

Show Your Potential in an Interview

How to Rock an Internship Interview

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You did it!

Your perfectly tailored resume landed you a scheduled interview at your dream employer. Now the only thing standing in your way is the interview. Success, especially when it comes to your job search, is about being able to get the details right. For many an internship is a first-time job filled with many unknowns.

An interview for an internship is like other types of interviews, such as those for full-time or part-time work. All these interviews generally follow the same format where the interviewer will ask you information-based questions about your background and behavioral questions to gauge your skills and problem-solving abilities. They may even present hypothetical scenarios to evaluate your approach to various situations.

As a student, it is unlikely that you will have a wealth of job experience. Lean on your academic and volunteer experiences and explain the potential benefits you could bring to the company. Remember that most organizations will recognize that as a student completing their degree, you have limited work experience. Also, you likely won't have the direct skills you'll perform on the job. **Therefore, your goal for the interview is not to show employers what you have done but the potential of what you can get done for the organization.** It is about demonstrating your potential for the role, how you will grow into the role and benefit the company.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

When asked, "Tell me a little about yourself," the best way to make a lasting impression is to avoid your education and work background because the employer already knows this through your resume. Instead, talk about yourself, what motivates you, and how you work in a team environment. Make connections to the job description and company when answering the question.

Interviewers may ask you directly what you know about the company; this is where your preparation for the interview comes in handy.

Keep it brief but relevant. Practice what you will say in advance if you are asked this question during the interview. Understanding a company's values and current projects can better help you decide on your interview answers. For example, if you know about the company's involvement in multiple environmental initiatives, you could also speak about how that motivates you in your work.

You can also use the information you picked up and incorporate it into other responses. Use LinkedIn, the company website, news websites, and other relevant sources for your research.

In almost any interview, employers will also expect you to speak about how you have dealt with situations in the past. For example, they may ask, "Tell me about a time you worked on a team and things didn't go so well. What did you do?"

When asked about a past situation you've dealt with, employers are looking for you to explain in detail a problem you faced and the steps you took to overcome it. Your explanation gives them a snapshot of how you would act if you encountered similar situations during your internship and your problem-solving ability. To prepare for this question before the interview, brainstorm two or three relevant instances where you solved a problem. Knowing the story's key points is sufficient to avoid appearing robotic to the interviewer. **Additionally, ensure you can explain the situation through the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, and Result).**

INTERVIEW PREP

Overall, interviews can be nerve-wracking no matter what stage you are in of your career. Remember that nervousness is normal, and preparation is the key to doing well in an interview. Lean on your career services department for assistance and use resources available at your school. Almost all of them offer workshops to conduct mock interviews.

Good luck out there! Find more tips and resources in the "Interviewing" category of the AgCareers.com Career Success Library at www.AgCareers.com.

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