

The Art of Behavioral Interviewing

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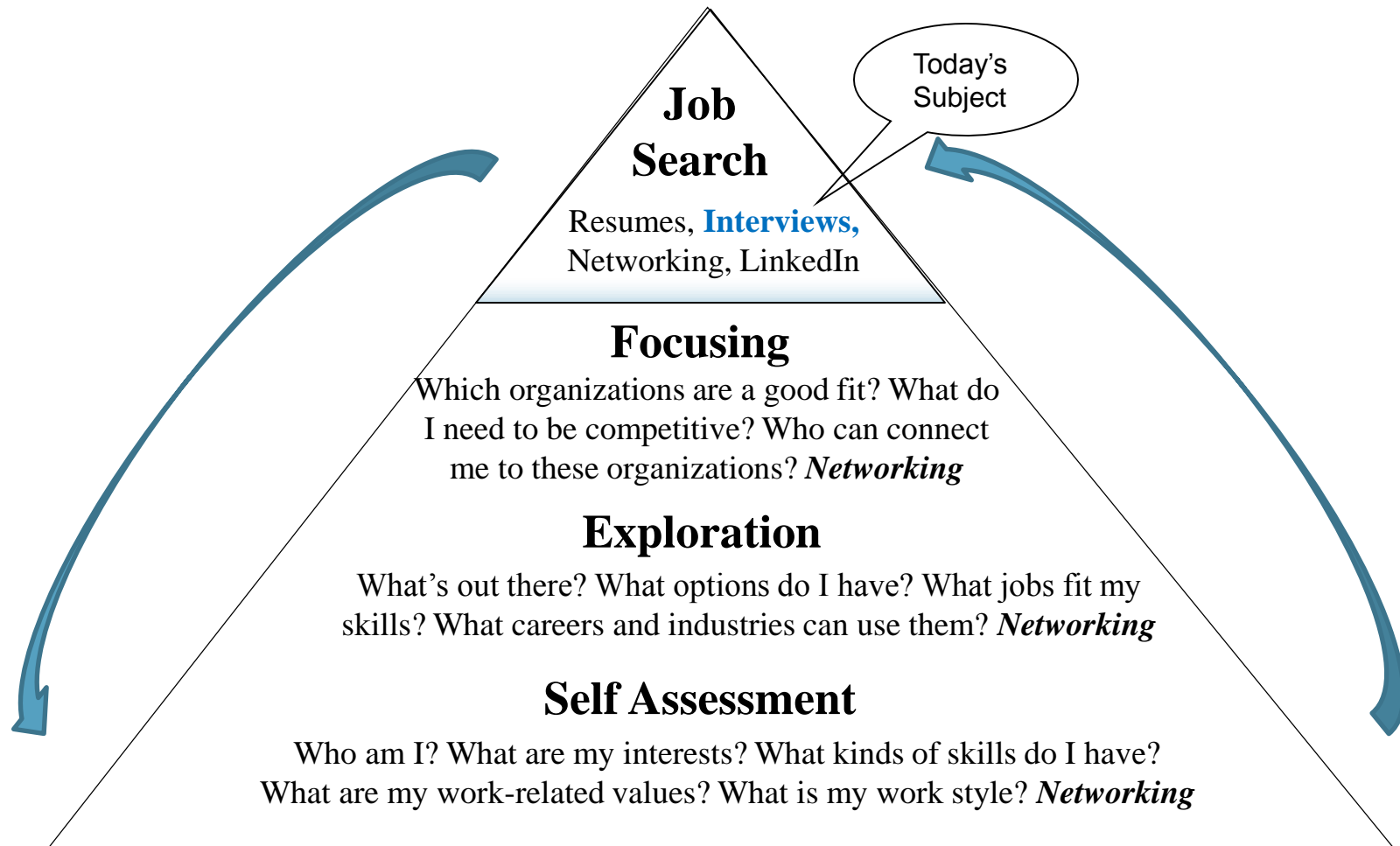
Workshop Overview

Intended Learning Outcomes

- Career Planning Process
- Purpose of Behavioral Interviews
- Sample Interview Questions
- How to Prepare
- What Do Hiring Managers Look For?
- Important Interview Tips & Strategies
- Top 7 Interview Mistakes
- Questions and Answers
- Tips from Recruiters



Career Planning-A Life Long Process



From Peter Fiske: Workshop at MIT. Modified from Stanford University Career Planning and Placement Office

Your Resume/CV

CONFESSIONS OF THE RECRUITMENT INDUSTRY

TOP SECRET



applications received
200
seconds after a job is posted



average time spent looking at a CV is
5-7
seconds



17%
chance that your cover letter will be read

Tpyos r wicked badd



1
spelling or grammar mistake and your CV will be thrown in the trash can

68%
of employers will find you on Facebook



76%
of CV's are ignored if your e-mail address is unprofessional



88%
job rejection rate if you have a photo of yourself on your CV

an average of
250
CV's are received for each job position

89%
of businesses planned to use social media networks for recruitment in 2011



86%
LinkedIn



60%
Facebook



50%
Twitter

LinkedIn
Now 96%

No Photo
in U.S.

