



WHY Should I Hire You?

It's no secret. A good resume can open the door to an interview, but it's your personal presentation in the interview that determines if you'll secure the position for which you have applied.

Most every candidate for a job feels nervous on interview day. What will *I* be asked? What do *they* want? What if I don't *know the answer* to a question? You hope you are prepared for the interrogation that awaits you, but the knot in your stomach never seems to go away.

There is such a thing as good nervousness, you know. A little bit of stress helps many of us perform well. You cannot eliminate the jitters, but you can bring them under control by being well prepared. What do you need to do?

First, *adjust your thinking*. An interview is not an interrogation; it's a conversation.

Second, remember that *you are not likely to be interviewing if the organization didn't think you could do the job*. Granted they may still want to hear you speak about your skills and job knowledge in the interview, but if they didn't think you had the basics, you wouldn't even be there.

Third, *learn to tell your story*. Actually, learn to tell many short stories about your accomplishments and contributions in the classroom, at your internship, on the soccer field or at your weekly volunteer project. Show how you responded to a crisis, exhibited leadership, learned from a mistake, or functioned as part of a team.

Telling Your Story

When you tell a story you come alive. You smile, you relax. You use gestures to complement your words and your tone of voice becomes interesting to listen to.

Overall, you are engaged with the interviewer and are likely providing them with the kinds of information from which they can make good judgments about your communicative abilities, your analytical skills, your work ethic and your teamwork skills.

They also will want to hear about important qualities such as your interpersonal strengths and your success with taking initiative, solving problems, and keeping flexible. Stories can highlight your abilities in these areas.

Many employers use the behavioral based interviewing method of asking questions that require you to describe your experience. The assumption is your past performance in a job, activity, leadership role, service or class project will predict your future performance with their organization and in the job for which you are interviewing.

A great technique to keep in mind to help you tell your story is the **P.A.R.** method. **Problem— Action—Result**

Problem / Situation

State the problem, need, opportunity or goal.
This provides the context for the actions you took.

Action(s)

State key actions performed using action-oriented verbs and other descriptive words.
This helps you to target your skills to the requirements for the job.

Result

State the result and quantify/qualify the impact it had on the situation, company/organization, or personnel involved.
This helps you to demonstrate the significance of your actions.

Practice telling your story in a mock interview.

Articulate Your Strengths

Who are you? What can you do? What do you know?

Every interview question, no matter how creatively worded or complexly designed, is basically asking one of these three questions. If you know this, you'll not let the questions get the better of you. Instead, you will realize interviewers are seeking to learn more about your skills and your ability to perform them in a competent matter,

Students, we have found, have some recurring hesitations with articulating skills. For example:

- Inability to describe or define their skills
- Little or no understanding of the skills they possess
- Concern about the legitimacy of skills developed in non-paid experiences
- Insufficient knowledge of their strongest skills and the activities that draw on and cultivate those skills
- Perception that job-specific skills are the only ones that matter

It sometimes can help to think of your strengths/skills as falling into one of three different areas, as outlined by the folks that developed **SkillScan**, a skills-focused career development tool.

Transferable / Functional / Liberal Arts Skills

Actions taken to perform a task, transferable to different work functions and industries.

- Based on ability and aptitude. Expressed in verbs.
- Examples: organize; promote; analyze; write



Personal Traits / Attitudes

Traits or personality characteristics that contribute to performing work.

- Developed in childhood and through life experience. Expressed in adjectives
- Examples: patient; diplomatic; results-oriented; independent

Knowledge Based Skills

Knowledge of specific subjects, procedures and information necessary to perform particular tasks.

- Acquired through education, training and on-the-job experience. Expressed in nouns.
- Examples: accounting, Spanish, Personnel administration, contract management, PowerPoint

Keep these three groups of skills in mind when attempting to articulate your strengths in an interview. For additional help with this consider making an appointment to **develop your SkillScan Profile** and/or **practice articulating your skills in a mock interview**. We'd also encourage you to **take a look at the liberal arts skills (PDF) posted on the Career Services resource page for students** at www.lvc.edu/career-services.

What Interviewers Want

Can you do the job? What do you already know or can learn? Do we like you? Do you fit? Are you a risk?

Bottom line. These are the things your interviewer is trying to assess when speaking with you.

To help them make a good decision they look for you to provide concrete evidence of the following:

- self-motivation and initiative
- confidence
- written and oral communication skills
- maturity
- leadership strengths
- interpersonal social skills
- ability to work in team settings
- organizational skills
- decisiveness
- problem-solving abilities
- flexibility/adaptability
- realistic goals
- positive attitude, poise, appearance, enthusiasm

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Impossible Questions.....

These questions are often asked to see how well you perform under pressure. In [301 Smart Answers to Tough Interview Questions](#), Vicky Oliver categorizes these types of questions into five groups.

- “Pop essay” questions
- Questions that have no correct answer (but require logic to answer them)
- Ethical questions with a twist
- “Pigeon-hole” yourself questions
- Questions that send you to confession (or Oprah)

If you could be any product in the world, what would you choose? How many skis are rented each year? What would you do if.....? Have you ever lost your cool? Are you better at “managing up” or “managing down”?

Oliver says your response may not nearly be as important as the way in which you deliver it. Poise, confidence and good humor will help you tremendously when confronted with impossible questions.