

# THE ULTIMATE

# INTERVIEW HANDBOOK



**InternMatch**  
*Find your focus*

***“One important key to success is self-confidence. An important key to self-confidence is preparation.”  
–Arthur Ashe***

Job interviews can be nerve racking and scary. With proper practice and preparation, interview stress will melt away allowing you to focus on why you are the right hire for a job. The goal of this handbook is to help you understand common interview formats, questions and strategies for success, leaving you prepared to handle even the most intense of interviews.



Average number of people applying for any given job:

118

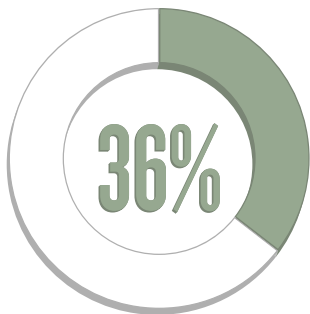


20%

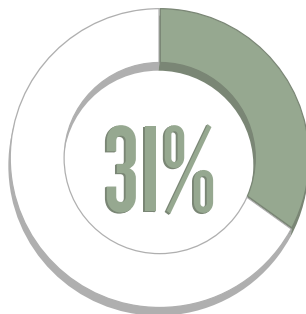
of those applicants get an interview.

## What do employers look for before making an offer?

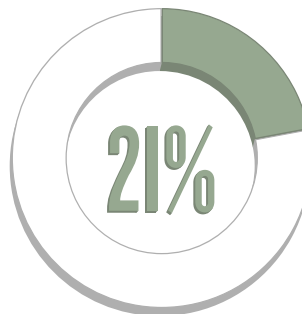
multitasking skills



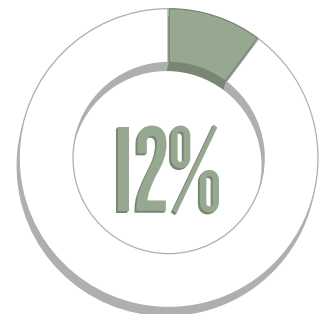
initiative



creative thinking



something else in the candidate



The average length of an interview is

40 MINUTES

When meeting candidates, employers mostly pay attention to:



the way they dress, act, and walk through the door



the quality of their voice, grammar and overall confidence



what they say

In a survey consisting of 2000 Hiring Executives 33% said they know if they will hire someone **90 SECONDS** into an interview.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Page 5 - 24</b>	<b>Common Interview Styles:</b> The Traditional Interview The Behavioral Interview The Situational Interview The Stress Interview The Case Interview
<b>Page 22 - 39</b>	<b>Interview Formants:</b> The Telephone Screen The Skype or Video Interview The Panel or Group Interview The Lunch or Dinner Interview
<b>Page 40</b>	<b>Nonverbal</b>
<b>Page 43</b>	<b>Common Interview Mistakes &amp; Recommended Leave Behinds</b>
<b>Page 45</b>	<b>Common Interview Questions for Top Industries</b>
<b>Page 47</b>	<b>Sources</b>



# COMMON INTERVIEW STYLES



***“The better you can understand the different types of interview questions the more confident you will be in answering them.”***

Hiring executives intertwine a mix of techniques when creating interview questions. You can detect the style of interview by paying attention to the employer's actions or listening to the way they begin each inquiry. The better you understand each question, the easier the interview process will become.



# COMMON INTERVIEW STYLES: THE TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW



# THE TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW

Traditional Interviews are the most common interview style. All applicants are asked the same questions and employers evaluate applicants using a common rating score.

Traditional Interviews are typically conducted on-site or over the phone. Interviewers ask general questions about an applicant's job experience, such as professional achievements, GPA, and technical experience. Traditional Interviews allow job candidates to build rapport with the hiring manager through casual conversation. The goal is to be straightforward and fair in selecting hires.

## Designed to assess:

- How well you fit with the company culture and how well your skills complement the department you are looking to join.
- Your goals and experience.
- Your ability to interact in a professional and productive manner.

## Companies that use this interview style:



## Story from the Trenches, Digitas Interview:

“At my Digitas Interview they didn’t ask any case studies and instead just asked about my experience in the field. I failed to prepare for this open-ended question and was unable to expound on my experience. I was only able to mumble a few bits and pieces of my experience, and wish I had thought through a more complete response.”