1 in 3
employers rejected candidates based on something they found about them online

427k
CV's are posted on Monster every week. That is approx the population of Luxembourg



Use Good Judgment
Now 42%

collected by b behind

Purpose of Behavioral Interview

Hiring Manager

- Opportunity for them to evaluate your performance skills
- Help determine if you are the right fit for the job
- Initially their view is narrow...they have an open position that needs to be filled
- In addition to skills/competencies, they look for traits that they believe are important to meet their needs, solve their problems, fix what's broken, etc.

Purpose of Behavioral Interview

You (*remember, it's initially about them*)

- You need to find out what they need by researching the company and asking the right questions
- You need to communicate/demonstrate that you have the interpersonal skills and competencies to ***meet their needs***
- Assess if the employer/position is a good fit for you based on your skills, interest, and values

Show...don't tell

Purpose of Behavioral Interview

Hiring Manager's Mind Set

- What do you know?
- How do you act?
- Why should I care?

Technical gets you the interview, Behavioral gets you the job !!

Purpose of Behavioral Interview

Recruiters believe that your past behavior is the best predictor for your future behavior!

Therefore, questions will be open ended

- *Please describe how you handled....*
- *Tell me about a time when you....*

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How to Prepare

Employers will focus on actual behaviors and emotions

- Prepare answers that will describe how you handled a situation
- Concrete, specific examples of your actions are expected and will reveal your interpersonal skills, or lack thereof
- Employers make assumptions about your performance based on past behaviors, attitudes and experiences



**Do You
Fit?**

Once technical is established...Behavioral gets you the job !!

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A recent study by Leadership IQ found that 46% of new hires are either fired or disciplined within their first 18 months. And in a staggering 89% of those cases, the reason for the action isn't incompetence, but attitude: poor motivation, bad temperament, or emotional issues.

As Herb Kelleher says, you can teach technical skills, but you can't teach attitude.

<https://www.leadershipiq.com/>

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Avoid 'talented terrors': Hire for attitude

- *"If you don't have a good attitude, we don't want you, no matter how skilled you are. We can change skill level through training. We can't change attitude." — Herb Kelleher, co-founder of Southwest Airlines*
- Figuring out if applicants have the technical skills to perform a job is relatively easy. You run a test and look at the numbers. What's more difficult is finding out whether a person has the personal characteristics that would make them successful AND someone co-workers wouldn't go nuts working alongside.
- Nearly half of new hires (46%) fail within 18 months of being hired, according to research in Mark Murphy's book *Hiring for Attitude*.

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What Do Hiring Managers Look For?

Hiring Managers are looking for:

- Technical Acumen I.Q . 40%
- **Social Acumen** **E.Q .** **50%**
- Clarity of Purpose I have a Clue 10%

Communicated by a Partner from a Tier 1 Management Consulting Firm

IQ = Intellectual Quotient

EQ = Emotional Quotient (the behavioral stuff)

Four Key Dimensions of Management Consulting

- **Problem Solving:** Reasons logically, can think conceptually, demonstrates curiosity, creativity, good business judgment, tolerance for ambiguity, and an intuitive feel for numbers
- **Achieving:** Sets high standards for self, expects and achieves outstanding results, handles obstacles well, shows signs of entrepreneurship and a willingness to take personal risks
- **Impacting Others:** Positively influences others, shows an interest in other people, self-confidence without arrogance, listens, understands and responds well to others
- **Building Relationships:** Takes on leadership roles, seizes opportunities and takes action, helps to build highly effective teams with a shared vision, and is sensitive to the thoughts and feelings of others team members

Not just MC, almost all companies look for these attributes

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EQ Versus IQ

EQ:

- Is learned, you need to be intentional about its development
- Is about behavior
- Is based on conscious choice

IQ:

