document as an easy reference tool when you need to write or talk about tangible EXAMPLES of your skills and competencies

Instructions:

- In the left-hand column is a list of the TOP TEN SKILLS EMPLOYERS MOST DESIRE (Job Outlook 2005, National Association of Colleges and Employers). There are MANY SKILLS listed here, but it is not a complete list. Add whatever you don't see.
- In the right hand column, list a specific event, assignment, task, accomplishment, job, experience, etc.... that you feel CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES that you possess the skill listed.
- Fill in what you can, but don't feel overwhelmed! This is to be done over a period of time and used throughout your job search process. Keep in mind that the goal of this exercise is to connect your accomplishments to skills that are being sought by employers.
- In order to be able to provide evidence of the skill to an employer, provide a detailed description of the accomplishment.

You can use the STAR approach to help you provide a detailed description of the accomplishment:

SITUATION/ TASK: Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail. This situation can be from a class, a project or assignment, a previous job, from a volunteer or intern experience, or any relevant event.

ACTION: Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did. Keep in mind that you are trying to demonstrate a specific SKILL.

RESULTS: What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn?

SKILLS LIST	ACCOMPLISHMENT AND DESCRIPTION
<p>Communication Skills (Written and Verbal):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Listen objectively and paraphrase content -Use various forms and styles of written communication. -Speak effectively to individuals and groups. -Use media formats to present ideas imaginatively. -Describe objects or events with a minimum of factual errors. -Express one's needs, wants, opinions and preferences without offending the sensitivity of others. 	
<p>Honesty and Integrity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accepts the consequences of your own actions. -Accepts responsibility/accountable. -Adhere to a moral and ethical code. 	

<p>Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Express feelings appropriately -Understand the feelings of others -Interact effectively with peers, superiors and subordinates -Make commitments to people -Teach or convey information to others. -Analyze behavior of self and others in group situations -Work under time and environmental pressure. -Demonstrate effective social behavior in a variety of settings and under different circumstances. 	
<p>Strong work ethic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Demonstrate a willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. -Persist with a project when faced with challenges or failure. -Exert high level of effort and perseverance toward goal attainment. -Display high standards of attendance and punctuality. -Display enthusiasm, vitality and optimism in approaching and completing tasks. -Follow through with plans or decisions. 	
<p>Teamwork Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Generates trust and confidence in others. -Maintains group cooperation and support. -Interacts effectively with peers, superiors and subordinates. - Analyzes behavior of self and others in groups. 	
<p>Analytical Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Define the parameters of a problem. -Identify critical issues when making a decision or solving a problem. - Identify a general principle that explains interrelated experiences or factual data. -Identify reasonable criteria for assessing the value or appropriateness of an action or behavior. -Analyze the interrelationships of events and ideas from several perspectives 	
<p>Motivation/Initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Initiate projects or new ideas. -Makes suggestions to modify or improve services or procedures. -Develops new or alternative systems or ways of doing things. 	

<p>Flexibility/Adaptability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Adapt one's concepts and behavior to changing conventions and norms. -Analyze and learn from life experiences. -Recognize when a project cannot be carried out or your approach needs to change. -Take risks. 	
<p>Computer Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Uses computer resources to acquire information. -Uses computer to organize or manage data. -Employs electronic resources to communicate or convey information. -Learns and utilizes new software with ease. -Prevents, identifies or solves computer problems. 	
<p>Detail-Oriented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Careful and precise in carrying out projects. -Check for errors in written communications. -Carefully attends to all aspects of work. 	
<p>Leadership Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Delegate responsibility -Identify people who can contribute to the solution of a problem or task. -Motivate, persuade, encourage and convince people towards a common goal. -Organize people and tasks to achieve specific goals. - Responsibly challenge existing procedures, policies or authority. 	
<p>Organizational Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bringing together people, resources and events. -Manage time effectively. -Predict future trends and patterns. -Accommodate multiple demands for commitment of time, energy and resources. -Make and keep a schedule. -Prioritize. 	