# THE TRADITIONAL INTERVIEW

## Example Questions:

Please describe yourself.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Why are interested in working with us?



## Informational Tips:

When asked to describe yourself provide a 1 to 2 minute answer summarizing your qualifications and the professional value you plan to contribute to the organization.

**DO NOT RAMBLE** when asked an open-ended question. Maintain focus and provide concise answers.

Whenever possible, give specific examples of when you have utilized skills that address the questions an interviewer is asking.

Highlight personal characteristics that make you unique.



# COMMON INTERVIEW STYLES: THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW



# THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

The Behavioral Interview has become one of the most popular interview formats especially among Fortune 500 companies like Google and Morgan Stanley. Employers will ask you to share details about past work you've performed that is similar to the work you will be doing in this new role. Employers will ask follow-up questions in order to understand your thought process and performance in past jobs and predict your potential for future success.

**70%** of Fortune 500 companies use this technique.

**55%** of behavioral questions have been deemed predictive of future on-the-job success vs 10% of traditional interview questions

## Designed to assess:

- Future on-the-job behavior.
- Interpersonal skills; understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness.
- Problem assessment, problem solving, and organizational skills.

## Companies that use this interview style:



## Story From the Trenches, Google Interview:

“My Google interview was professional and friendly. They asked a sequence of behavioral and hypothetical questions. It was helpful to understand Google’s products before going into the interview. Despite how much prep you do, interviewers will find a way to have questions that are unexpected. For my administrative assistant role I had to articulate my framework for planning events and managing logistics for large gatherings of people and pull from past experiences.”



# THE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW

## Example Questions:

Pay attention to the way the interviewer begins each question.

Give me an example of a time that you motivated others.

Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.

Describe a process you find effective when faced with a large or critical decision.



## Informational Tips:

Use the STAR Method when responding to behavioral-based interview questions.

**S**ituation: Describe the situation you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. Detail a specific event from a previous job, volunteer experience, or relevant event. (Be specific, not vague.)

**T**ask: What was the goal you were working towards?

**A**ction: Describe the actions you took to address the situation or problem. What steps did you take? Focus your answer around what YOU did, not what WE or the TEAM did.

**R**esult: Did you solve the problem? What were the results? Describe the outcome of your actions and sell yourself!



# COMMON INTERVIEW STYLES: THE SITUATIONAL INTERVIEW



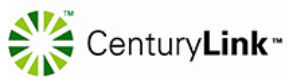
# THE SITUATIONAL INTERVIEW

Situational Interviews focus on the future (unlike behavioral interviews which focus on the past). This interview type consists of questions that relate to hypothetical situations that may happen on the job.

## Designed to assess:

- Future job performance.
- Position suitability.
- Self-presentation and vocabulary.

## Companies that use this interview style:



### Story From the Trenches, YMCA Interview:

“If you were alone (no supervisors around), the phone is ringing, and a difficult customer is at the front of the line, what would you do?”

### Story From the Trenches, Century Link Interview:

“If a customer had a problem and we assigned engineering resources to solve it, but the customer solved it themselves and didn’t want to pay, how would you handle that? Give them credit, make them pay, etc?”



# THE SITUATIONAL INTERVIEW

## Example Questions:

What would you do in situation XYZ?

How would you deal with a significant mistake that you made at work?

How would you handle an uncooperative colleague?

A co-worker tells you in confidence that she plans to call in sick while actually taking a vacation. What would you do and why?



## Informational Tips:

Envision yourself actually doing the job you are asked to do.

During the interview reference buzzwords from the job description such as "time management" or "ability to multitask."

Give specific and detailed answers when asked how you would handle situations on the job.



# COMMON INTERVIEW STYLES: THE STRESS INTERVIEW





# THE STRESS INTERVIEW

Stress Interviews are designed to test your patience. To put candidates on the defense, the hiring executive may sound sarcastic or pause for an extended period of time. They may seem uninterested, ask odd irrelevant questions or take excessive notes to distract or upset you. It is uncommon for an entire interview to be based off of stress questions, so keep your cool and respond as best as possible. Positions in areas like law enforcement, sales, finance, and management are the most likely to utilize this interview style.

## Designed to assess:

- How well candidates handle criticism.
- How candidates act during stressful or unusual situations.
- A candidate's emotional intelligence.

