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everyone needs a little help sometimes

GUIDE TO 17 INTERVIEW TYPES

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1. Overview/Behavioral Interview

Yes, there really are different types of interviews, probably even more than I have listed!

More and more interviews take the behavioral interview approach to identify your patterns of accomplishment and how they relate to the job and company you are interviewing with. The belief is simply that how you have responded in the past is indicative of how you will respond in the future.



You will find that behavior based questions will occur in the majority of the types of interviews that follow. You can know you are being asked a behavior based question if it takes on some form of:

“Give me an example of what you did...”
“Tell me about how you...”

You will easily be able to handle this type of interview if you have completed the Elevator Speech for Interviews and SMART Stories™ exercises.

TIPS FOR HANDLING BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS

- Have a minimum of 3 accomplishment-focused stories for each of the key job requirements.
- Have stories which focus on teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and initiative.
- Have stories that describe a difficult situation/conflict you overcame or difficult coworker you had to deal with. Focus on resolution and/or key learning. (Remember, never speak negatively about a co-worker or employer.)
- Remember to put yourself in the interviewer’s shoes. Base your answers on how you can make them look good and/or solve their problem(s), by telling stories how you did this for your current and/or former employer(s).
- Tell stories that focus on your personal brand and your unique value to the employer.
- Don’t take full credit for all the success of a team project. Discuss your role and the impact to the end result it had. If you recognized a problem and acted on it or helped a team member, be sure to mention it. It shows your initiative and dedication.

2. The Phone Interview

With the telephone interview, there is no opportunity for research. Chances are you will not do the kind of targeted research we talked about until you have set up an interview. In fact, with those “blind advertisements” you can’t do research until they call you!

When your phone rings with the telephone interview or primary telephone screening, you’ve had no chance to prepare. This is one of the reasons we are discussing all of these issues now, before you start your job search. This way, you won’t be taken completely off guard by those surprise interviews. You see, most job seekers wait to bone up on their interview skills until they have scheduled an interview. Unfortunately, most employers “screen” applicants over the



phone these days. These individuals who wait may have a tougher and tougher time getting to the face-to-face meeting. So, make sure you take the steps now to prepare.

Once you have applied for a job, answer every call. If you were in the shower or just running out the door, ask the employer if you can schedule a more appropriate time to speak. You might say, "Ms. Jones, I am extremely interested in speaking with you. However, this is not the best time to have this conversation. Could we please schedule a time later today that we could speak?" This is fine except if the employer hems and haws and says they will just get back to you. Don't count on it! Don't let them get away! Now you must decide how important what you were doing was. At this point I would probably say, "I understand. This is really important to me, so let me take a moment to find a quiet place to talk to you now."

Now make sure you are in a quiet environment with no distractions. Put them on hold to go into another room if you have to. Also, make sure you have a copy of the job posting you applied to or the tailored cover letter you sent. If you keep detailed records of your job search, this will not be a problem.

The most important issue in a telephone interview is making sure your personality comes across over the phone line. The employer's impression of you will be solely based on your voice, not the way you look or present yourself. Your voice is your tool, so be certain to remain calm, speak clearly and in an upbeat fashion while maintaining professionalism. Studies on telephone job search and interviewing have shown that by sitting before a mirror, you are more conscious of your actions, attitude, and facial expressions, thereby performing at a superior level. However, this is something to practice and not just "do" when the interview arrives!

Avoid short, closed answers like "yes" and "no." These answers do not give the interviewer any insight into your individual value to their company. Now is the time to use visual and descriptive answers that make an impression.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. You don't have until the end of the interview to ask questions. For example:

At the end of your answer to the ubiquitous question, "So, tell me about yourself," ask if you can ask them a question. "What do you see as the major challenge facing your department?" or "What are the most important attributes the person you plan to hire should possess?"

Also, don't smoke, vape, chew gum, or eat while you are on the phone. You would be amazed what sounds travel and build an impression about you!

If you find that the interview has become too much of a conversation that has nothing to do with the company, the job or your skills, try to gently steer it back by asking something such as:



"I have some great examples of how I might perform in this position, may I share them with you?"

Or,

"Can I provide you with any details on how I have performed in positions similar to This one?"

Be careful here as you do not want to come across as overly aggressive or controlling. You have to make sure that the employer always feels that they are the one in control.

Finally, don't get off the phone without a second interview, if possible. If the employer or recruiter says they will get back to you, ask him or her if you can provide any additional information that can further your candidacy at this time. Also asks what you can expect to happen next and when and from who you will hear back from.

In scheduling the interview, be certain to find out:

1. The full name and title of the individual you will be meeting with. Get the correct spelling.
2. The time and location of the interview. Do not be afraid to ask for directions.
3. Ask if you should be prepared for any special circumstances. This is an unexpected question and will almost always lead them to ask what you are referring to. Tell them you just wanted to know whether you should plan to bring any personal records or prepare to stay longer for a test or multiple interviews. This will give you some insight into what you are in for and show that you are planning ahead and thinking positively.
4. If you are told that they will be interviewing Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, I recommend picking one of the later slots. Studies have shown that being at the very beginning or the very end is the best because everything in the middle gets blended together. Also, Monday morning and Friday afternoon are usually poor choices because people are into, or not yet out of, their weekend.

**REMEMBER THIS AND....
YOU'LL DO BETTER THAN 95% OF THE PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE CALLS...**

1. Be informed about the company and its products.
2. Be enthusiastic and positive. "I'm glad you called. I'm excited about the chance to be a part of your team!"



