The Unwritten Rules of Interviewing

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WARNING

The stories you are about to hear are true;

only the names have been changed to protect the innocent

Getting your foot in the door

- The MYTH of job postings
 - Most posted jobs are already taken
 - Many jobs are never posted
 - Good candidates make their own job postings
- Getting your resume looked at
 - Use your network (No, it's not cheating!)
 - Use the phone
 - Write letters to the right people
 - Use email only if you really must

15 Seconds per resume

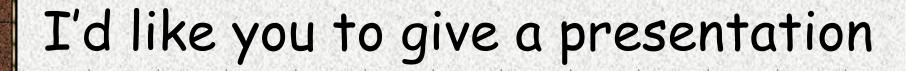
- *Double check your spelling
- Tailor your resume to the position you are applying for
- Try to be specific rather than general
- *DO NOT lie, pad, exaggerate

The initial phone call

- Preparing for the interview
 - Read up on the company
 - Read up on the department
 - Read up on your new boss
- Asking questions
 - Be ready with questions
- * Act excited!
 - Do you really want the job?
- *Warn your roommates, spouse, children, ...

Researching the company

- *Check the Web
- *Follow up on papers and reports written by the staff
- Use your network



- * Who's the audience?
 - You have to know the audience
 - Be flexible you don't know who will actually be in the audience until the day of the talk
- What's the purpose of the talk?
 - High level overview
 - Technical project description
- * How long should it be?
 - Different length talks have different purposes

What should you include in your talk?

- Why is this problem important?
 - Or Why should I care?
- What was the outcome/product/....
 - Did you actually finish something?
- What was your contribution?
 - OK to use words like "we", "the group", "my advisor", but they must be offset by words like "This is my main result"

How long should your talk last?

- ♦1 hour
- ◆50 minutes
- As long as people keep asking questions
- *As long as it takes

The single most important point is that you MUST finish on time.

Probably the most important aspect of the entire interview is your presentation

- The interview talk can make or break the interview
- You need to be able to convey:
 - Technical competence
 - Critical thinking skills
 - Self-confidence
- Practice your talk ahead of time
- Prepare for questions, especially the really obvious ones, n=1

Technical competence is not enough

- *Technical competence
 - Always highly valued, BUT not sufficient
- High level of creativity/curiosity
 - Much sought after and very rare
 - Critical thinking skills and follow-through
- High level of enthusiasm
 - More important than you might think
 - Team dynamics increasingly important

Bad Answers to Good Questions

10 Easy Ways to Not Get a Job Offer

What do you want to work on?

- ❖I'm very flexible
 - I don't know what I want to do
- *Anything you want me to work on
 - I don't know what I want to do
- ❖I don't know
 - I don't know what I want to do

Why did you work on this problem?

- *Because my advisor told me to
 - I need to be told exactly what to do
- It looked kind of interesting
 - I can't prioritize tasks
- I wanted to graduate
 - I'm tired of school and I'm desperate for a job (funding ran out).



- ❖ If you were an animal, what would you be?
- If you are a part of a salad, what part are you?
- If you were on an 8-hour transatlantic flight, who would you want to sit next to you and what would you talk about?

Do you have any questions?

- *I can't think of any right now
 - It's all I can do to stay awake
- No, you've covered everything so well already
 - I wasn't paying any attention
- What does your company do again?
 - I know I should ask questions and I'm buying time until I can think of one

Dinner conversation

- ❖ So now you can relax, right?
 - Think again, you're still on an interview
 - Follow your host/hostess lead
 - Again, act excited
- ❖ Is there life after work?
 - Now is a good time to ask those questions
 - Try to find out how you'll fit into the group
- Stay away from hot-button issues
 - Politics, religion, is P = NP?

After the interview

- *Thank you!
- *Thank you!!
- *Thank you !!!
- Written note, not email

Summary

- Be assertive in all aspects of the job hunt
- Demonstrate follow-through and professionalism
- Show enthusiasm
- Have a game plan for what you want to say and practice it

Typical questions

- 1. Tell me about yourself.
- 2. Where do you want to be in five years?
- 3. Why should I hire you?
- 4. What have you learned on your own?
- 5. What would you like to know about us?
- 6. How do you work under pressure?
- 7. What do you expect to accomplish here?
- 8. What kind of decisions do you find most difficult to make?
- 9. Give me an example of

Questions you might ask

- 1. What would a normal working day be like?
- 2. Can you explain the position and the type of candidate you would like to hire?
- 3. What do you expect from the successful candidate in the first three months?
- 4. Who will the new employee report to?
- 5. Do you see any major changes within the company that will affect this position?
- 6. How often are performance reviews given?
- 7. Does the company provide any training or other educational opportunities for staff?