- Is innate
- Is about cognition
- Is something you already have

EQ can be developed, expanded, and strengthened throughout your life

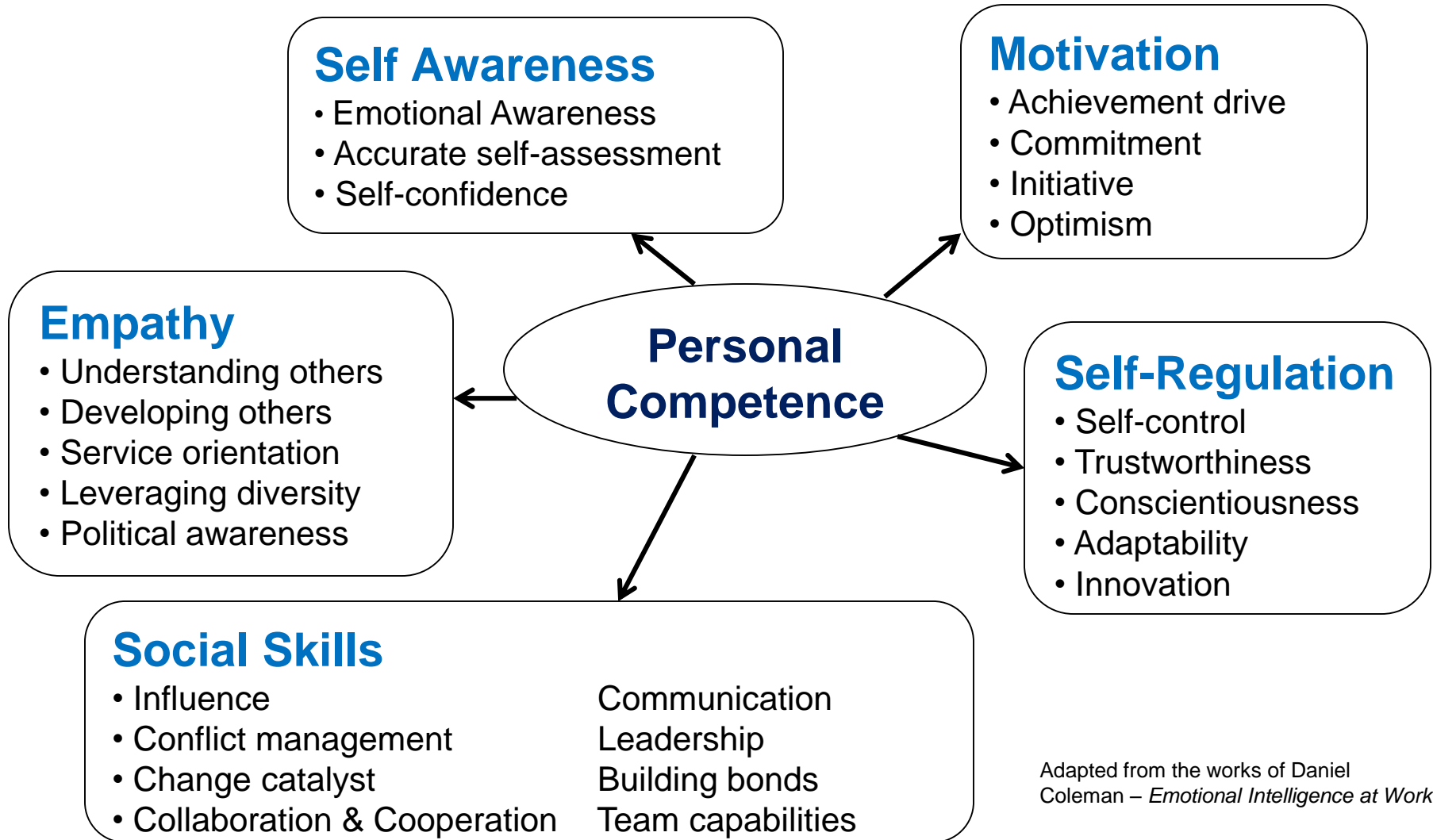
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EQ...How Can You Improve?

“Making emotions work for you by using them to guide your behavior and thinking in ways that enhance your results” Hendrie Weisinger “Emotional Intelligence at Work”

“Your ability to understand your own emotions and others’ emotions and use this information to guide your thinking and actions” Adapted from John Mayer and Peter Salovey “Emotional Intelligence”