3. Ask questions in a proactive manner without waiting until the end of the interview to be asked if you have any questions. At the end of your answer to the ubiquitous question, "So, tell me about yourself," ask if you can ask them a question. "What do you see as the major challenge facing your department?" or "What are the most important attributes the person you plan to hire should possess?"
4. Do not ramble. Stay within a few clear and descriptive sentences that address the topic. Keep your answers to 1-2 minutes.

HANDLING THE FIRST 5 MINUTES OF THE CALL

1. Answer the phone with a happy, upbeat voice. Don't answer sleepy-sounding or grumpy and perk up upon learning it's someone calling about a job. Too late, you already turned the caller off.
2. Be in a quiet place with time to talk. Sound composed, confident, and enthusiastic with knowledge of the company.
3. Take the lead in the conversation. Open with a sincere appreciation – "so glad you called," etc. Show enthusiasm for the company, what you've heard, seen, used, etc..
3. Continue to take the initiative after being told who/why is calling. Don't sit and wait for the assault. Ask questions first to avoid rambling on about details of yourself or sounding desperate. *"Before I start telling you about myself, could you describe to me your ideal candidate for the position?"... "What are you looking for this person to achieve?"... "What is the long-term focus of the company?"... "What are your biggest challenges?"... "Is this a growth position?"*

Thank the interviewer for their time. If this is not the person you will be meeting with for the in-person interview, you should consider writing a thank you letter.

Finally, breathe a sigh of relief, because it is over – you did it!

3. The Panel Interview

A panel interview is just what it sounds like: you are typically meeting with a panel of interviewers. It could have characteristics of the stress interview or the good cop / bad cop interview. All members of the group may ask you questions, or you may only be asked by one, while the others observe. Try to make eye contact with all of the board as if you were



addressing an audience. If you are nervous in front of groups, relax, they probably aren't utilizing this method to stress you out, but rather to let the team evaluate you in a convenient manner. Relax and follow techniques from the other types of interviews.

Again, be certain to have the names of the individuals you have met with and make sure that when you go out to your car you jot down any additional information you want to remember from each interviewer's questions.

- What's the best way to find out the names/titles of each panel member?

4. The Hands-On Interview

There are two aspects to the hands-on interview. In one you are actually asked to perform aspects of the job to prove you can do them. For example, an interviewer might ask an applicant for a Desktop Publishing position to recreate a flyer on one of the company's computers or they might ask an applicant for a Secretarial position to take a typing test. This type of interview is perfect for the individual who wishes they could just cut through all the interview games and "show" how good they can do the job. Try not to think of it as a test, just do your job. Be open as well, if you don't know how to do something, do your best, or in critical issues, ask for help. Feel out the situation for what is appropriate.

Many years ago, I was hired for a desktop publishing job, because after trying to recreate a number of documents, they went forward to show me what I did wrong. Rather than being defensive, I asked if I could take notes, and even asked a few other conversational questions. They said they liked my enthusiasm and interest.

More and more common is the use of skills tests to determine the actual aptitude of the technical applicant. There are resources such as those offered by www.interviewquest.com that provide free, authentic on-line testing and certification. Topics at InterviewQuest cover programming, AutoCAD design, networking, administration, DBA, etc.

There are also excellent resources for job seekers in all fields to test their knowledge or take sample tests (some free and some for a fee) at [BrainBench \(www.brainbench.com\)](http://www.brainbench.com). At BrainBench you will find over 350 tests on: office skills; management; finance; healthcare; computer software; essential skills such as vocabulary, business math, spelling, attention to detail; languages; information technology; and industry specific where you are apt to find a category for you. Subjects range from advertising to aerospace and telecommunications to hospitality. The tests that result in a "certification" seem to range from free to \$49.95.

The second type of hands-on is rarely seen in interviews these days. In this interview, you might be handed a box of odds and ends and be told to make something out of them. Or, you might be asked to calculate the cubic feet (or perhaps the metric tons) of Mt. Fuji as several



MBA grads were once asked in a corporate interview. Or, it might be something simple, like choosing whether you would rather be a stapler or a pair of scissors while defending your answer.

Tips for Acing the Hands-On Interview:

1. First, realize you are being tested to see how well you think under pressure/handle pressure and how you approach problems/challenges/opportunities.
2. Second, realize that in situations like these, there is no one correct answer or solution (okay, there might be, but you aren't expected to actually find it). The real mistake here is freezing up and having no answer.
3. Third, the solution is to try. With Mt. Fuji, if you remember the geometric formula for a cone, you might be able to make some guesses and calculations to make a stab at the answer. The true value here is your creativity and dedication toward attempting it. Most interviewers value that beyond an actual correct solution. Just give it your best.

5. The Wear You Down All-Day Interview

Yes, it's just what it sounds like – interviewing all day, but not just with one interviewer. You are typically passed around from one interviewer to the next. You might spend 15 minutes to an hour with each interviewer. You might be asked different questions or the same ones.

1. Don't let the wear show on you.
2. Stick to your answers to avoid inconsistencies.
3. Get each individual's name and title, noting interview specifics to address later in your thank you / follow-up letters.