## Companies that use this interview style:



## Story From the Trenches, Bain Interview:

"I had been interviewing for a number of hours when I walked into my second to last interview with one of the partners. When I entered his office he was on the phone. When he hung up he was full of energy. He said he didn't want to interview but instead just shoot the shit. He jumped all over the place with a bunch of oddball questions. He was funny and eventually asked me, "What's the largest animal I could kill with my bare hands?" I kept my cool and responded with "human." I got the job."



# THE STRESS INTERVIEW

## Example Questions:

Keep in mind that this interview process is to test you.

If you caught a colleague stealing from the office, how would you handle the situation?

Tell me a joke. Entertain me for five minutes and then we'll see if I want to stay and learn more about you.

How do you feel the interview is going?

You don't make eye contact very much, do you have problems with your father?



## Informational Tips:

Don't be intimidated and maintain eye contact.

Don't be afraid to ask for clarification.

Don't rush your answer, collect your thoughts, and calmly respond.



# COMMON INTERVIEW STYLES: THE CASE INTERVIEW



# THE CASE INTERVIEW

The case interview, popular among consulting firms, is an interactive analysis of a business question. The interviewer presents the applicant with a business problem then asks the candidate to provide a solution, but there is no “right” answer. Hiring managers want to see the candidate’s analytical and creative thought process.

## Designed to assess:

- “On the spot” problem solving skills and creativity.
- Logical thought processes and speed of analysis.
- Leadership, quantitative skills, and flexibility.
- Listening skills.
- Business and common sense.

## Companies that use this interview style:



NORDSTROM

## Story From the Trenches, The Nielsen Company Interview

"You are a senior project manager with the option to choose one of two clients for your next project: Client A, whose brand A has a very broad customer base consisting of customers who buy Brand A infrequently. Client B, whose brand B has a much smaller but more loyal customer base. If you had enough resources to conduct research for only one brand, which would you pick (and believe will be most successful), and why?"



# CASE INTERVIEW EXAMPLE QUESTIONS & TIPS:

## Example Questions:

Below is a graph of a made up company that sells widgets. Along the x axis are sales of widgets. On the Y-axis are costs. Even at zero widgets sold costs are \$10,000. Why would this be and what is this type of cost called?

If you had to develop a strategy for launching a new discount version of our product where would you begin? Outline your steps using a whiteboard.

Your client manufactures hair products. It's thinking about entering the sunscreen market. Tell me if you think this is a good idea and why?

Honda claims it is the safest car in the world because fewer people die in a Honda than in a car made by any other manufacturer in the world. What's wrong with this conclusion?



## Informational Tips:

Ask the interviewer logical questions to help you better evaluate and solve the problem, and listen carefully to the answers that you receive!

If the interviewer provides you with a business case, make sure to take detailed notes.

Create a logical and clear structure to your analysis that you can easily walk employers through.



# INTERVIEW FORMATS



***“Each interview format requires different skills and approaches to make the best impression.”***

Interview Formats describe the place and mechanics of your interview. Over the course of applying to internships and jobs it’s likely you’ll experience a large variety of interview formats from in-person interviews to Skype and video calls. Each interview format requires different skills and approaches to make the best impression. Our goal is to help you learn all the tips and tricks necessary to ace your next interview, regardless of format.



# INTERVIEW FORMATS

## THE TELEPHONE SCREEN





# THE TELEPHONE SCREEN

Many companies use Phone Screens to narrow down large applicant pools. Phone screens are usually traditional interviews where an employer will go over your resume and try to find any holes or issues that easily disqualify you from the applicant pool. Telephone screenings can last anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour depending on the flow of conversation.

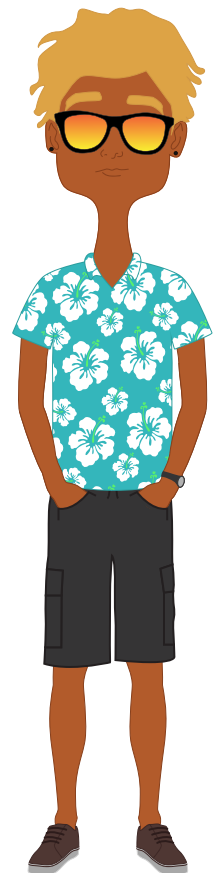
## Why is this method used?



