Air Force Personnel Center

Successful Interviewing

Crystal Moore, GS-15
Financial Management Career Field Team
Agenda

- Types of Interviews
- Exercise #1
- Interview preparation
- S-ition, A-ction, R-esults (SAR)
- Difficult questions
- Getting off the stage
- Interview process
- Interview tips
- Interview attire
- Follow-up
- Exercise #2
- Summary
Types of Interviews

- **Traditional Interview**: typical interview, Q&A, structured

- **Non-Directive Interview**: unstructured, more like a conversation

- **Behavioral Interviews**: targeted questions that ask how interviewee behaved in past, past performance is a predictor of future behavior

*Resource: [http://career.uncc.ed/students/effective-interviewing/types-interviews-and-techniques](http://career.uncc.ed/students/effective-interviewing/types-interviews-and-techniques)
Interview Questions

- Give us a brief overview of you and your career. Describe a major achievement or a major challenge you have experienced and how has that experience helped you along the way?

- Tell us about a situation where you led a project. Describe the project, the expected outcome, the process you used to achieve the expected outcome, and whether you met expectations.

- Various systems will be utilized in this position, such as DEAMS, CRIS, FM Suites, BQ, etc. Describe your experience with these systems.
Interview Preparation
(1 of 2)

- Obtain copy of job announcement
- Review knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Request core document or position description
- Review the position description
  - Understand the job/role/function
  - Understand critical tasks
- Ask if there will be an interview panel and who will be on the panel (if applicable)
- Clarify the amount of preparation and interview time (if applicable)

You are on an interview EVERY DAY!
Interview Preparation
(2 of 2)

- Allow at least one week or prepare now!
- Talk to people in the organization about the position
- Prepare opening remarks
- Identify 6-7 accomplishments in the last 0-5 years
- Script accomplishments in S-A-R format (no acronyms)
  - (S)-Situation
  - (A)-Actions
  - (R)-Results
- Prepare 30 second “get off the stage”
- Make note cards
- Practice
- Plan your attire

Always Be Prepared!
How to Pick Examples

Mid-Level Position

- Technical Competence
- Leadership
- Initiative/Flexibility
- Process Improvement
- Teamwork
- Communication (oral and written)
- Personnel Mgmt/Conflict Mgmt

Senior Level Position (SES ECQ)

- Leading People
- Leading Change
- Significant Challenge
- Building Coalitions/Teams
- Technical Competence
- Management style (tasks/projects)
- Personnel Mgmt/Conflict Mgmt

Tactical/Operational = Technical Competence/Teamwork/Leader

Operational/Strategic = Leadership/Diplomacy/Results/Corporate Impact

One Team, One Family, One Mission
Include some of the following:

- Description of situation
- Your role
- Individual or team
- Significance of event/project
(A) Actions

- Specific actions you took
- Demonstrate some of the following:
  - Ability to manage project
  - Working independently and with minimal guidance
  - Initiative
  - Problem-solving abilities
  - Flexibility in a changing environment
  - Visionary capabilities
  - Team-work
  - Leading a team
  - Conflict resolution
(R) Results

- Ensure quantifiable results
  - Saved $10M in O&M
  - Reduced processing time by 40 hours per task
  - Completed project 30 days ahead of schedule
- Identify how it impacts the organization, mission, or warfighter
- Effects on future planning, mission, capabilities, etc.
- Awards/recognition received, if applicable
Difficult Questions

- Be honest when you do not have experience in an area
- Identify a strength or experience related to the question
- Describe in SAR format when you applied similar strength
- Be positive

EXAMPLES:

“I do not have specific experience working with Centralized Asset Management (CAM), however, I do have experience working with Operations & Maintenance (O&M) funding which CAM falls under. Specifically, when I served as the Resource Advisor to 902d ABW….”

“I have not had specific experience working with the CCaR software, but I do have experience working with many other financial systems and have picked them up very quickly. When we transitioned from manual TDYs to the Defense Travel System (DTS), I volunteered to become the Financial Defense Travel Administrator, where I…”

One Team, One Family, One Mission
Getting Off the Stage

- 30 second hard-hitting closure
  - Identify what uniqueness you bring to the table
  - Answer why you are the best candidate for the job
  - Leave a lasting impression
  - Memorize it

- Let the panel know you are finished

- Thank the panel members and shake their hands
Interview Process Tips

- Answer the question! (#1 mistake in my experience)
- Do not go over, but no more than 2 minutes under
- No acronyms unless you are positive panel knows them
- At 2 minute warning, wrap-up and “get off the stage”
- It’s ok to ask questions at the end, but not too many or lengthy
  - How long before you anticipate making a selection?
  - What is the #1 focus area or challenge you want the person selected for this position to tackle?
  - Can I follow-up with each of you for interview feedback (if they did not already mention it)?
Other Tips

- Maintain eye contact w/ all panel members
- Do not assume they know you and your work
- Monitor projection, tone and speed of your voice
- Stay away from yes/no responses
- Do not fidget
- It’s ok to check your notes or pause
- Do not chew gum
- Be confident, concise, and sincere

Imagine Yourself Successful!

One Team, One Family, One Mission
Telephone Interviews

- Be in a quiet place (no driving)
- If using a cell phone, ensure good connection
- Have a pen and paper to write notes
- Ok to ask interviewer to repeat so you can write down information to fully answer question
- Ensure you articulate and speak loud enough so it’s clear over the phone
Interview Attire - General

- Properly fitting clean/pressed suit (blue or black)
- Conservative neat shoes (no sneakers or open toes)
- No facial piercings/abundance of visible tattoos
- Briefcase or portfolio (no backpack/purse)
- Clean/fresh haircut (no strange colors)
- No strong perfume/aftershave
- Manicured nails
- No short sleeves

References: Career Builder.com, About.com (Job Searching), Online Career Services at Virginia Tech
Interview-Men

- Conservative shirt (no bright/large patterns)
- Long sleeve, not short sleeve
- Silk ties w/ conservative pattern
- No earrings
- Matching belt/sock/shoe color
- Socks that cover your calves

References: Career Builder.com, About.com (Job Searching), Online Career Services at Virginia Tech)
Interview-Women

- Skirts should cover thigh when sitting
- No low-rise or tight fitting slacks/pants
- Conservative make-up
- Limit Jewelry
- Only one set of earrings
- Neutral color pantyhose
- No open-toed shoes

References: Career Builder.com, About.com (Job Searching), Online Career Services at Virginia Tech
Follow-Up

- Schedule interview feedback
- Send thank you cards, notes, or email
Exercise #2

Interview Questions

- Give us a brief overview of you and your career. Describe a major achievement or a major challenge you have experienced and how has that experience helped you along the way?

- Tell us about a situation where you led a project. Describe the project, the expected outcome, the process you used to achieve the expected outcome, and whether you met expectations.

- Various systems will be utilized in this position, such as DEAMS, CRIS, FM Suites, BQ, etc. Describe your experience with these systems.
Summary

- Prepare now
- Bring notes w/ SAR format
- Don’t use acronyms
- Fully answer the questions
- Manage your time
- Plan your attire
- Memorize your 30 second get off the stage finale

Good Luck!

One Team, One Family, One Mission
Questions?
Air Force Personnel Center