6. The Cattle Call Interview

The cattle call interview is usually a favorite of airlines hiring Flight Attendants and Chiropractors hiring Administrative Staff and Medical Assistants. By cattle call I mean that you will feel like cattle when you walk into the herd of job applicants for the group interview. It usually goes something like this:

You go in and are given a job application to fill out. Then you are herded into a room with as many as 100 other applicants. The group will be told about the company and what the hiring process will entail, and each person will probably be asked to stand, introduce himself or herself, and answer a question such as, "Why do you want to be a flight attendant." Then, each person is given a private, one-on-one, five to fifteen-minute interview. Then off you go.



Wow, doesn't that sound like fun? This can seem like a very discouraging situation. So, make certain that you:

1. Have a fantastic marketing resume.
2. Have done your homework on the company to be able to give definitive value with your answers.
3. Have practiced your answers so you can effectively sell yourself with your limited answers.
4. Have dressed impeccably to make a very positive first impression.
5. Get names of all individuals you meet with so that you can follow up with the ever-important thank you letters.

Client Story:

Joe discovered he was going to a cattle call interview with Federal Express, he asked for assistance in standing out from the crowd. They had requested that applicants bring a ten-year work history to the interview. He brought a very eye-catching 11x17 brochure-style resume with a man in business attire running with packages on the cover. Under the runner we had words describing what you would expect from a Package Handler such as "reliable and on-time." We also had the applicant wear a suit with the knowledge that if he seemed totally inappropriate, he could remove his jacket and tie.

When it had been his turn to hand in his paperwork, the interviewers had raved over his creative resume which built recognition and made him stand out from the crowd (or herd). He also noticed how most applicants had shown up wearing shorts or jeans, looking most inappropriate. When the interviewers selected their two newest employees, he was one of them.



7. The In-Box Exercise

Is this something new or something old? That seems to depend on whom you ask. While the in-box exercise may seem a new phenomenon to many of us, it has been around for quite a long time and is currently enjoying a surge in popularity.

The word exercise sounds like it denotes activity, and that is exactly what it does. It is an activity or exercise in which you, the job seeker is placed into a hypothetical role of employee with responsibility for performing certain tasks. Typically, the scenario goes something like this:

Ms. Jorgensen, we are very interested in getting a sense of how well you will perform in this position of Human Resource Administrator. We would like you to participate in an in-box exercise with us. You will act as Human Resource Administrator and respond to a series of ten emails and five voice messages that have been left for you. Your responses will then be evaluated.

I see that you feel a little anxious about this, but you shouldn't. An in-box exercise is really superior to a typical interview because you are able to demonstrate your skills, not just be forced to talk about them.

You should ask if you will be given access to company policy and procedures and/or a job manual before beginning. If these items are not available to you, use common sense when you are unsure of how to respond. Be certain to keep good notes and records and perform the tasks in a timely manner.

Finally, remember to speak clearly, leave positive messages and above all, ensure grammar and spelling are accurate in emails.

8. The Long-Distance Interview (Travel)

While having to drive a long distance or fly to your interview is not an actual type of interview, we need to address the topic because it is critical. You don't want to go to this amount of trouble and then have a problem or be frazzled when you arrive.

If you are driving be sure to get directions from the employer with emphasis on any necessary landmarks if the location is difficult to find. If you are extremely unfamiliar with the area you might ask for advice regarding heaviness of traffic, etc.



You should also research road conditions and/or construction issues. Also, check your GPS or www.mapquest.com for directions to your location with approximate driving time and mileage.

Never underestimate the time it will take to get there. If you expect it to take two hours, then give yourself four. You can always sit in a coffee house or in your car if you arrive too early. This will give you an allowance for traffic problems, emergencies, getting lost, etc.

If you still find yourself in a predicament, call as soon as possible and let the employer know the problem. If you left extremely early and issues out of your control still arose, the employer may be flexible. Or, in the case of one of my clients, they may say, "sorry I can't wait but we'll call to reschedule." A hint here, don't hold your breath.

Now, if you are flying, I hope you will take my advice that is somewhat learned from experience:

1. Never try to fly in "early" before your morning interview. What can go wrong will go wrong.
2. Always have your interview attire and toiletries in a carry-on bag. That way if your luggage gets lost you won't be lost too.
3. Bring your own blow dryer and iron (if attire is not wrinkle-resistant). I know, I know, every hotel room has them, but sometimes they don't work or operate to your standards/needs.
4. Allow yourself ample time to get where you are going.
5. When staying overnight, be certain to ask the front desk or valet about morning traffic and appropriate departure time for your destination.
6. Don't try to guesstimate what time your interview will end for a flight home. You will just find yourself watching the clock and not concentrating on the interview.

9. The Video Interview

These days you're looking at Skype or Zoom as a method of videoconferencing. However, I've left the old school details in here just in case, and because they still represent good advice!



When asked to participate in a videoconferencing interview, be certain to arrive at the designated location with enough time to get started. If you are unfamiliar with the process, you should take time to get to know it and become comfortable with the mode of communication prior to the time of interview, being sure to test audio and video.



Tips for Video Interviews

1. Log-in at least 15 minutes early for a brief orientation. Become familiar with the features you will be using. Test the audio, video, and screen sharing settings with another user to ensure you can be seen and heard on the other end and vice versa. Don't be one of those candidates who delays a video interview by trying to troubleshoot the audio and/or video features!

2. What to wear:

- Avoid large plaids and prints which may be overemphasized on the screen.
- Pastel colors are preferable over white, which may glare.
- If wearing white, add a dark jacket to cut down on glare.
- The color red may "bleed" and should be avoided if possible.
- Avoid flashy jewelry that will catch the light.