Emotional Competence Framework

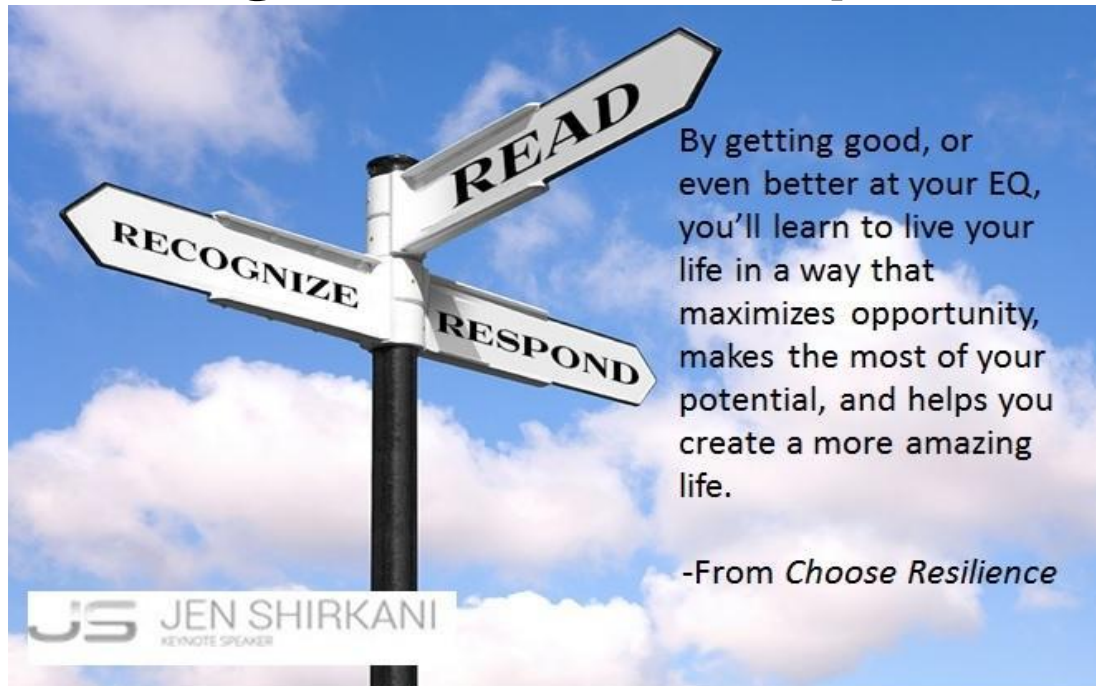


Adapted from the works of Daniel Coleman – *Emotional Intelligence at Work*

The Art of Behavioral Interviewing Your Strategy

Your approach to answering questions:

- ***Recognize, Read, Respond***



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Behavioral Question Categories

The line of questioning may fall into several categories...

- **Your Skills, Background and Experience**
- **Your Goals and Objectives**
- **Your Education and Training**
- **Your Growth Opportunities/Weaknesses**

Most of the questions will be open ended

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Sample Behavioral Questions

Your Skills, Background and Experience

- Tell me about yourself (Almost always asked, often the 1st question)
- What aspects of your background qualify you for this position?
- What activities have you been involved with that allowed you to use your leadership skills? Be specific
- Give me an example of how you used your team building skills
- What contribution do you think you can make to our company/lab?
- What criteria are you using to evaluate this position/industry?
- What kinds of people are difficult for you to work with?

Pre Interviewing Prep

“Tell me about yourself”

- Consider responding in the following manner
 - I am a
 - With interest/expertise in
 - I have had internships in; project/lab work on; worked for...
 - My strengths include *skill, skill, skill*

Your response should highlight your skills and competencies, specifically in their areas of interest

Pre Interviewing Prep

I am a Post Doctoral Fellow at MIT with expertise in optogenetics/biophotonics.

My areas of interest are in optics, microscopy and image processing/analysis, with particular emphasis on the technical requirements related to optogenetic applications.

I have worked in several labs and have lead teams in the design and implementation of hardware necessary to grow biophotonic and ontogenetic capabilities. I have also had access to a broad range of sophisticated instruments and assisted in the design and construction of new hardware/software to develop unique and customized imaging capabilities.

As a Scientist at the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory and Laboratory for Nuclear Science at MIT, my research has enabled me to develop additional skills in EthoVision XT, video tracking, behavioral patterns, operant conditioning, and exploratory behavior.

Note: Words underlined appeared in the actual job description

Pre Interviewing Prep

Actual example of an M.Eng targeting an I.T. role at Google:

I am a candidate for a Masters in Engineering in Computer Science & Electrical Engineering and will graduate in June 20xx.

My areas of interest are in software development and systems design. My expertise is focused on understanding the user's needs, and to provide solutions to solve problems, improve product quality or increase productivity in the workplace.

I interned with IBM and was a member of the research team that designed, prototyped, and implemented a successful multi-user enterprise web application to visualize and manage collaborative projects and work activities. Additionally, I was able to strengthen my skills in Java and JavaScript and work closely with highly experienced, world-class engineers.

I have additional strengths in natural language processing, artificial intelligence, distributed computing and proficient with Windows environments, C++, information retrieval and TCP/IP. I will also complete my BS in Mathematics upon graduation this June.

