

# Interview Tips and Answering Behavioral-Based Questions

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# Learning Objectives

- Identify the steps to prepare for an upcoming interview
- Understand the interview process
- Identify the research that is needed on employers and the sources of information
- Examine why the behavioral-based interview questions are asked and how to prepare a response using the STAR method
- Identify steps to follow after your interview

# Overview

- Purpose
- What to do Before the Interview
  - Create Image, Self, Assess, Research Employer, Prepare and Rehearse
- What to do During the Interview
  - Introduction, Body Language, Closing
- Phone and Web Interview Tips
- What to do After the Interview

# Purpose of the Interview

- Good Fit
- Beginning of Screening Process
- Hiring decision may not come until 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> interview

# What to Do Before the Interview...

- Create Image
- Self Assess
- Research Employers
- Prepare and Rehearse

# Create Image

- Purchase and/or prepare professional attire
- Prepare you professional portfolio
- Monitor and correct your online image regularly
- Know where you are going

# Professional Attire

- Matching solid-color, 2-piece suit (either pant suit or skirt suit), preferably a dark color such as navy or gray; or tailored dress with jacket
- Tailored fit, including pants length, knee-length hem with no extreme slits
- Shirt with collar, or tailored blouse (no ruffles or lace), white or light color; no cleavage showing
- Tie required - no extreme prints or patterns
- Dark-colored shoes, Dark, conservative style, closed-toed shoes with 1-2 inch heel or flat, leather or leather-look, well-maintained and polished
- Dress socks, dark in color
- Minimal jewelry, make-up or scent
- No visible piercings or tattoos

# Self Assess

- What do I do well?
- What are my strengths?
- What are my weaknesses?
- Why should an employer hire me?
- What are my career goals?
- What skills have I developed from past experiences?
- What have I accomplished from work and academic experiences?



# Research Employers

## What you Want to Know

- Potential growth for industry
- Array of products or services
- Competitors within the market
- Organizational structure
- Number of branches and locations
- Name of key management personnel



# Research Employers

## Where to find it

- Career Services website
- Employer websites and reviews
- LinkedIn
- Business periodicals
- Employees of the company
- Annual reports
- Industry guides

# Prepare and Rehearse

## Answering Interview Questions

- Listen to the questions
- Be careful to answer all parts of the question
- Respond to each question in 1 to 2 minutes
- Interject values
- Prepare 6-10 situations or scenarios from past experience to use as examples for behavioral interview questions
- Complete a recorded practice interview (e.g., Optimal Resume's Interview Prep program)
- Review recorded interview to make improvements in presentation style and delivery

# Basic Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself (elevator speech).
- Why did you select your college/major?
- Why should I hire you?
- What is your greatest accomplishment?
- How do you deal with stress?
- How would your friends describe you?
- Describe three things that motivate you.
- Give an example of your creative skills.

# Behavioral Based Interviewing

The STAR response is an acronym to remind you of how to respond fully to a behavioral interview question.

**S**ituation

-or-

**T**ask

**A**ction you took

**R**esult you achieved



# Behavioral Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time when you resolved a conflict within your team.
- Describe a time when you were given a rush assignment which was due on the same date as a very important project. How did you decide which assignment to do first?
- Tell me about a time when you dealt with an angry customer.
- Tell me about a situation in which you made an unpopular decision.
- Describe a situation in which you felt that you demonstrated competency in your field.

# What to Do During the Interview

## The Introduction

- Bring Employer Information with you
- NO Cell Phone
- Make eye contact, smile and shake hands
- Remember to maintain eye contact with all interviewers
- Match your vocal tone and volume to the tone and volume of the interviewers
- Be conscious of body language (non-verbals)

# What to Do During the Interview

## Body Language

- Be conscious of body language (non-verbals)
- Follow the interviewer's lead
- Respond to each question in 1 to 2 minutes
- Express confidence and enthusiasm
- Be positive and honest
- Emphasize your strong points
- Communicate future goals



# What to Do During the Interview

## The Closing

- Ask good questions
  - Typical day at work? Projects?
  - What kind of training?
  - Who is immediate supervisor?
  - Is travel expected?
  - Is this a new position?
  - Next step in the hiring process? Timeline?
- Ask for business cards and/or contact information for interviewers
- Express your interest in the position