Avoid all-light or all-dark clothing. The camera's automatic brightness control will be tricked by these. If you are wearing too much light-colored clothing, the camera will automatically darken the picture, making your face appear shadowed.

3. Your image looks best when you're seen from the waist up, with about 10% of the picture area left above your head.

4. Preparing any presentation materials:

If you had planned to have a presentation or show items during your interview, you will want to have them prepared and tested in the appropriate context for visual display over videoconferencing.

5. Tips and protocol:

- Be aware of any possible transmission delay. Pause for the interviewer to comment.
- Be yourself. Speak naturally and think of the interviewer(s) as sitting across the table from you.
- Look at the webcam, not your picture in the screen. Again, you want to appear like you are sitting across the table from them.
- Keep your microphone muted if no one is speaking. Try not to shuffle papers, drum fingers or make unnecessary noise distractions near the microphone. Any of these issues will cause the camera to shift to your site.
- Avoid too much body motion as this creates blurry or jumpy images at the receiving end.



10. Virtual Interviews with a Robot (AI)

Yes, artificial intelligence (AI) has come to the job interview. The same rules apply here that apply to the Video Interview.

Now we have Mya, HireVue, and others. These are Artificial Intelligence (AI) robot recruiters that can evaluate resumes, schedules and conduct job screenings, and can even congratulate you when you accept your new job.

The only way to guess you aren't dealing with a human being is that "bot" appears next to her name in chat sessions. But, I would rely on that being a fact. And, these AI robots are being incorporated. Three of the five largest US recruiters have incorporated Mya.

Mya: The reality is you need to approach this the same as any other interview – a telephone interview or in-person interview. According to Mya Systems, "Mya is cloud-based and integrates directly into a company's applicant-tracking software. Her responses are so realistic that, even when applicants are told they're talking to a bot, 72% of interviewees still thought they were chatting with a human." So just follow your expected strategies to put your best foot forward and give home-run winning answers.

HireVue allows candidates to preview questions, think about them, and record when ready – a real advantage to traditional in-person interviews. Use this freedom wisely. Jot down the answers before hitting "record" to use as a cheat sheet when answering the questions. Also, use the start/stop feature as needed. If you need a break before proceeding, take it. Depending on how the company adjusting settings, you may or may not be able to re-record answers, so plan to have one shot, just as you would have in a traditional face-to-face, Skype, or phone interview.

11. Text-Based Interviews

Texting is so "now" and it makes for very convenient interviews with less stress and less time planning required.

Apply the same strategies as you would to a phone interview in terms of whether it is a good time, if you are just contacted on the fly. Also, when engaging, focus on the interview. Even if there are pauses between questions, don't be swapping screens and apps, or multitasking. It is too easy to accidentally close out, post something wrong, or create a lag in conversation.



Be sure to sell yourself as best as possible, and take the extra moments to make sure auto correct hasn't changed what you were trying to write. A spelling error or auto correct blunder could be very embarrassing!

There are two added bonuses of this formula. First, if you are in front of a computer, you can be looking things up to augment your conversation and answers. Second, you'll have a record of the chat which will help you to formulate a strong follow up email or letter to sell yourself for the position.

12. The Lunch Interview

Occasionally you will find yourself being invited to an interview or meeting that takes place over a meal. No need to fret about it, just follow a few simple rules:



Etiquette:

It should be common sense but use your manners! This means:

- If possible, order something that is easy to eat and requires you to use utensils, rather than eating with your hands or crack shells.
- Eat slowly and chew your food. If you are asked a question when you have food in your mouth, signal for needing a moment to finish chewing.
- Hold your fork correctly not like you are gripping and shoveling.
- Put your napkin in your lap.
- Don't speak with food in your mouth.
- Don't reach over other people's plates.
- Say please and thank you.
- Don't order the most expensive item on the menu.
- Don't complain about your food or avoid sending it back.
- Turn down and/or don't request any alcohol with your meal.
- Be polite to the wait staff.
- Don't put all your attention on your food or eat like you have never been fed before. You are on display and should demonstrate interest in the interviewer and not the meal.
- Finally, don't ask for a doggy bag. I really think there are two sides to this. Taking food home displays a cost-conscious attitude, but it is considered a no-no. (Note: If the interviewer recommends/insists you take it home, then do.)

Attire:

Dress as you would for any other professional interview.



The Bill:

If the bill is placed by your seat, simply ignore it. Sometimes the interviewer has this done on purpose to see how you will react. Don't become flustered. He/she will eventually ask for the bill. It is polite to offer to pay for your own meal.

Say Thank You:

Be positive, say thank you and let the interviewer know you have appreciated the interview and the meal.

13. The Interaction or Fishbowl Interview

On the outside looking in is the concept of the employer to the interaction interview. If you have never heard of a fishbowl exercise, the translation is simple:

The employer schedules a group of 3-6 job seekers to a group interview and puts them into a group or team environment that he / she will observe. This newly established team is given a scenario and asked to discuss it amongst themselves.

These might be realistic scenarios such as:

"An employee has lied and you know about it. What should you do?"

Or, they might be what-if scenarios such as:

"Aliens have just landed and your group are the ambassadors. What will you do?"

Or,

"There has been a nuclear war and you six are alive in this bunker. You do not know if anyone else is alive or what is happening outside. What will you do?"