INTERVIEW ATTIRE

General Guidelines:

- Pay particular attention to your fingernails, breath and hair. One of the most terrible scenarios for an interview is to attempt to conduct an interview made even more difficult due to poor personal hygiene.
- Clothing and shoes should be in good repair and should fit properly.
- Dress should reflect the level of professionalism of the organization or profession. Dress the part. Limit cologne/perfume – wash hands after applying fragrances.
- No cellular phones, beepers, beeping watches etc. should be left active in an interview.
- Select apparel, jewelry, hairstyle, etc. that do not detract from your professional image. The interviewer's attention should be focused on what you say and your qualifications.
- Make sure your hair is clean, neat and professionally styled. Avoid styles that cover more than your forehead or one that you have to brush back.
- Remove facial and body piercings other than single ear jewelry for interviews; Visible tattoos should be covered.
- Apparel should be clean and neatly pressed.
- Apparel should fit well and remain in place while sitting and/or walking.

Guidelines For Women:

- Suits should be well tailored and stylish (pants or skirt are acceptable).
- Preferred colors are gray, light gray, black, and navy.
- A conservative skirt hemline, preferably knee length is desirable.
- Blouses should be made of cotton or silk and preferably long sleeved. Soft colors are preferable (white, cream, lemon or pale blue.)
- The color of your shoes should match your clothes.
- Shoes should be made of leather, pristine and polished with a conservative medium to low heel (and comfortable if you will be walking during your interview).
- Always wear hose to interviews. Wear plain-style, non-patterned hosiery and select colors that flatter your coloring. For traditional industries, wear a neutral color. For other industries, you may choose to wear hose that coordinate with your skirt. Carry an extra pair in case of runs.
- Jewelry should be subtle. Wear a minimum of well-chosen jewelry that reflects good taste - nothing that moves or makes noise.
- Ensure that your bag is good quality leather, clean and polished and matches shoes.
- Make-up should be subtle and natural. In this case less is more.
- Perfume should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear perfume.
- Nails should be clean, conservative length and conservative color or clear.
- Hair clean and conservatively styled.
- Low cut blouses, miniskirts, and tight clothing are discouraged.



Guidelines For Men:

- Single-breasted navy or charcoal gray two-piece suit. A subtle stripe or pattern is acceptable.
- Long sleeved dress shirts should always be worn.
- Shirts should be white, cream or a subtle shade of blue; clean, ironed and crease free.
- Your silk (or silk-like) tie should complement your shirt and your suit and should be conservative or plain. Select lace-up (not slip-on) dress shoes. The color should be dark or blend with pant and should be pristine and polished.
- Socks should be calf-length or above the calf. Choose natural-fiber blends that allow a flow of air and do not hold in perspiration and heat. Choose colors such as dark blue, black or gray.
- Select a leather belt that visually blends or matches your shoes.
- Limit jewelry: no more than 1 ring per hand; wear a professional watch without an alarm; remove piercings; avoid necklaces.
- Maintain appropriate grooming, facial hair, fingernails, hair, etc: Trimmed and clean fingernails, a short haircut and no facial hair is expected.
- Cologne should never be strong. A fragrance can cause an allergic reaction or offend the interviewer. When in doubt, do not wear cologne.
- A full-length coat can be worn over your suit; avoid casual coats.
- Your briefcase is part of visual effect; consider a simple portfolio as an effective substitute, and try to select a color that supports your visual effect.



Additional Interview Attire Resources:

Washington State University has an illustrated guide to appropriate attire: <http://amdt.wsu.edu/research/dti/>

Professional clothing for women:

- <http://www.annataylor.com/> (Ann Taylor)
- <http://www.fields.com> (Marshall Fields)
- <http://store.nordstrom.com/> (Nordstrom)

Professional clothing for men:

- <http://www.menswearhouse.com> (Men's Wearhouse)
- <http://www.brooksbrothers.com/> (Brooks Brothers)
- <http://www.fields.com> (Marshall Fields)
- <http://www.josbank.com> (Joseph A. Bank)

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Frequently Asked Questions:

- Walk me through your resume.
- Why this career field? Why our company?
- Tell me about yourself.
- Why did you choose Stuart?
- What are your greatest strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- What do you understand the responsibilities of this position to be?
- What questions do you have for me? (See attached sheet)?

