Title: Interview Strategies
URL: http://www.screencast.com/t/MLwb9QEylBc

Begin transcript:

SLIDE 1: Interview Strategies

Welcome to “Interview Strategies.” This session is presented to you by two members of your Walden Career Services advising team.

SLIDE 2: Your Evolving Career Identity

Before we get started, we would like to share a graphic we developed based on concepts from Herminia Ibarra’s book, Working Identity. This visual represents our holistic approach to proactive career management. Our career identities change as we gain new experiences, meet new people, and tell a new story about our academic and professional endeavors. We hope that you find this framework helpful as you progress through your academic program and start the next chapter of your career.

Transition: Keeping this framework in mind,

SLIDE 3: Objectives

Our objectives for this session are to cover the following topics:

• Prepare for the interview
• Showcase your achievements
• Answer challenging interview questions
• Learn how to leave a lasting impression
SLIDE 4: The Interview Process... Before, During, & After

To help us get started, here's an overview of the Interview process that we'll go over in more detail in the next few slides.

Moving from left to right, you want to:

- Research the organization
- Reassess your qualifications for the position
- Prepare relevant stories about your previous work and other experience like community service
- Prepare answers to some of the most common questions
- Practice
- During the interview show how you are the best candidate for the job
- And finally, be sure to follow-up

You can see from this diagram that preparation is key. By following these steps, you will be able to maximize your chance of receiving an offer.

SLIDE 5: Research the Employer

The more prepared you are for the interview, the more confident and relaxed you’ll be.

To begin your preparation, research the organization’s history and mission, and be sure to familiarize yourself with their products, services, brand and strengths.

Know the trends in the field, challenges, problems, and opportunities for you to contribute.

Research the salary range for the position in your geographical area by using sites such as salary.com, PayScale, and glassdoor.

SLIDE 6: Reassess Your Qualifications for the Job

Next, reassess your qualifications for the position.

Compare your resume, relevant skills, achievements, knowledge, experience, education, and values against the job description and the mission of the organization.

As a reminder, stay organized during your job search. Keep a job search folder. For each position, keep a copy of the job description, the application materials you sent, and notes from your research.

SLIDE 7: Develop Your Stories

After researching the organization and taking inventory to see how you are a good fit for the position, get ready to share at least 5 relevant examples from your previous experience that illustrate your top qualifications.

To craft these stories, use the CART acronym (Challenge, Action, Results, and Tie-in):

- Think of a challenge or problem you faced,
- The action you took to address the challenge. What did you do? Did you take a leadership role in finding a solution?
What was the result, who or what was impacted, Quantify whenever possible. People served? Processes improved? Goals met? Risk reduced? Money saved?

It’s important to act as if you will get the job. Showcase your past experience and what you can do for the organization in the future.

To craft these stories, it may be helpful to review previous performance reviews or your professional journal.

For example, an accomplishment could be:

- I created a safety training program which reduced the number of accidents by 60% in a 12 month period.

Another example is...

- I increased my former employer’s social media presence which resulted in an increase in sales of 12% over a 3 month period.

You want to feel confident that you can clearly communicate your accomplishments during the interview.

**SLIDE 8: Practice Your Interviewing Skills**

After you’ve created your CART stories, practice your interviewing skills with someone else or through our OptimalResume system. *We will discuss OptimalResumes’ Interview Prep function later in this session.*

Next, we will demonstrate how to address a few common interview questions through a mock interview.

**SLIDE 9: Our Mock Candidate**

Our candidate, Dina, is applying for a Human Resource Training Specialist position.

**SLIDE 10: Mock Interview:**

**Interviewer:**
Now we will begin our mock interview...
Dina, tell me a little about yourself.

**Dina:**
First of all, I’m very honored to have the opportunity to interview for the HR Training Specialist position today. Recently, I’ve been taking on more training responsibilities at my current job. I also volunteer at the local chapter of the Society of Human Resource Management.

My co-workers and supervisors would tell you that I’m a result-oriented person who gets the job done. As an example, I recently developed and implemented a successful training program for a new customer tracking system within a short project deadline.

I’m also enrolled in the MBA program at Walden University.

**Interviewer:**
I’m not familiar with Walden University. Dina, could you tell me more about Walden?
Dina:
Walden is a regionally accredited online university with over 50,000 students all over the world. I chose Walden because of its strong social change mission, the global perspective of our student body, and also because of the quality of the faculty who have degrees from leading universities. With the experience I’m getting in the online learning community, I’m developing great communication skills, and taking full advantage of the rigorous curriculum to advance in my field. Walden’s M.B.A. program is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs.

Interviewer:
Thank you, Dina. Before we continue with the interview, I’m wondering what salary you are seeking?

Dina:
While I understand the reason for this question, I’d really like to learn more about the position and discuss my qualifications with you before we discuss the topic of salary.

Interviewer:
I understand, but we do have a set salary range and we want to make sure that your expectations fall within that range.

Dina:
I did some research on salary.com and, given my education and experience, the range I would consider is between 50 and 60 thousand. Let me tell you more about my qualifications so you can determine where I would fall in that range.

