

Types of Interviews

Besides the traditional one-on-one interview format, there are a variety of other styles and formats when it comes to interviewing. It is appropriate and recommended to ask the employer in advance about the type of interview format you should expect.

PHONE: Phone interviews are commonly used to screen candidates in order to narrow the pool of applicants who will be invited for in-person interviews. Since the employer will not be able to see your visual and body language cues, telephone interviews rely heavily on the content in your answers, and your ability to project enthusiasm and interest in your voice. Even though you aren't being "seen," it can help to smile and dress up – you'll feel more professional and prepared, and this will reflect in your voice.

GROUP: This style of interviewing has become increasingly common. The format typically includes a company and position presentation to multiple candidates simultaneously, as well as group interactions such as work or project simulation exercises. Employers use this type of interview to assess things like communication, interpersonal, team and leadership skills, as well as how you handle stress.

Tip: introduce yourself to the other candidates before the interview begins. Actively participate during the interview. Be sure to practice active listening and to avoid interrupting others or dominating the conversation. Pay attention to your nonverbal communication cues and remain professional and courteous to everyone.

PANEL: Various representatives who are involved in the hiring process meet with a candidate at the same time. Building rapport is incredibly important in an interview, but rapport is extremely difficult to establish with each person on a large panel. Be sure to take the opportunity when you are introduced to look each person in the eye, greet them using their name, and shake hands.

During the interview, respond to questions by making eye contact and using the name of the person who asked the question; then, include the rest of the panel in your answer and be sure to look around the room. When preparing questions for the panel, be sure to include questions that are relevant to each person's role within the organization.

At the conclusion of the interview, request business cards from all panel members in order to send them a thank-you note. Do your best to personalize each thank-you note.

CASE: This interview style is typically used in the management consulting and investment banking industries, but it is becoming more common in other industries as well. Candidates are given a case – a set of facts – to analyze and solve. Generally, interviewers are looking at the approach used to solve the case as much as they are the answer. Tip: build a logical framework for answering the case question and know that it is generally expected that you will ask the interviewer questions.

Interviewers are usually assessing quantitative and analytical skills, problem solving ability and style, communication, listening ability, creativity, flexibility, and the ability to process information under pressure. It is imperative to prepare for this style of interview - do not "wing it!" Successful candidates spend hours upon hours practicing this style of interviewing. Be sure to research the company you're interviewing with, as many companies post guides to "acing the case interview" on their website.