Behavioral Questions:

- Tell me about a time when you....
 - Worked effectively under pressure.
 - Handled a difficult situation with a co-worker.
 - Were creative in solving a problem.
 - Missed an obvious solution to a problem.
 - Were unable to complete a project on time.
 - Persuaded team members to do things your way.
 - Wrote a report that was well received.
 - Anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
 - Had to make an important decision with limited facts.
 - Were forced to make an unpopular decision.
 - Had to adapt to a difficult situation.
 - Were tolerant of an opinion that was different from yours.
 - Were disappointed in your behavior.
 - Used your political savvy to push a program through that you really believed in.
 - Had to deal with an irate customer/co-worker.
 - Delegated a project effectively.
 - Surmounted a major obstacle.
 - Set your sights too high (or too low).
 - Prioritized the elements of a complicated project.
 - Got bogged down in the details of a project.
 - Lost (or won) an important contract.
 - Made a bad decision.

Work History Questions:

- I noticed that you are/were working for _____. Why did you decide to work there?
- What exactly do (did) you do there?
- What do (did) you like about that job and company?
- What do (did) you not like?
- How do (did) you get along with your supervisor there?
- How do you think he or she would rate you?
- Would he or she recommend you for another job?
- What qualities do you look for in a supervisor?
- What type of people do you like to work with?
- Tell me about your successes in that job.
- Was your work ever criticized? If so, in what way? What did you do to improve?
- What kind of setting do you like to work in quiet or noisy? Alone or with others?
- In doing your job, do you think it's more important to finish quickly or do the work exactly right?

Education Questions:

- I see you went to Stuart. Why did you pick that school?
- Would you go there again? If not, why? Where would you go instead?
- What do you feel were the most significant things you got out of going there?
- Would you choose the same curriculum again? If not, what would you choose instead?
- What were your favorite classes? In what courses did you do best?
- What classes gave you the most trouble?
- What was your overall average for class standings?
- How will your degree help you succeed in our company?
- Why aren't your grades higher?

Self-Evaluation Questions:

- How do you feel you can contribute to this company?
- What do you hope to gain from working here?
- What do you feel are your outstanding qualities?
- What are your short and long range career objectives?
- What will your last supervisor tell me are your two strongest/weakest areas?
- What do you really want to do in life?
- Have you ever hired or fired anyone?
- How would you describe yourself?
- How would your friends describe you?
- Describe the kind of people that annoy you most. What types of people do you like working with?
- What interests you about this position?
- Give an example of a time when you were able to effectively communicate with another person even though that person may have disliked you?
- Give an example of a time when you were able to build motivation in your co-workers or those you supervised.
- Why should I hire you rather than someone else for this position?
- How do you feel about your career progress to date?
- Give an example of a problem you had at work and tell me how you solved it.
- How has your past experience trained you for this career?
- Describe an important goal that you've set in the past, and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- What kinds of decisions are hard for you?
- Give an example of a time when you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- Describe the most significant written report/presentation that you had to complete.
- What is the most creative work-related project you've been involved in?
- How do you work under pressure?
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- What have you learned from your mistakes?
- Describe a time on any job when you've confronted problems/stresses that tested your coping skills.
- Give me an example of a specific occasion when you conformed to a policy that you didn't agree with.
- What motivates you in a job and in personal life?
- What role do you take in a group situation? Give examples.
- What are the five biggest accomplishments of your life?
- How would you rate yourself as a manager? As a worker?
- Describe your personality.
- Describe your study habits.
- Describe a time when you had to be persuasive in getting your ideas across.
- What are some things about yourself that you would like to improve?
- What are two or three things you would still like to learn in this field?
- What skills do you rely on most in your everyday work?
- What kind of training do you feel you would benefit from?
- How much supervision do you normally receive? Prefer?
- What kind of things come most naturally to you? Describe your biggest success.
- How do you feel about working in an unstructured environment? Why?
- What do you like most about your present job? What do you like least about it?
- What kinds of things give you the greatest satisfaction in your work? Least satisfaction?
- What steps have you taken in the last few years to develop your skills? In your opinion, what makes you different from the other applicants?
- What has been your greatest challenge since beginning at Stuart?
- What was the most ethical decision you had to make?
- Highlight your quantitative accomplishments.
- You seem to like marketing, why are you interested in finance?