**DO NOT**  
**Discuss salary or benefits**  
**in initial interview!!**

# Phone Interview Tips

- Get names of all interviewers in advance
- Have resume, notes and water within reach
- Have a non-ticking clock nearby to keep track of the length of your responses
- Select quiet surroundings
- Turn off noisy equipment
- Use a reliable phone and disable call waiting
- Answer the phone with your name
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly
- Look in the mirror and smile to convey enthusiasm

# Web Interview Tips

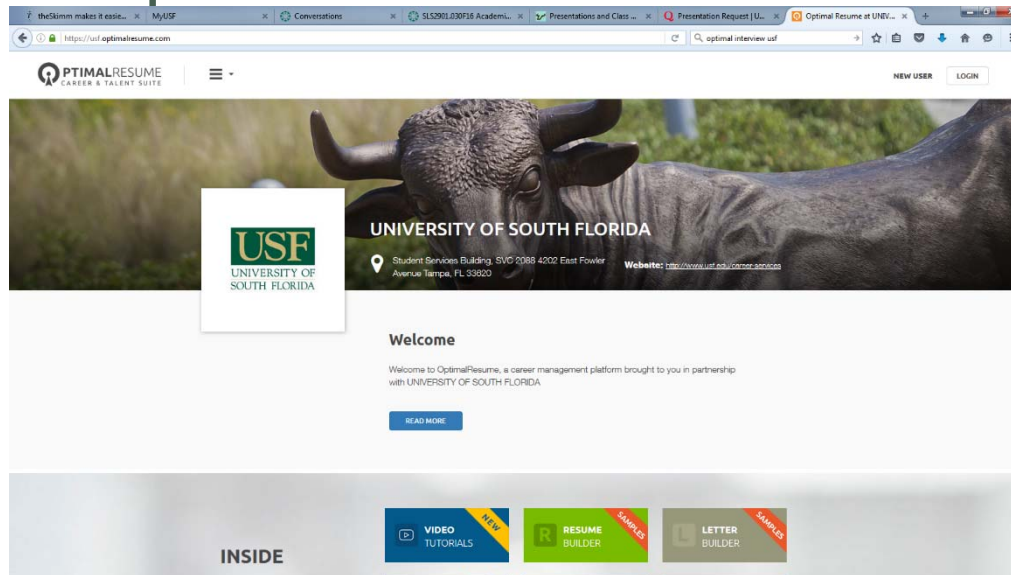
- Make sure equipment functions quietly and properly
- Have a “Plan B” if there are technical difficulties
- Select appropriate lighting and background
- Remove distracting visual items
- Have a non-ticking clock nearby to keep track of the length of your responses
- Dress professionally
- Have resume, notes and water within reach
- Sit at an angle and turn head toward the camera
- Be conscious of body language and vocal tone

# After the Interview

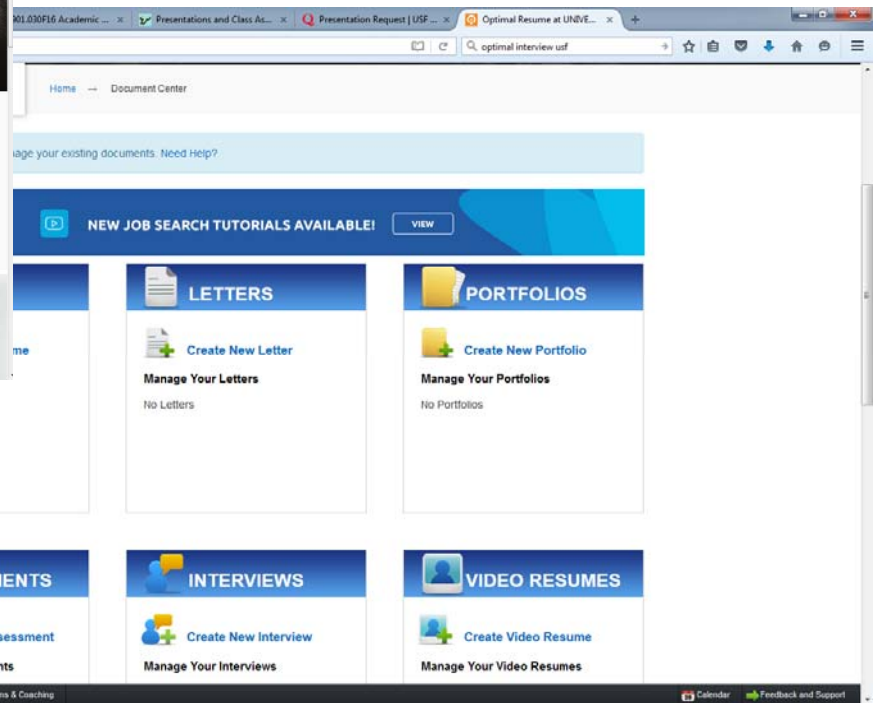
- Record your observations and reactions
- Express your interest in the position in a thank-you letter or e-mail within 24 hours
- Follow the employer's instructions on how and when to follow up on the status of the position