Don't let these scenarios scare you. When you find yourself in the interaction interview you need to:

1. Remain calm and recall what we said employers are looking for in an employee. The top components include that the employer:
 - Likes you
 - Thinks you will fit in with staff and customers



- Believes you have the ability to do the job (notice that I am not saying, "know the job" but the ability to do the job - you must be trainable)

Specific Attributes:

Energetic	Self-Motivated
Team Oriented	Appropriately Dressed
Positive	Good Listener
Prompt	Attentive, Interested
Enthusiastic	Flexible / Multi-Faceted
Multi-Tasking	Good / Clear Communicator
Good Eye Contact	Candid, Open and Honest
Interested	Polite and Mannerly
Calm, In Control	Self-Composed
Tactful	Embraces Technology
Analytical	Problem Solving

2. Briefly consider the type of position you are applying for and the specific qualifications and responsibilities.

Is it management and you should be emphasizing visionary thinking, calmness under pressure, problem solving, and delegation skills?

Is it a team position where it's important to be visionary but you should focus on working together?

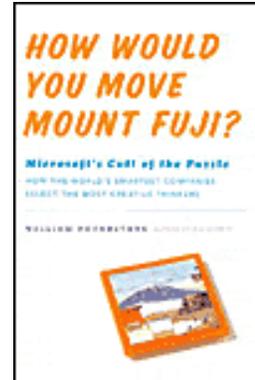
The key components of the interaction interview is to simply remember that the employer is doing this for a purpose to see:

1. How you interact with others
2. What your temperament is in a group setting
3. How you respond to challenges and problems
4. How you think under pressure
5. How well what you do and how you act correlate to the position at hand.

14. The Puzzle Interview

With the expanding IT market, some companies, Microsoft included, have adopted creative “outside-the-box” strategies to identify the best candidates for a job. If you are targeting visionary positions with one of the technology gurus such as Apple, Oracle, Google, or Microsoft, you may want to give this more serious thought.

In 2003, William Poundstone wrote, How Would You Move Mount Fuji: Microsoft's Cult of the Puzzle -- How the World's Smartest Companies Select the Most Creative Thinkers, Little Brown and Company Publishers. According to NPR's (www.npr.org) Wendy Kaufman in the article, “Job Interviews Get Creative: Employers, In Search of 'Right Stuff,' Hone Questions,” the trend is to introduce problem solving questions that help companies seek out talented individuals who fit into the company’s culture.



Puzzle questions can seem tricky, loaded or not exactly fair, especially when coupled with the stress and pressure of the interview. According to author William Poundstone, you can prepare for and attempt to outsmart the puzzles. First, those with limited puzzle experience may be at a disadvantage and need to learn how puzzles work. He states that there are “tricks” in the interview questions themselves and that if you “look inside, you find that most puzzles repackage the same small set of cognitive tricks.”

Consider this common logic puzzle that was presented to Bruce Willis and Samuel L. Jackson in Die Hard III: Die Hard With a Vengeance (it is also in Poundstone’s book):

You have a 3-gallon jug, a 5-gallon jug and an unlimited amount of water. You have no measuring devices. How would you measure out precisely four gallons?

Answer One:

Fill the 5-gallon jug to the top and pour the water into the empty 3-gallon jug until it is full. If you did not spill anything you now have 2 gallons in the 5-gallon jug.

Next, empty the 3-gallon jug and pour the 2 gallons from the 5-gallon jug into the 3-gallon jug.

Finally, refill the 5-gallon jug to the top. Pour it into the 3-gallon jug until it is topped off. That drains off exactly 1 gallon and leaves 4 gallons in the 5-gallon jug.

Answer Two:



Fill the 3-gallon jug and pour it into the 5-gallon jug. Refill the 3-gallon bucket and use it top off the 5-gallon jug (leaving 1 gallon in the 3-gallon jug).

Next empty the 5-gallon jug. Pour the 1 gallon of water into the empty 5-gallon jug.

Refill the 3-gallon jug and transfer its contents into the 5-gallon jug, making 4 gallons.

Following are Poundstone's tips for survival from Chapter 7 of How Would You Move Mount Fuji: Microsoft's Cult of the Puzzle -- How the World's Smartest Companies Select the Most Creative Thinkers:

1. Determine required answer type: monologue or dialogue

Logic puzzles typically call for a monologue. You are given limited information and expected to find the solution without further information.

"Design questions ("design a spice rack") have no single right answer. However, that doesn't mean everything is a right answer and you should be prepared to ask questions. A good candidate will ask questions like, "Who will use it?" and "Where will it be placed?"

Open-ended questions such as, "Which of the fifty states would you remove?" are similar to Rorschach blots. These questions are purposely unstructured. The concept of this question is to actually generate a half hour of conversation, which allegedly shows how smart the person is.

Bottom line: assume a dialogue is required unless it is a conventional logic puzzle.

2. Accept that your first answer is wrong.

It's a puzzle, so for the reasonable individual, the first response that jumps into your mind is probably wrong. You are supposed to be "puzzled" and even deceived.

Don't panic when and if you do not see the answer immediately. Use your speculation time to begin a monologue to the interviewer about why the "obvious" solution is wrong. This will let you begin to work through to understanding the problem while not experiencing that uncomfortable silence.

3. Realize that logic puzzles are not a calculus problem.



If you apply higher math to a TV-quiz-show level logic puzzle then you are most likely making a mistake.