Financial questions:

- Why would two companies merge? What major factors drive mergers and acquisitions?
- What are some common anti-takeover tactics?
- What is a LBO? Why leverage up a firm?
- Why might a company choose to issue debt vs. equity?
- What could a company do with excess cash on the balance sheet?
- How would you calculate a firm's WACC? What would you use it for?
- What is the Beta and where would you go to find a firm's Beta? How and why would you unlever a beta?
- What is the CAPM?
- How do you calculate the firm value for the firm below?
 - Shares outstanding 100,000
 - Stock price \$20
 - Debt \$500,000
 - Cash and equivalents \$500,000
- What would have a greater impact on valuation, a 10% reduction in revenues or 1% reduction in discount rate?
- What major factors affect the yield on a corporate bond?
- How would you evaluate the creditworthiness of a tuna manufacturer with three factories in different locations throughout the U.S.?
- A firm is using LIFO, and prices on supplies start decreasing. What are effects on I/S, BS and CFS?
- Is it always better to use Pooling rather than Purchase in a merger? If sometimes Purchase is better, tell me when?
- Company A trades at P/E of 20. Company B trades at P/E of 10. Both are considering acquiring Company C, which trades at P/E of 15. For which of the two acquiring companies would the deal be dilutive? For which would it be accretive? Explain why for each.
- Suppose you are buying a new fixed asset - part cash and part debt. Take me through how it affects all the financial statements.

Financial markets questions:

- What did our firm's stock close at yesterday?
- What is the DJIA at today? NASDAQ? S&P500? What is the long bond at? Fed funds rate?
- Where is the market going? Bond, equity and forex? Where do you think interest rates will be in the next 12 months?
- What happened on the markets in the past three months?
- Do you read the Wall Street Journal every day? What's on the front page today?
- Do you follow an industry, a stock?
- What do you personally invest in?
- How does the yield curve look like?
- What industry you follow and what numbers do you look at to determine if a firm is doing well in that industry.

Accounting questions:

- What is EBITDA?
- Walk me through the major line items of a Cash Flow Statement.
- Say you knew a company's net income. How would you figure out its cash flows?
- What is the difference between a balance sheet and an income statement?
- What is goodwill? How does it affect net income?
- What is the difference between Purchase vs. Pooling?
- What are deferred taxes? How do they arise?
- What is working capital?

Questions on Investment Banks:

- Why I-Banking vs. Consulting? Sales & Trading? Research? Finance in an Industry?
- How do your experiences qualify you for a position in investment banking?
- What department do you want to work for inside I-banking and why?
- Who is in the bulge bracket?
- Rank firms on Wall Street and where do we fit? Who is our competition (in the major categories)? What differentiates our firm? What are our firm's strengths? Weaknesses?
- Describe a typical day of an investment banking associate?
- What is your greatest concern about investment banking?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in investment banking?
- What do you think investment bankers do every day?
- Describe a situation in which you used quantitative skills to solve a problem.
- Sales/trading: Sell me this XYZ object. Recommend a stock to me.
- What sources of information do you read on the investment banking industry?
- What do you think of the way the government treats insider traders?
- Has the investment banking industry been represented fairly in the press?
- What are your strengths in business analysis?