Note: Words underlined appeared in the actual job description

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Sample Behavioral Questions

Your Goals and Objectives

- What important career goals have you set for yourself?
- Where do you see yourself in 3-5 years? (your response = growth strategy)
- Please describe a goal you had that was not reached, or re-directed. What happened?
- What is most important to you in a job?
- What do you know about our company and how does it fit into your career goals?
- What motivates you in a job?
- Do you prefer to work alone, or with others?

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Sample Behavioral Questions

Your Education and Training

- Other than technical expertise, what part of your education/training has prepared you for this role?
- Describe a collaborative initiative you were involved with
- Tell me about a time when you were challenged to solve a complex problem. What strategy and resources did you use to create a solution?
- Tell me about a conflict that existed on a class/job/lab project you worked on. How did you handle it?
- Describe a job, class project, or internship that inspired you

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Sample Behavioral Questions

Your Growth Opportunities/Weaknesses

- Please describe a weakness of yours and what you are doing to improve it
- Tell me about a project you worked on that would reflect your ability to deal with pressure
- Give me an example of a time when you became bored with a project or assignment. What happened?
- What part of a job is least enjoyable to you?

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Recommended Response Structure

- Consider structuring all of your responses using the following format:

“**STAR**” Framework (1-2 minutes max)



- What was the **Situation**? 10%
- What was your **Task**? 10%
- What **Action** did you take? **60%**
- What was the **Result**? 20%

Other Similar Formats:

PAR – Project, Action, Result



CAR – Challenge, Action, Result

Whatever works best for you

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Modes of Interviewing

- **In Person:**

- On campus 
- Company location 

- **Telephone** 

- Screening process - May be first round
- Sometimes the screening process can be either an elimination or qualification strategy for employer → See Handout

- **Off-Site/Dinner Interview** 

- **Video-Conferencing/Skype** 

→ See Handout

- **The “All Day” Interview** (mostly for PhD’s) 

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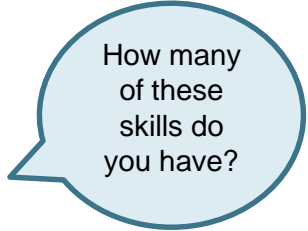
What Do Hiring Managers Look For?

That depends upon who is conducting the interview

- **Recruiter/HR** – focus will be primarily on fit/behavioral attributes
 - May ask some technical questions, but at a high level
- **Recruiter/HR** – Their goal is to find an employee who best fits the culture of the organization/company
- **Hiring Manager** - focus will be primarily on technical abilities
 - May ask behavioral questions - team orientation, conflict resolution
- **Hiring Manager** – Their view is longer term and are looking for technical & personal attributes that fit current initiatives and group dynamics, but are also assessing abilities for future projects

Employer Rated Career Readiness Competencies

• Critical Thinking/Problem Solving	4.58
• Professionalism/Work Ethic	4.56
• Oral/Written Communication Skills	4.43
• Teamwork/Collaboration	4.43
• Leadership	3.86
• Information Technology Application	3.78
• Career Management	3.47
• Global/Multicultural Fluency	2.85



How many of these skills do you have?

5-point scale, where 1 = Not Important and 5 = Extremely Important

Let's take a moment and identify every skill you have on this list...

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- How best to prepare for an interview?
 - Thoroughly dissect the job description and identify/highlight all technical and behavioral skills
 - Also review how they emphasize their needs

Content

Actual Job Description – Broad Institute

Software Engineer Area of Interest: Software Engineering

Job Description - Will design and implement new algorithms, applications, and infrastructure to engineer the computational infrastructure underlying the diabetes genetics portal

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Collaborates with peers with biological, computational, and outreach domain knowledge to design and implement applications and visualization infrastructure for a large scale human genetics data portal
- Will rapidly prototype and validate using novel data sets, tools and infrastructure and instantiate into software for use by the broader community
- Maintains, upgrades, fixes, and reviews product source codes
- Prepare written reports and presentations for internal use and publication Requirements: Bachelor's degree in computer science or a related field.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS: 2 to 5 years software development experience.

SKILLS / TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE / CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- Must have extensive experience with Java (or C/C++), web development (php, json, javascript)
- Experience developing distributed software infrastructure
- Prior biological experience a plus but not required
- Capable of understanding and translating high-level scientific goals into concrete computational approaches
- Excellent oral and written communication skills required.
- Must be able to work collaboratively with other scientists on computational research in a fast-paced environment.
- Must enable the research of other program scientists through excellent communication, teamwork, and a focus on creating usable and accessible research software tools.
- Must be capable of working in an interactive team environment while conducting self-directed research within broader goals set by group.