A traditional interview that can lead to a hire or in-person interviews



To make sure that applicants meet the minimum job requirements



To test for cultural fit

# THE TELEPHONE SCREEN

## **Story from the Trenches, Nordstroms Retail Management Interview:**

“My scheduled time was at 10:30am, but the lady interviewing me didn’t end up calling until 12:20pm. I waited in anticipation for over an hour, which was awful. Here are a few questions she asked:

1. Tell me about a recent leadership role you have had?
2. Where do you want to be 5 years from now?
3. Tell me about a time when you had a small competition within a working environment, how did you feel about the competition?

After the phone interview they will tell you they want a second interview, if not, I’m guessing they’re not interested.”

## **Story from the Trenches, Apple Manufacturing Engineer Interview:**

“I had a quick phone call with the recruiter and was asked the standard questions regarding why I was looking for a job, was I willing to relocate, etc. After this brief (10 minute) phone interview, I received an email and scheduled another brief phone interview with another recruiter, then again with a hiring manager.

The conversation with the hiring manager was very technically focused on manufacturing processes, plastics, metals, composites, tooling, machine tools, inspection, surface finishing, treatments, etc. This was about 30 minutes and the manager was a pleasure to talk to. He had a great sense of humor and the conversation although technical, was enjoyable and relaxed.

Following this I received an email and was invited for an on site interview. The Apple travel site even takes care of your airfare, hotel, and rental car.”

**NORDSTROM**

  
Think different.



# THE TELEPHONE SCREEN

## Informational Tips:

Create a general script: Have key information, including your resume, notes about the company and any cue cards you have prepared next to the phone.

Have your laptop near so you can utilize the web to reference the company's website. (Don't overuse your computer--keep focused on the hiring manager and conversation).

Make sure you are located in a noise free environment. Avoid distractions or unprofessional interruptions.

If appropriate spend a couple minutes building rapport with your interviewer at the beginning of the call. Being able to engage in casual conversation can help show you're a good office culture fit.

Treat phone interviews just like in-person interviews. Practice extensively, dress professionally (even if you never meet the hiring manager), and gesticulate while talking--it will show in your tone and voice.

i

# INTERVIEW FORMATS

## THE SKYPE OR VIDEO INTERVIEW



# THE SKYPE OR VIDEO INTERVIEW

There are two types of video Interviews: Live and One-Way. Live interviews are real time person-to-person interviews conducted online using Skype or another free online tool like Google Hangouts.

One-Way Video Interviews are when a firm sends you a series of text or video based prompts and you are asked to record answers that will be reviewed later by a hiring manager. One-way interviews are becoming popular for screening as companies become overwhelmed by large numbers of online applicants.

**From 2010 to 2013 use of video interviews rose by over 6x.**



**6 out of 10 HR managers use video to interviews.**



**Why is this method used?**

Video interviews can be conducted quickly with tools most applicants have available at home.

Video Interviews are cost efficient.

Video Interviews are particularly helpful for applicants who are long-distance or international.



# THE SKYPE & VIDEO INTERVIEW

## **Story from the Trenches, Zappos Brand Marketing Interview:**

“I applied through my University recruiting website. I created a cover letter video to attempt to stand out, and that seemed to work for me. I was then directed to complete an online video interview of 8 rapid-fire questions (you get 30 seconds to think and about 1 minute to answer. Then it saves and submits your video). You have to be ready for any question here, things like 'If you were stranded on an island and had only 2 things, what would they be?' ”

## **Story from the Trenches, Hershey Internship Interview:**

“They emailed me about two weeks after applying to do a video interview. The interview was a series of 15 questions (most were behavioral based). The questions were read by someone on the video and then you were given 5 seconds before the video started recording your response.

You could review your response but you could not redo them. Overall the questions were pretty easy, but it is difficult to give lengthy responses when you are just talking to a computer screen. Next time I would practice extending the length of my answers and giving detailed responses.”



# SKYPE & VIDEO INTERVIEW EXAMPLE TIPS:

## Informational Tips:

Download the video interviewing software ahead of time and create a professional username.

Dress professionally from top to bottom: The same interview strategies you would use if you were meeting in person apply - clothing, body language, and dialogue are important.

Prepare your surroundings: Dress in light colors against a darker background or dark colors against a light background and tidy up the area around you.

Make eye contact with the camera, which will appear as direct eye-contact to the employer. Make sure your head, shoulders and hands are all viewable.