"There is a genre of faux calculus problems that have simple, noncalculus solutions. This is not the place to show off your calculus skills but to see the puzzle and the solution; to cut through the jumble with the "ah-ha" easy answer.

4. Understand that the more complex the question the easier the answer.

Just like on a quiz show, the typical expectation with the quiz question is that the largest fraction of the viewing audience should be able to say, "I should have gotten that!"

This reminds me of another puzzle in Die Hard III:

As I was going to St. Ives I met a man with seven wives. Every wife had seven sacks, every sack had seven cats, every cat had seven kittens. Kittens, cats, sacks, and wives; how many were going to St. Ives?

The answer was right there all along. He was walking alone! All the rest was just information about him to confuse the listener and distract him or her from the truth.

5. Conversely to #4, if the question is simple the answer is most likely complicated.

Sometimes very simple questions (like the spice rack) are actually demanding you request further information.

If you get a one-liner such as, "Why are beer cans tapered at the top and bottom?" then use logic and detail to spell out the answer.

Your first thought might be, "Because it lets them be stackable." However, this would not be the logical, well-thought-out answer the employer is seeking. In fact, the shape of a beer can has much to do with making light aluminum cans strong enough to contain high-pressure carbonation while not having the thicker top end become larger than the overall diameter of the can. Then, it makes sense to also taper the bottom so they are stackable. As you can see, if you don't jump on the first right answer, you can become very detailed with your answer once you think it through!



6. Deal with the unrealistic reality of the "PLB."

"Many logic puzzles speak of the perfectly logical being (PLB)." When and if you hear those words, you need to forget almost everything you know about human psychology. With a PLB question you are supposed to make certain assumptions:

- PLBs have simple, one-dimensional motivations. They may obey silly laws, focus on getting the most money, or escaping the dragon. They never help others.
- PLBs think quickly, are extremely logical, never forget, and never make a mistake.
- PLBs understand the psychology of other PLBs and can make precise conclusions about their actions, which unlike real humans, are always certain. This is not real world and the intended solutions to these puzzles are therefore wildly unrealistic.

So, don't use your own reasoning but try to use that of the PLB: black and white. These questions usually come in the form of, "What would you do in this situation?"

7. If you can't seem to come up with an answer, try to list the assumptions you have been making and see what happens when you reject each in succession.

Go down your mental list of the assumptions and assume the opposite of each one. You may just find that by tossing out one of the assumptions you come upon a solution.

Note: Even if you don't come up with the answer the employer will be able to see that you understand how to reframe a problem toward identifying a solution.

8. Don't let crucial missing information in a logic puzzle stump you.

One of the traps of the logic puzzle that leaves out crucial information is that most individuals get caught up in that issue. When a puzzle has missing information that might be a few different things, the best strategy is to try each of the possibilities. If it were "X" what conclusions could you draw? How about "Y?" Plug each one in.

9. Try to present an original answer whenever possible.



When you deal with open-ended questions that have no one right answer it's quite probable that the employer has heard every common answer several times. This is a chance to truly show how you can think outside of the box.

For more examples of puzzle questions, read the NPR article at: www.npr.org/display_pages/features/feature_1405340.html

and/or purchase the book,

How Would You Move Mount Fuji: Microsoft's Cult of the Puzzle -- How the World's Smartest Companies Select the Most Creative Thinkers by William Poundstone, Little Brown and Company Publishers, 2003; available at www.amazon.com.

There is also a great archive of questions at GeeksforGeeks.com a <http://www.geeksforgeeks.org/category/puzzles/>.

15. The Stress Interview

Yes, it is what it sounds like, stressful. Similar to good cop / bad cop, except all you have is a bad cop, leaving you feeling trapped with nowhere to turn. Like good cop / bad cop, it is most likely a test to see how you will handle stress. On the flip side however, you could be facing a real jerk. Either way, it is best to assume you are being tested and not to jump to any conclusions too abruptly.

If the interview becomes too heated with rude comments and a truly negative attitude, you have my permission to get up and walk out. Don't worry that you are blowing your chance at the job, rather ask yourself, if someone actually treats a stranger this way in an interview, how will they treat an employee that they know? Chalk it up to being lucky that you found out before you got trapped in a job with this employer.

An example of what I mean by too rude would be:

"Are you sure you managed all of these projects on time and on budget? You don't appear to me to be that organized..."

Otherwise, it is best to keep your cool and not let them win by flustering you. Think about it, they don't get the best of you, and later, when you are removed from the situation, then you can decide whether you would like to tell them to shove their job or not!



16. The Good Cop / Bad Cop Interview

Now, the good cop / bad cop interview is about what it sounds like: two interviews, one who is friendly and encouraging, and one who is pushing, tough and gruff. This is a type of the stress interview but has some unique components. The idea is that they will see how you handle stress and also see how you behave in this unique trust / distrust situation.