Behavioral Attributes required in this job

Look at the Emphasis

Content Actual Job Description – Pfizer

Qualifications

- PhD or PharmD in Pharmacology, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Biochemistry, Biology, or equivalent with track record of sound scientific achievement, 2-4 years industrial and relevant experience
- **Excellent understanding** of ADME and PK principles
- Demonstrated **in depth and hands on** PK/tissue distribution/PD study design.
- Experience in bioimaging studies are **preferred** ←
- PK software experience such as WINNONLIN **is required** ←
- Experience with **hands on** biochemical and cell-based assay is **a plus**
- **Work effectively across scientific disciplines** and summarize concisely, developing recommendations
- **Knowledge of** IACUC, animal use protocols, animal model use
- **Attention to detail is critical** ←
- **Strong interpersonal skills, communication (verbal and written)**
- **Demonstrated evidence** of **strong problem-solving skills** and the **ability to thrive** in a **matrixed environment by influencing and networking efficiently** to leverage internal capabilities to increase overall efficiency and productivity
- **Excellent organizational, communication and presentation skills**
- **High level of initiative** in performing experiments, **multi-tasking** and troubleshooting
- **Proven effective skill and expertise** in **cross discipline interactions, influence and collaborations**
- **Proven scientific writing and oral** summarization, publication and **presentation skills**
- Works well **independently and as a member of a team**

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What Do Hiring Managers Look For?

- 1,400 CFO's were asked – *“Other than technical ability and willingness to do the job, what quality impresses you the most when hiring a candidate?”*

• Honesty & Integrity	58%	} Behavioral – 92%
• Enthusiasm	14%	
• Communications Skills	12%	
• Professional Appearance	7%	
• Sense of Humor	1%	
• Other	8%	

Survey conducted by Robert Half International (Global Career Service Firm)




Important Interview Tips

Before the Interview:

- **Prepare**
 - Know as much as you can about the company/job description
 - Know the interviewers (names, job titles, responsibilities, etc)
 - Prepare a list of questions to ask about the company/position
 - Become familiar with own resume, bring copies, portfolio and notepad
- **Practice**
 - Practice answering behavioral questions
 - Use examples of actual experiences that describe your skills
- **Appropriate Dress**
 - Suit is recommended (tie for men)
 - No sneakers or sandals (men...same color socks)
 - Light or no perfume/cologne suggested
 - No distracting accessory (i.e. large jewelry, hats, sunglasses, etc)

Important Interview Tips

Day of/During the Interview:

- **Arrive 10/15 minutes early (*shut cell phone OFF*)** 
 - timeliness shows respect, punctuality and reliability
- **Stand/Sit tall and confidently**
 - have body language express confidence in your abilities
- **Solid Handshake... opening and closing** 
- **Eye Contact** 
 - Maintain eye contact when listening and answering questions
 - Demonstrates engagement and attentiveness
 - Smiling supports the Emotion Theory of Facial Expression
- **Try to relax, but being nervous is not unusual**
 - Deep breathing prior to interview may help
 - Practicing can help you feel more comfortable

Important Interview Tips

After the Interview:

- **Reflect on what you did well, what you could improve**
 - Important to learn and grow from each interview
- **Send a thank-you email to interviewers**
 - Ensure all interviewers receive a thank you...individually tailored to each interviewer
 - Thank you note allows you to reiterate your interest and re-sell your skills...it keeps you top of mind
- **Provide interviewers with additional information that you want to share based on your enhanced knowledge of the job or company**

Top 7 Interview Mistakes

1. **Being late to the interview – *wicked bad***
2. **Not researching the company/position before interview**
3. **Inability to articulate your own skills, needs, and desires**
4. **Being unprofessional in the interview**
 - Dress appropriately, no gum chewing, minimize personal information
5. **Demonstrating poor communication skills**
 - Be articulate, clear and concise with your language and verbal delivery
6. **Talking the negative (*Always Stay Neutral to Positive*)**
 - Important to always frame things in the positive
 - Instead of saying “I don’t have experience in consulting”, try saying, “I am eager to use my problem solving skills in the consulting industry”
7. **Being too arrogant**
 - Important to be assertive/confident but not pushy