# Career Services Interview Resources- Optimal Interview

*usf.optimalresume.com*



The screenshot shows the homepage of the OptimalResume platform for the University of South Florida. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the PTIMALRESUME logo, a menu icon, and links for 'NEW USER' and 'LOGIN'. Below this is a large banner image of a bull's head with the text 'UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA' and its address: 'Student Services Building, SVC 2088 4202 East Fowler Avenue, Tampa, FL 33620'. A 'Welcome' message follows, stating 'Welcome to OptimalResume, a career management platform brought to you in partnership with UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA', with a 'READ MORE' button. At the bottom, there is an 'INSIDE' section with three tiles: 'VIDEO TUTORIALS' (marked 'NEW'), 'RESUME BUILDER' (marked 'SAMPLES'), and 'LETTER BUILDER' (marked 'SAMPLES').



The screenshot shows a user's dashboard on the platform. At the top, there is a 'Document Center' section with a 'Need Help?' link. Below this is a blue banner for 'NEW JOB SEARCH TUTORIALS AVAILABLE!' with a 'VIEW' button. The dashboard is organized into a grid of six main sections: 'LETTERS', 'PORTFOLIOS', 'ASSESSMENTS', 'INTERVIEWS', and 'VIDEO RESUMES'. Each section has a 'Create New' button and a 'Manage Your' link. For example, the 'LETTERS' section shows 'No Letters' and has a 'Manage Your Letters' link. The 'PORTFOLIOS' section shows 'No Portfolios' and has a 'Manage Your Portfolios' link. The 'ASSESSMENTS' section has a 'Create New Assessment' button and a 'Manage Your Assessments' link. The 'INTERVIEWS' section has a 'Create New Interview' button and a 'Manage Your Interviews' link. The 'VIDEO RESUMES' section has a 'Create Video Resume' button and a 'Manage Your Video Resumes' link. At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Messages', 'Announcements', 'Tips', 'Resources', 'Interview Questions & Coaching', 'Calendar', and 'Feedback and Support'.

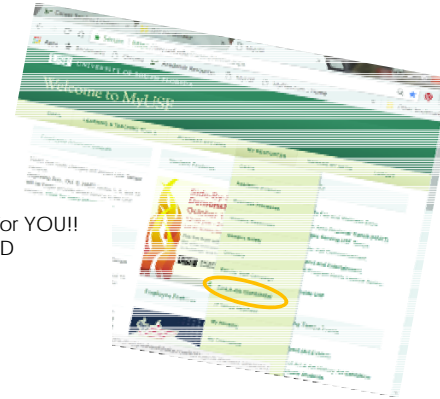
# handshake

## WHAT is Handshake?

USF's official student career portal!!  
- and YOU are paying for it!

Handshake is super easy to use! Your account is waiting for YOU!!

- Just login to **your MyUSF account** using your USF Net ID username and password
- Go to "MY RESOURCES" tab; click on "Find A Job (Handshake)"
- **WHALA! You're IN!!**



## WHY use Handshake?



**Create a Professional Profile & Upload a Resume** – so Employers looking for USF grads can find **YOU!!**



**Find Jobs & Experience to Build Your Resume** – find the right fit for you and increase your chances of full-time employment right out of school!

- Full-time jobs
- Internships
- Cooperative Education (co-op)
- Part-time jobs
- On-campus jobs
- Volunteering
- Leadership Programs



**Make Opportunities Happen Right from Your Phone** – download the mobile app for iPhones!



**Receive Career Services** – schedule appointments with your Career Consultant, visit Career Express or find resources on resumes, interviews and more!!



**Look for Recruiting Events with Top Employers** – learn more about the fields and companies that interest you!

- Info Sessions
- Careers & Coffee
- Career Fairs
- Employer Spotlights

# QUESTIONS??

## Survey:

<http://bit.ly/usfcspresentationsurvey>

- Student Services Building (SVC) 2088
- (813) 974-2171
- Monday - Friday, 8am-5pm
- [www.usf.edu/career-services](http://www.usf.edu/career-services)