Management Consulting Questions

- Give me an example of a time you worked in a team. Did you face any obstacles?
- Give me an example of a problem you have faced and how you overcame it.
- What do you think management consultants do every day?
- Give me an example of a situation in which you analyzed and solved a problem. How did you do it?
- How would you describe your way of solving problems?

Marketing (Product Management)

- Give me an example of how you demonstrated initiative. What were the results?
- Rank order the important characteristics for brand management.
- Scenario and create a plan to market Brand X in Philadelphia.
- Tell me about a time when you had to influence various departments/people to help accomplish your goals without having direct authority over them.

Organizational Development

- What was your most challenging personal encounter with someone? How did you deal with the individual?
- Tell me how you would build a team out of independent individuals?
- How would a friend, boss and a client describe you?
- Tell me about a creative solution that you developed for a difficult problem?
- What was the most challenging group you successfully worked with? What was one of your failures?

Open Ended Questions

- Q: Run me through your résumé.
- A: Start with college and work forward, outlining your employment history, key accomplishments and transitions. You need to be able to do this in about two minutes, but be prepared to go into much greater depth in response to questioning.
- Q: Tell me about yourself.
- A: Depending upon when this question appears, you'll need to vary your approach. If this is the first question, then use the "run me through your résumé" response. If you have already explained your background, focus on strengths. If these are used, bring up some other skills or personality traits that may be useful to the employer. Whenever possible customize your skills/experience to the targeted position.
- Q: How would your boss (or colleagues) describe you?
- A: This is a good place to play up strengths and personality traits important to the job.

Company/Industry Questions

- Q: Why do you want to work for us?
- A: Approach this from the perspective of what's in it for them. You are interested because you could make a contribution in _____ and because your skills of _____ are a good fit with the job.
- Q: What do you know about our organization? Why are you specifically interested in our organization over our competition?
- A: You need to do your homework. Go beyond the surface reasons such as good reputation, industry leader etc.) How do your skills and interests relate to specifics of this company?

Personal Questions

- Q: What are the two most important decisions of your life?
- A: This is asking about your values and approach to problem solving.
- Q: Why did you decide to go back and get your MBA?
- A: Again, this question is asking about your values and goals. Also to check the rationale between your past experience and present goals. Is there a logical connection?
- Q: What were your most important successes? Failures?
- A: Successes illustrate strengths. Select examples that highlight skills that would contribute to the position you are discussing. Failures are probed to understand how you handle adversity, so it is important to show how you handled the situation and what you learned. Again, limit failures to one.
- Q: Where would you like to be in five years?
- A: This is to determine whether you plan to stick with the organization. Your answer may be, "my interest is to grow with the company".

QUESTIONS TO ASK IN AN INTERVIEW

Below are some sample questions to ask an interviewer to help you get a sense for the atmosphere at the company, the position in question and the overall structure of the organization:

- What is the philosophy of the organization?
- What do you consider to be the organization's strengths and weaknesses?
- What are the organization's plans and goals?
- Describe the work environment.
- What attracted you to this organization?
- Why do you enjoy working for this organization?

- Describe the opportunities for training and professional development.
- Are there opportunities for advancement within the organization?
- Describe a typical first year assignment.
- What are the responsibilities of the position?
- What are the most challenging aspects of the job?
- What is the departmental structure?
- How would you describe your organization's culture?
- What initial training will I receive?
- How is an employee evaluated and promoted?
- What are the characteristics of a successful person at your company?
- What are the organization's plans for future growth?
- What is a typical career path at your organization?
- What are the biggest challenges facing the organization/department?
- What is the management style of the organization? Of the department?
- What are the goals of the department? Of the organization?
- How much travel is normally expected?
- How frequently do you relocate your employees?
- How much decision-making authority is given to new employees?
- Does the organization promote from within or fill high-level positions with outside hires?
- To whom does the position report? Can you tell me something about his/her background?
- Who are the key people in other departments with whom I would interface?
- Is this a newly created position? If not, who was the last person to hold the position and what are they doing now?

Sources:

Boston College (www.bc.edu/offices/careers/skills/interview/) "Interview Skills"

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