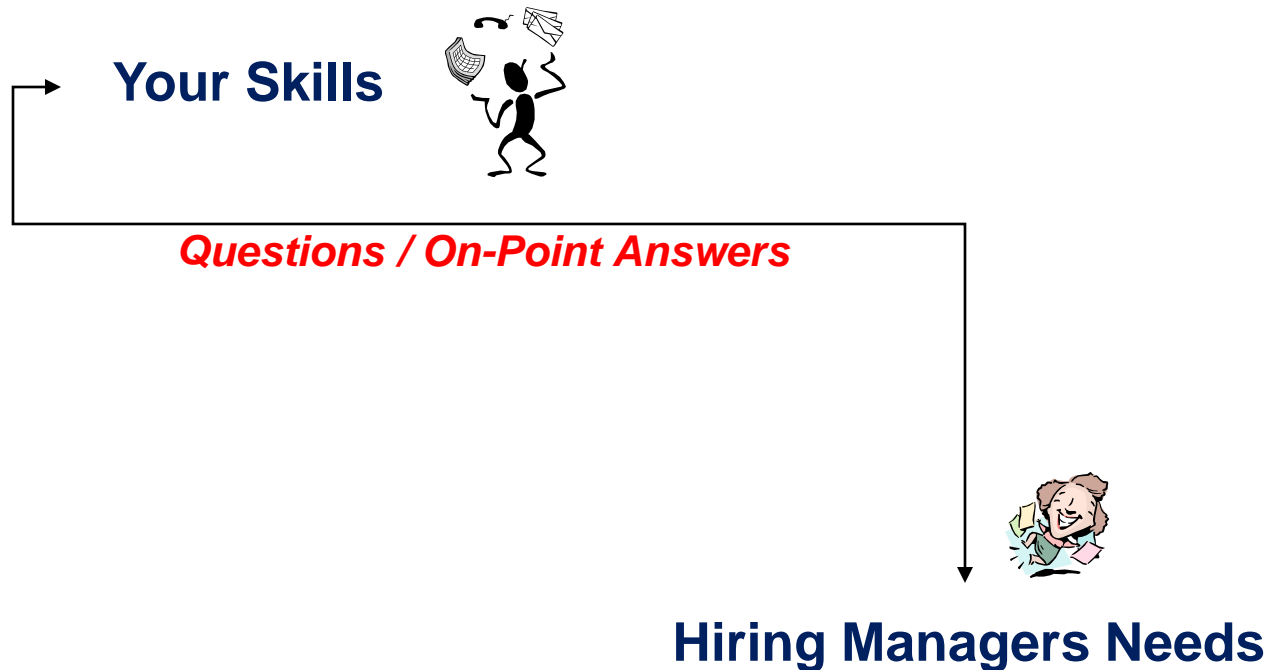
Dress for Success

- **For a Formal Look** — wear a well-fitted, wrinkle free suit in a neutral color (grey, navy, black, brown). This applies to both suits with pants or a dress/skirt.
- **No Suit** — Combine a blazer and slacks with a button-down shirt and tie, or a skirt with a blouse. Choose a white, off-white, or a solid color shirt or blouse.
- **Shoes Matter** — Wear clean, polished shoes that coordinate with your clothes. Black goes with everything. Avoid heels higher than 2 inches.
- **Go Simple** — Skip any strong-smelling cologne, perfume, or beauty products. Pull long hair back out of your face. Trim beard and mustache.
- **Don't Wear** — Avoid jeans, sweatpants, yoga pants, athletic gear, shorts, short-sleeved shirts, T-shirts, sneakers, loafers, boots, stiletto heels, sheer tops, and mini-shirts.
- **Be Present** — Make eye contact, shake hands, and smile. This will help them remember you when selecting future candidates.

Final Thoughts

During the Interview:

- Link your skills and attributes to their needs, *it's that simple!*



What do Recruiters say about the hiring process?

Fortune Magazine

Top 100 Best Companies-Industry Recruiter Guidance

Anna Gray, Patient Care Director, Lifebridge Health #96

- **What do you look for on a Resume?**

“After I look for the skill set, I’ll look for how they might have assisted with some change, how they impacted the organization, if they made a difference.”

- **What if the applicant hasn’t interviewed in many years?**

“Practice in the mirror or do a role-play with a friend. Sit down with them and have them ask you questions so you’ll feel a little bit more comfortable and confident.”

Fortune Magazine

Top 100 Best Companies-Industry Recruiter Guidance

Stacey Hattle, Director of HR, Scottrade #27

- **Any Resume Tips?**

“I don’t want to have to search to try to find out if the candidate has the skills set we’re looking for. Their objective should be for that particular position.”

- **What should applicants know in advance?**

“The candidate needs to have the right attitude. You want to see enthusiasm when they talk about prior experience and projects. They have to have a passion for what they do.”

Fortune Magazine

Top 100 Best Companies-Industry Recruiter Guidance

Lynn Franklin, HR Manager, Wegmans Food Markets #3

- **What do you look for first?**

“I usually go right for the Cover Letter, because Resumes are all very similar. I look for a candidate to engage me and to really get a glimpse of who that person is. What do they know about us as an organization? Can they clearly define how their values and their skill set match up to what we offer as an organization.”