Interviewer:
Ok, then my next question is tell me about a time when you implemented a training initiative that impacted the customer.

Dina:
My company was working on initiatives to improve customer satisfaction. I worked with a team of managers to improve the quality of our training materials for our customer service representatives.

This training initiative helped reduce the wait time for customer calls by 30%. I received very positive feedback from my supervisor and I’m very proud to share that I received the Employee of the Month Award for my efforts.

My knowledge of training design and ability to achieve results helped increase efficiency and improve customer service. I can do the same for your company.

Interviewer:
Give me an example of an area you need to improve.

Dina:
I tend to take on too many responsibilities at once. I know this about myself, and make an effort to allocate specific times for specific projects. I keep a calendar and practice time management techniques to help me stay focused.
Interviewer:
Great, thank you Dina and that concludes our mock interview.

SLIDE 11: Tell Me A Little About Yourself...

Next, we’d like to reinforce the key points Dina covered in her responses.

Dina highlighted her strengths, focused on recent and relevant experience related to training, and showed confidence in her abilities.

SLIDE 12: Tell Me About Walden

She communicated the benefits of her Walden education, including the social change mission, accreditation, quality of faculty, curriculum, and global perspective.

SLIDE 13: What Salary Are You Seeking?

She deferred discussion of salary, provided a range, and emphasized her education and experience.

SLIDE 14: Tell Me a Time When...

She answered a behavioral interview question by sharing a CART story to demonstrate how she implemented a training initiative.

SLIDE 15: What Are Your Areas of Improvement?

Finally, she shared an area of improvement that was not essential to the job, and explained how she organized and managed her responsibilities.

Transition: This ends our interview preparation. Now it’s time for the interview!

SLIDE 16: Now, It’s Time for the Interview

Just prior to the interview, breathe deeply and visualize yourself in your future role. Remember that you’re already qualified - this is your chance to shine!

We have received feedback from Walden students who practiced and implemented these visualization techniques. Students expressed that visualizing themselves in their future role helped them build confidence, which led to successful interviews and job offers.

Remember, your goal is to educate the potential employer on what you have to offer and how you can add value. Be confident in your abilities.

SLIDE 17: The Interview

Be sure to plan logistics ahead of time such as attire, directions, and parking. Bring copies of your application documents and references.

Pay attention to your body language and remain positive and enthusiastic.
**SLIDE 18: Ask Meaningful Questions**

Be ready to ask meaningful questions during the interview.

The more you know about the industry, hot topics in your field, the organization, position, and your interviewers, the better questions you’ll be able to ask.

This is your opportunity to engage them in a conversation! Let your personality and enthusiasm shine through! Show genuine interest in learning more about the organization and be natural in your responses. This is also a chance for you to determine if the organization is a good fit for you.

Use your judgment to determine what questions would be appropriate for a specific interview.

For example, *a candidate* was concerned that her interviewers thought she was over-qualified, so near the end of the interview she asked “Do you have any concerns about my application?” An interviewer expressed concern that she was overqualified. She confirmed why the position was a perfect fit for her and the organization, and expressed her enthusiasm. Her response convinced the employer she was an excellent fit, resulting in a job offer.

**SLIDE 19: After the Interview**

After the interview, continue to stay in touch with your potential employer and express your interest in the position. Send a thank you email or letter to all interviewers within 24 hours expressing your interest and restating your qualifications. Allow yourself time to reflect on the interview experience. Most importantly, reward yourself for your efforts!

Next, let’s take a quick look at the interviewing resources on the Career Services Center website...

**SLIDE 20: Interviewing Resources**

There are three main areas where we have information to help you with the Interviewing process.

- In the OptimalResume System
  - In our archived webinars
  - And on the Interviewing tab on the upper right side of the homepage. The interviewing tab includes information on phone, virtual, and panel interviews, along with tips for all stages of the interview process.

Next we are going to take a closer look at the Interview Prep Feature in Optimal Resume.

**SLIDE 21: Use OptimalResume for Interview Prep**

The OptimalResume Interview Prep feature allows you to practice interviewing by holding mock interviews and recording yourself.

If you don’t already have an account, you’ll need to set up a free OptimalResume account using your Walden email address.
SLIDE 22: OptimalResume - Mock Interview

After you set up your account, you can enter the Interview Prep feature and select your Interview type and the format.

SLIDE 23: OptimalResume – Mock Interview (Continued)

Here is a view of a candidate, the interviewer, and a coach who provides guidance. You can see the current question for this example is “Can you give an example of your problem-solving ability?”

SLIDE 24: Roadmap to Success

To recap the process we walked through in this session:

First, prepare for your interview by researching the organization, assessing your qualifications, and developing CART stories.

Next, practice articulating your strengths, answering challenging questions, and demonstrating how you can add value. Practicing your interview skills will build your confidence and allow you to show how you are the best candidate.

Finally, remember to further express your interest by following up.

SLIDE 25: Final Thought

And we want to leave you with this final thought from Winston Churchill...

“Continuous effort - not strength or intelligence - is the key to unlocking our potential.”