# INTERVIEW FORMATS

## THE PANEL OR GROUP INTERVIEW





# THE PANEL OR GROUP INTERVIEW

There are two interview formats that involve multiple people; Panels and Groups. In a Panel Interview you are interviewed by two or more executives in the same room, using either behavioral or situational interview formats (or both).

Group interviews are when one or multiple representatives from a company interview a large group of applicants all at once. Questions will be presented to the group and you will need to jump in and respond. Group interviews are meant to foster discussion and see how well you do interacting with others.

## Why is this method used?



### Panel

The hiring committee wants to evaluate you on multiple criteria and different areas of expertise.

Allowing employees to have input in who their peers will be encourages cross-departmental teamwork.



### Group

Designed to uncover the leadership potential of prospective employees.

Designed to evaluate social and team building skills.

# THE PANEL OR GROUP INTERVIEW

## **Story From the Trenches, PNC Financial Services Assistant Branch Manager Interview:**

“The panel interview was very laid back, but formal. I brought 5 copies of my resume and business plan in the event of an extra person on the panel. Many questions from the phone interview with the recruiter were asked again. Many how would you make this plan, how would you speak to this employee kind of questions. There seemed to be more of emphasis on how you fit with the team as opposed to every little thing that you knew about that particular branch.”

## **Story From the Trenches, Zumiez Sales Associate Interview:**

At my particular location, they conducted group interviews. The group interview was conducted outside of the mall. The first thing we did was introduce ourselves. The first test came in at this time and the hiring manager asked each person to either 1. Dance 2. Sing 3. Reenact their favorite scene from a movie. When we were told this, five people left. After this task, we were divided into groups and asked to make a skit including a product sold at the store. Our task was to show how we would sell the particular item to customers. Out of the group of about 15 people, I was hired with two other people. We were hired as temps and could work our way to being on a permanent schedule (if we interacted with customers well, met sales goals, etc.).



# THE PANEL OR GROUP INTERVIEW

## Informational Tips:

### Panel

When answering questions from individuals in a several person panel, open your gaze to others around the room.

Be prepared to expend more energy in this setting-you need to be alert and respond to multiple people.

Bring EXTRA copies of your resume.

Take notes and send unique thank you cards to the entire panel.

You should never ask benefit or salary questions in panel interviews.

### Group

Give everyone a chance to speak and DO NOT overpower the group conversation. Employers will analyze your listening skills and level of engagement.

Be aware that all interactions are being observed; don't let your guard down or lose your perspective.

Give unique personal details about yourself.

Demonstrate social skills and engage with others that are being interviewed for the same job.

i

# INTERVIEW FORMATS

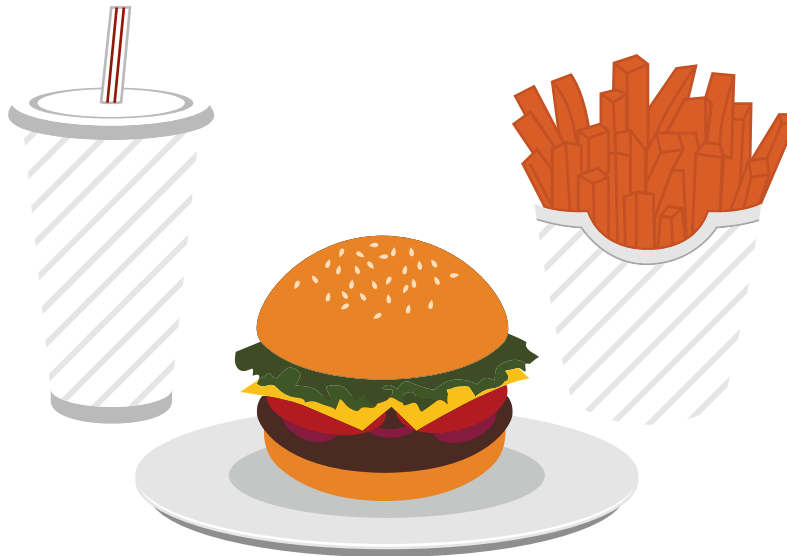
## THE LUNCH OR DINNER INTERVIEW



# THE LUNCH OR DINNER INTERVIEW

Lunch or dinner interviews allow employers to get to know candidates in a casual setting. This interview format provides a perfect platform to convey skills and personality. It's conversational and will switch from business topics to friendly conversation. Your overall goal is to build rapport with your interviewer but make sure you still cover your key professional selling points and make a strong case for yourself as a co-worker.

