Interviewing: Secrets From the Wharton School

Frank J. Lexa, MD, MBA, FACP

Professor and Vice Chair, Dept of Radiology, University of Pittsburgh and UPMC International

Chief Medical Officer, The Radiology Leadership Institute of the American College of Radiology
Goals for This Session

- Understand the impact that good interview skills and habits can have on your career
- Preparing for an interview-doing your homework
- Make sure we cover the 1) basic ways that interviews can go bad - how not to screw up, 2) core things that you can do to improve your chances and 3) some advanced topics that can help to ensure career success
Do Interviews Matter?

Can Blind Interviews Finally Solve Tech's Diversity Hiring Problem?

The solution to unbiased hiring could be to literally turn your back on job candidates.
Why Do Interviews Matter?

1) A lot of people look the same on paper

2) Residency and fellowship program directors are often not very helpful in providing clarity

3) It’s not about your grades anymore - being number one in your organic chemistry class isn’t high on the list of success factors in life

4) If you get the job, you will spend a lot of time with these people - Compatibility (airplane) test
What **Should** Happen in a Good Interview?

1) The interviewer can gain insights beyond what is in your letters, CV, etc.

2) You have an opportunity to talk about yourself
   - Set your agenda
   - Make your own points

3) Information gathering - make a list of what you need to know
Mistake Zero

- DON’T CONFUSE INTERVIEWING AND NEGOTIATING

- First get the job offer, then do whatever negotiating you are going to do (Bad news- in most first jobs there won’t be a lot of negotiating, at least not successful negotiating...)

Copyright 2021  Frank J. Lexa, MD MBA FACR
Interviewing - the Very Basic Ways to Screw Up

1. Don’t do your homework
2. Arrive late
3. Don’t be polite to the administrator who is setting up your interview
4. Ask your interviewer out
5. Don’t get dressed up, you will be uncomfortable
6. Feel free to text or sext if you get bored in the interview
7. Pick clothes that show off your best tattoos and piercings
8. Underwear is optional
9. Don’t make eye contact
10. Put your feet up on their desk
Illegal Questions for the Interviewer to Ask

1. Religion, race, color, national origin, disability, genetics – www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices
2. Age, gender, sexual orientation
3. Marital status, children, pregnancy, native language, citizenship
4. How long have you lived here, what social organizations/clubs you belong to
5. Do you smoke or drink
6. Height, weight, health
7. …
Legal Ways to Get Around the Illegal Questions

1. Is there any reason why you can’t work seven days a week?
2. Our radiologists do the LPs and myelograms on call - is there any reason why you wouldn’t be able to do this job?
3. Hypotheticals can be illegal (or at least very disturbing) depending on how they are posed…
Bad Topics to Bring Up in an Interview in the USA

1. Politics
2. Sex
3. Race
4. Religion
Stupid Questions to Ask Your Interviewer

1. How is the weather here?
2. How big is this hospital?
3. Do you work hard here?
4. Are you allowed to date the medical students?
5. What do you do?
Smarter Questions to Ask Your Interviewer

1. What does it take to succeed here?
2. What is your vision for the future of this practice/department/institution?
3. What needs to change here?
4. What are you looking for in a candidate for this job?
5. Is this institution growing (and why and how)?
6. Give me an example of why someone didn’t work out in your group or department?
Doing More Homework

- Know the practice and the people
- Know your interviewers
- Prepare smart questions:
  - Get the information that you need
  - Look smart - smart people don’t ask stupid questions
Core Things to Do Before the Interview

1. Do some homework about the group and decide if you are really interested. Don’t waste their time or your time. If you are sincerely interested, then move on to step #2.

2. Intensively research – more on this later

3. Network and look for connections (past and present) to anyone in the group/department, but especially the key members

4. Clean up your social media and web presence

5. Consider tattoo removal procedures early on

6. Plan your travel logistics - in detail
Core Issues: Day of the Interview

1. Get a good night’s sleep
2. No hangovers, etc.
3. Review both the job description and your CV
4. Arrive early - the global business standard is 15 minutes before the interview

That means that you are in the office ready to go. The car parked, past security, up the elevators, hair brushed, dry hands, etc.
Morning of the Interview

1. Comb your hair
2. Groom facial hair
3. Brush your teeth
4. Don’t overdo perfume/cologne
5. Clean shoes
6. Dress up: dark suit (that fits you), white shirt, conservative tie, leather shoes, etc.
Core Issues: During the Interview

1) Turn the phone off unless it is a matter of life and death (and share that with the interviewer)
2) Shake hands - Make sure your hands are dry
3) Smile and look your interviewer in the eyes
4) Be yourself, or if that is a bad idea, try to be better than yourself
5) Answer the questions you are asked
Core Issues: During the Interview

6) Don’t answer illegal questions, but be polite if the interviewer asks stupid or illegal questions
7) Make sure that you make your points during the interview
8) Gently bring the interview back on track if your interviewer goes off on tangents
9) Have intelligent questions to ask the interviewer if she/he gives you that opportunity
Core Issues: The Day of the Interview - Beyond the “Interview”

1. If they take you out to a meal - order from the middle of the menu
2. Be very careful with alcohol
3. Don’t order lobster or spaghetti and meatballs
4. Be polite to everyone
5. The interview isn’t over until you are out of the building
Core Issues: After the Interview

1) Make sure that you understand the next steps in the process
2) Prepare to follow-up on any items from the interview
   • Be careful what you promise
3) Send a thank-you message
4) If things do not go your way, be gracious and don’t burn bridges by making enemies
What Interviewers are Looking for in Private Practice

1. Work ethic
2. Personality
3. Cognitive skills
4. Team player
5. What drives you
6. Roundedness
What Interviewers are Looking for in Academics

1. Work ethic
2. Academic potential
3. Ability to teach
4. Cognitive skills
5. Team player
6. Personality
7. What drives you
8. Roundedness
Beyond the Basics: Interviewing and Strategy

1. Using the interview to win the job
2. Understanding the mind of your interviewer
3. Preparing (doing your homework)
4. Working the interview- interviewing your interviewer

“Every battle is won before it’s ever fought.”

-Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*
Beyond the Basics: Questioning Styles

1. Hypothetical - Can you handle stress well?

2. Situational - How would you handle a stressful day in practice?

3. Behavioral - Give me an example of how you managed a stressful situation while working as a radiologist.
Panel Interviews

1. Try to work the room
2. Speak to everyone and look at everyone
3. See how they respond to you and work with them
4. Make your points regardless of the number of interviewers
5. Make as many allies as you can and don’t make any enemies
6. Thank everyone
1. I am the right person for this position because…
2. I can improve your practice/department because…
3. I would fit in here because…
4. In five years, I expect to have accomplished the following things in your department…
5. I am particularly interested in working with you because…
6. If you are asked a stupid question give a smart answer like the ones above
Conclusions

- Prepare, prepare, prepare
- Dress for the job you want
- Be confident, but not arrogant
- Behave like everyone you meet during the process is an interviewer
- Get into the mind of your interviewer
- Interview the interviewer
- Always give smart answers - even to stupid questions
Thanks!

- fjlexamd@icloud.com