First, don't be fooled. The nice interviewer is no more your friend than the not-so-nice one. This is a ploy! Don't be tricked into becoming conspiratorial toward the nice one and irritable toward the mean one. Keep your cool, be professional, and answer each one with the same level of professionalism. Don't let yourself become heated or argumentative. Take a deep breath and don't become flustered. If questions are being launched at you too quickly, say something like:

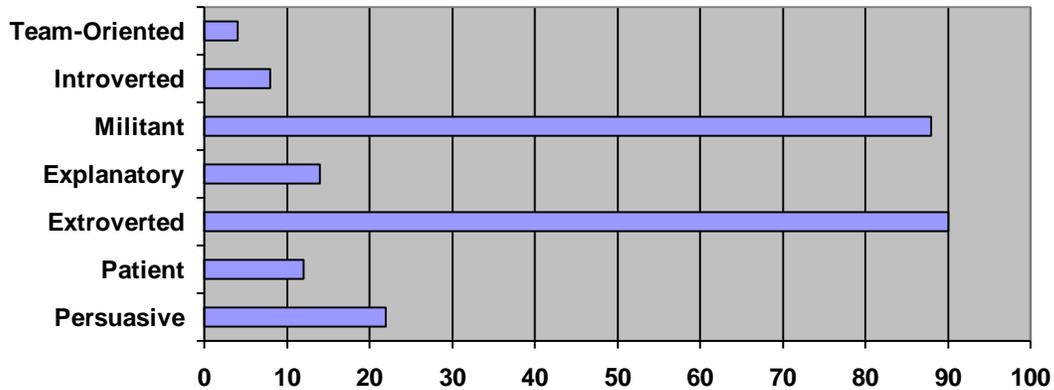
"Let's see, I believe you asked me ... I'll address that question before I get to the next..." or "just a moment, let me answer his question first..."

Before leaving the interview, make sure you know each person's title and name because you will want to write them all thank you letters, no matter how one of them made you feel!

17. Interview Testing

There are two aspects of interview testing.

1. First, there is the actual skills test which we touched on in the hands-on interview. Very straightforward and used to demonstrate your skills for the job.
2. The second type is the psychometric test. Fancy sounding, huh? To my knowledge, this type of test isn't something that you can trick or "win" against. It isn't about right or wrong. You are typically asked to answer a number of questions, usually regarding your preferences on certain issues. The test is computer scored and will tell the employer how you rank in certain performance categories. For instance, if you were applying for a position as a teacher at a business school that prided itself on being "the school that cares" how would these results look?



As this individual scores as highly militant with little ability to explain information, low persuasion level (sales), and barely any patience, they certainly wouldn't be a very caring, considerate, and outgoing instructor! No matter how "perfect" this individual might have seemed in the interview, the test is rarely wrong.

There are a number of different tests, each slightly different, but all with the same type of outcome. They tend to fall into categories including:

- A. Personality inventory.
- B. Aptitude inventory.
- C. Interest inventory.
- D. Combination instruments (combines various types of assessment tools).



Here are a few test examples:

The Comprehensive Personality Profile ®

The CPP® is an 88-question True/False questionnaire that reduces and measures applicant “faking” and increases “honest” answers to determine the “Basic Seven” personality traits. The drive, motivation, confidence, and empathy scale have strong predictive validity for numerous job descriptions.

With these types of tests, the best way to beat them is to be honest with your responses. According to Edward Hoffman, Ph.D., and author of, “Ace the Corporate Personality Test,” there are six dimensions of your personality that are measured. These include:

1. Conscientiousness: Are you completely reliable?
2. Extraversion: Are you outgoing?
3. Integrity: Are you extremely and consistently honest?
4. Anger-Level: Do you have a propensity for becoming angry?
5. Entrepreneurial: Are you innovative and out-of-the-box?
6. Stress Tolerance: Do you remain poised and level headed?

All of these characteristics, except anger, are highly sought-after qualifications.

1. Conscientiousness:

self-disciplined
attentive to detail

deliberate and careful
committed

Sample questions:

I believe that putting in long hours at work is admirable. (True or False)
You are successful if you consistently complete projects that you begin. (T/F)
My co-workers would say that I am a team player. (T/F)

2. Extraversion:

outgoing
social

friendly
interpersonal

Sample questions:

I enjoy going to loud parties. (T/F)
I rarely tell jokes when in a group. (T/F)
I am rarely referred to as a very outgoing or social person. (T/F)



3. Integrity:

honest
reliable

trustworthy
forthcoming

Sample questions:

Employees who take home office supplies are stealing from their employer. (T/F)

It is wrong to call in sick just because you want the day off. (T/F)

When I am undercharged in a store, I tell the cashier. (T/F)

4. Anger-Level:

irritated
impatient

angry
destructive

Sample questions:

I am impatient when I have to wait in line too long. (T/F)

I seem to have a lot of irritating and frustrating coworkers recently. (T/F)

It's natural for children to hit each other. (T/F)

5. Entrepreneurial:

innovative
creative

open-minded
dynamic

Sample questions:

I like to try new things whenever possible. (T/F)

I enjoy learning new things. (T/F)

Sometimes I think the future has nothing to offer. (T/F)

6. Stress Tolerance:

patient
easy-going

relaxed
tranquil / peaceful

Sample questions:

It is common for me to feel overwhelmed at work. (T/F)

I prefer to concentrate on only one task or project at a time. (T/F)

I am comfortable taking criticism from others. (T/F)



Now that you know what employers are looking for in these tests, there is something else you should know: how to survive them. As I said before, the best policy is honesty, but because these tests usually will always have a built-in lie detector, you must be extremely careful not to overdo how perfect of a candidate you appear.

The built-in lie detector is represented through questions that pose a typically unrealistic situation. Unrealistic in that it represents that you are "always" perfect or "never" wrong. While it is true you probably strive to always be perfect, you are human so that means sometimes you just are not perfect! You cannot assume that that an employer will gather that when they review the test. The test gives answers of "true" and "false" or "yes" and "no." These answers are black and white with no gray for interpretation.