Fortune Magazine

Top 100 Best Companies-Industry Recruiter Guidance

**Kerrie Peraino, Chief Diversity Officer,
American Express #73**

- **Any tips for applicants?**

“I look for clarity. Be clear and focused in how you articulate what you’re looking for. If you come across confused, then we are confused.”

- **Any Resume advice?**

“Keep it simple and clean. When a resume is overcrowded and there’s no white space, you can’t jump into it.”

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Every human has four endowments...

- Self Awareness
- Conscience
- Independent Will
- Creative Imagination

These give us the ultimate human freedom...

The power:

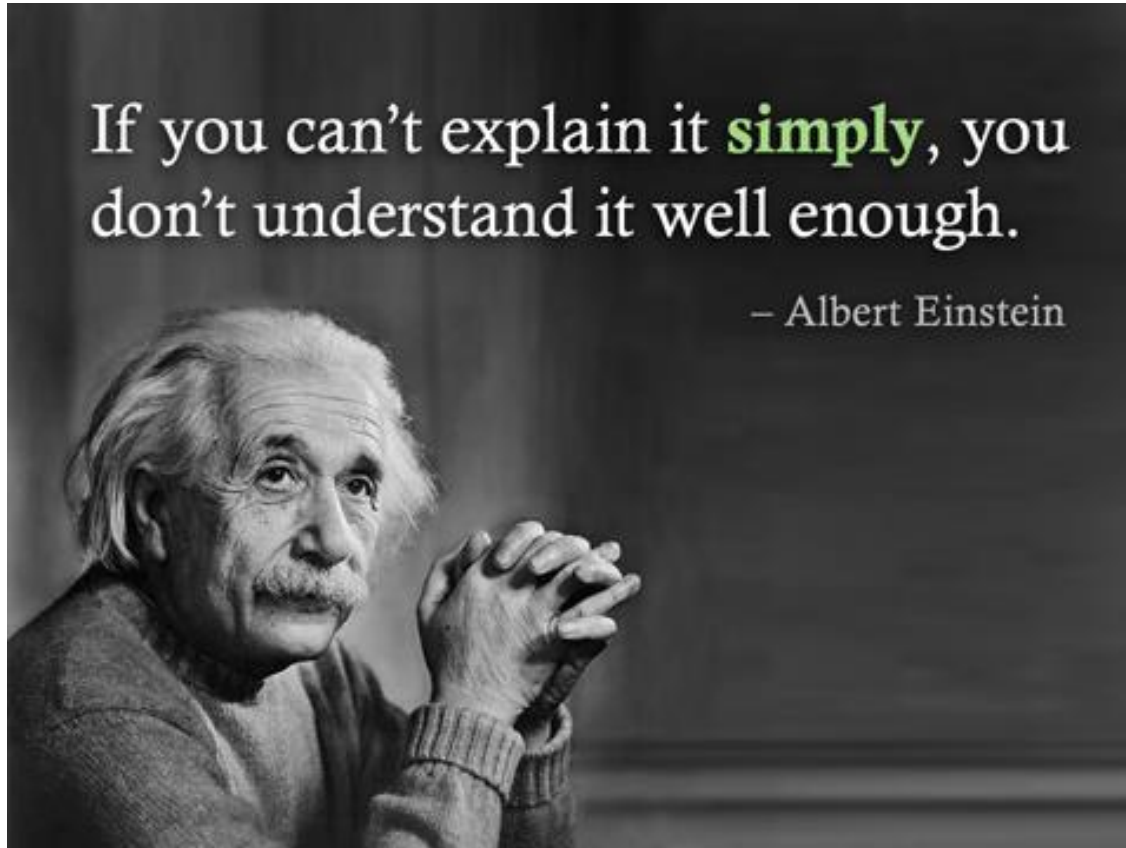
- To choose
- To respond
- To change

Stephen Covey

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If you can't explain it **simply**, you
don't understand it well enough.

– Albert Einstein



Final Q & A

Other Behaviors - Something to Consider

Researchers surveyed 554 full-time working professionals who earned more than \$50K in income and were employed by companies with at least 50 employees. The researchers asked the survey participants about the use of smartphones in formal and informal meetings to uncover attitudes about answering calls, writing or reading emails or text messages, browsing the Internet, and other mobile phone-related behaviors. Key findings include the following:

- 86% think it's inappropriate to answer phone calls during formal meetings
- 84% think it's inappropriate to write texts or emails during formal meetings
- 75% think it's inappropriate to read texts or emails during formal meetings
- 66% think it's inappropriate to write texts or emails during **any meeting**
- 22% think it's inappropriate to use phones during **any meeting**

Survey conducted by University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business, Jan 2015

Source: Talent Smart – Premier Provider of Emotional Intelligence