## Why are these methods used?



Allows employers to review your communication and interpersonal skills, as well as your table manners.

Employers believe that they can tell a lot about an applicant by the way they eat and act in social settings.

Employers might use this method of hiring if you were referred from a trusted source and they want to have a more casual conversation. They also might do a lunch interview if either you or they have extremely busy schedules.

# THE LUNCH OR DINNER INTERVIEW

## **Story From the Trenches, Insight Global Technical Recruiter Interview:**

“The lunch interview was the strangest part. I was not asked one question about my resume. Although the lunch was informal, it seemed unprofessional. I understand the point is to see if you can hold a conversation and would be a fit for relationship-based sales, but having not met either of the sales managers before, I felt a little confused as to why I wasn’t being asked any questions.

After the lunch interview, I was fully expecting to get an offer, and didn’t. I genuinely really loved one of the sales managers, and the other seemed to not like me as much (we just didn’t have too much in common), and I think that may be why. If you don’t get an offer after lunch, you didn’t get the job.”



# THE LUNCH OR DINNER INTERVIEW

## Informational Tips:

Learn about the restaurant in advance: This way you can research an interesting fact about the establishment to use as an icebreaker during an uncomfortable moment of silence.

Pick easy things to eat so you can answer questions and pay attention to the conversation. Don't order anything that is too expensive.

At the end of the meal, close the interview appropriately, find out what the next steps are and express your enthusiasm about the position and working for the company.