In short, whenever you see words in a question that are "absolute," realize this is a planted question to test your honesty. Answer too many of these in a way that makes you too good to be true and you will fail the test. Pretty scary, huh?

Examples of these absolute words and sample questions include:

Everything	Never
Always	None, No
Have Been	Extremely
Most	All

I always feel happy. (T/F)

I always complete my projects on time. (T/F)

I never call in sick to work. (T/F)

Most people like me – or -- All people like me. (T/F)

I have been successful in every new thing I have ever done. (T/F)

Everything comes easy to me. (T/F)

None of the people I know dislike me. (T/F)



EMPLOYEMENT SAMPLE TEST

1. When do you feel your best?
 - a. in the morning
 - b. during the afternoon & early evening
 - c. late at night
 - b. notices you
 - c. make a quiet entrance, looking around for someone you know
 - d. make the quietest entrance, trying to
 - e. stay unnoticed
2. You usually walk
 - a. fairly fast, with long steps
 - b. fairly fast, with short, quick steps
 - c. less fast, head up, looking the world in the face
 - d. less fast, head down
 - e. very slowly
3. When talking to people you
 - a. stand with your arms folded
 - b. have your hands clasped
 - c. hand(s) on your hips
 - d. touch or push the person to whom you are talking
 - e. play with your ear, touch your chin, or smooth your hair
4. When relaxing, you sit with
 - a. your knees bent with your legs neatly
 - b. side by side
 - c. (b) your legs crossed
 - d. (c) your legs stretched out or straight
 - e. (d) one leg curled under you
5. When something really amuses you, you react with
 - a. a big, appreciative laugh
 - b. a laugh, but not a loud one
 - c. a quiet chuckle
 - d. a sheepish smile
6. When you go to a party or social gathering you
 - a. make a loud entrance so everyone
 7. You're working very hard, concentrating hard, and you're interrupted. Do you
 - a. welcome the break
 - b. feel extremely irritated
 - c. vary between these two extremes
 8. Which of the following colors do you like most?
 - a. red or orange
 - b. black
 - c. yellow or light blue
 - d. green
 - e. dark blue or purple
 - f. white
 - g. brown or gray
 9. When you are in bed at night, in those last few moments before going to sleep, you lie
 - a. stretched out on your back
 - b. stretched out face down on your stomach
 - c. stomach
 - d. on your side, slightly curled
 - e. with your head on one arm
 - f. with your head under the covers
 10. You often dream that you are
 - a. falling
 - b. fighting or struggling
 - c. searching for something or somebody
 - d. flying or floating
 - e. you usually have dreamless sleep
 - f. your dreams are always pleasant



EMPLOYMENT TEST POINTS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. (a) 2
(b) 4
(c) 6 | 6. (a) 6
(b) 4
(c) 2 |
| 2. (a) 6
(b) 4
(c) 7
(d) 2
(e) 1 | 7. (a) 6
(b) 2
(c) 4 |
| 3. (a) 4
(b) 2
(c) 5
(d) 7
(e) 6 | 8. (a) 6
(b) 7
(c) 5
(d) 4
(e) 3
(f) 2
(g) 1 |
| 4. (a) 4
(b) 6
(c) 2
(d) 1 | 9. (a) 7
(b) 6
(c) 4
(d) 2
(e) 1 |
| 5. (a) 6
(b) 4
(c) 3
(d) 5
(e) 2 | 10. (a) 4
(b) 2
(c) 3
(d) 5
(e) 6
(f) 1 |



Now add up the total number of points.

OVER 60 POINTS:

Others see you as someone they should "handle with care." You're seen as vain, self-centered, and is extremely dominant. Others may admire you, wishing they could be more like you, but don't always trust you, hesitating to become too deeply involved with you.

51 TO 60 POINTS:

Others see you as an exciting, highly volatile, rather impulsive personality; a natural leader, who's quick to make decisions, though not always the right ones. They see you as bold and adventuresome, someone who will try anything once; someone who takes chances and enjoys an adventure. They enjoy being in your company because of the excitement you radiate.

41 TO 50 POINTS:

Others see you as fresh, lively, charming, amusing, practical, and always interesting; someone who's constantly in the center of attention, but sufficiently well-balanced not to let it go to their head. They also see you as kind, considerate, and understanding; someone who'll always cheer them up and help them out.

31 TO 40 POINTS:

Others see you as sensible, cautious, careful, & practical. They see you as clever, gifted, or talented, but modest. Not a person who makes friends too quickly or easily, but someone who's extremely loyal to friends you do make and who expect the same loyalty in return. Those who really get to know you realize it takes a lot to shake your trust in your friends, but equally that it takes you a long time to get over it if that trust is ever broken.

21 TO 30 POINTS:

Your friends see you as painstaking and fussy. They see you as very cautious, extremely careful, a slow and steady plodder. It'd really surprise them if you ever did something impulsively or on the spur of the moment, expecting you to examine everything carefully from every angle and then, usually decide against it. They think this reaction is caused partly by your careful nature.

UNDER 21 POINTS:

People think you are shy, nervous, and indecisive; someone who needs looking after, who always wants someone else to make the decisions & who doesn't want to get involved with anyone or anything. They see you as a worrier who always sees problems



that don't exist. Some people think you're boring. Only those who know you well know that you aren't.

Fascinating, isn't it? How many of you are surprised at how accurate this is? If it isn't accurate, you might want to review your answers and see if you were totally honest.