i

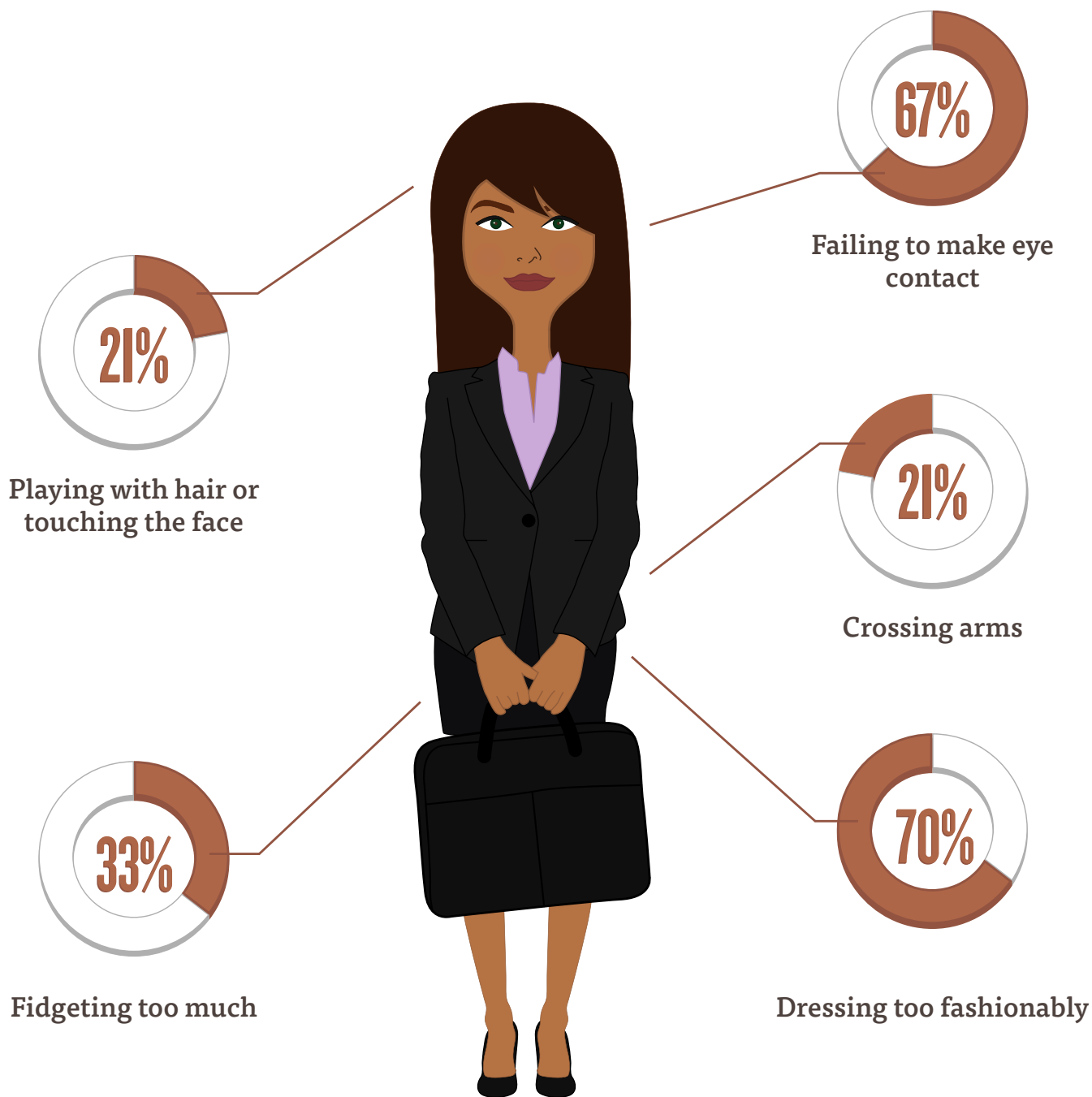
# READING NON-VERBALS





# READING NONVERBALS

Be aware of the nonverbal cues you are giving off during your interview. According to an Executive Hiring Survey the below nonverbal mistakes are some of the biggest contributors to candidates not getting a job.



# READING NONVERBALS TIPS

## Nonverbal Mistakes:

Not showing enough interest.

Failing to make eye contact.

Not smiling.

Playing with your hair or constantly touching your face.

Bad posture (sit erect and lean forward in the chair).

The use of too many hand gestures.

Handshake that is too weak.

Fidgeting too much.







Clothes that are too fashionable or trendy.



# COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES & RECOMMENDED LEAVE BEHINDS



# COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES

-  Trying to be all things to all people.
-  Lacking humor or personality.
-  Over explanation of why you lost your last job.
-  Failing to set yourself apart from other applicants.
-  Not asking questions.
-  Not following up.

# RECOMMENDED LEAVE BEHINDS

**Always leave something employers can remember you by. Here is a checklist on what you should bring and leave at your next job interview.**



Resume hard copies: Bring your most current resume, printed on high-quality resume paper.



Testimonials: Compile a list of sentences from recommendation letters written from past professors, hiring managers, or mentors. Print this list on a separate sheet of high-quality paper.



Business cards: Bring a few business cards that list your contact information and current job or university (if you are still a student). Pick a design that reflects your personal brand.



A portfolio showcasing career related materials, created during school, past internships, jobs, or personal projects.



A custom creation: Bring something specifically designed for the company and the position in which you are applying for. Create a sample marketing plan, design idea, or even a strategy to expand brand awareness.

# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TOP INDUSTRIES



# COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

## **Finance/Accounting Interview:**

1. Walk me through a cash flow statement.
2. Is it possible for a company to show positive cash flows but be in grave trouble?
3. How do you keep up with the financial markets?
4. Pitch us a stock. Who is the analyst at our firm working on that stock?

## **Marketing:**

1. What do you consider the 5 most important aspects of successful marketing?
2. Describe a time when you accomplished a marketing activity on a tight budget.
3. How familiar are you with our target market?
4. What social media channel would you promote our product on and why?

## **Computer Science**

1. What areas or topics in computer science are you interested in?
2. What was the toughest problem you've had to solve? What steps did you take to solve the problem?
3. What is the biggest project you've ever worked on?
4. Give me the code for: Given a string say "I am a human being" the output should reverse all letters of each word but not the whole string."

## **Engineering (Not CS):**

1. Tell us about a specific engineering project you worked on recently. What could you have done to be more successful in achieving your goals?
2. What do you enjoy most and least about engineering?
3. Tell me about your experience in dealing with routine engineering work. How do you keep from getting bored?



# SOURCES



# SOURCES:

Cornell University: Case Interview Questions

Developing and Administering Structured Interviews

Glassdoor

HR Recruiter

Interview Formula Success

Interview Question Types

Randstad Engineering

Resource Guide: Conducting Interviews

RIVS

Situational Interviewing

Structured Interview: A Practical Guide

The Case Interview

The Human Resource Management Review

UTSA University Career Center

Wall Street Prep

