



# The Interview

**Brian Alvin**



## Goals of Interview

- Determine if you are a good fit for them
- Determine if they are a good fit for you

## Types of Interviews

- Behavioral (what did you do)
- Situational (what would you do)
- Case Study
- Panel (multiple interviewers)
- Group (multiple interviewees)
- Meal



## What Companies Look For In Candidates

- Technical Ability
- Communication
- “Good Fit” and Teamwork
- Passion and Achievement
- Entrepreneurs (Vision + Ability + Delivery)

## Brian's Secrets to Preparing for the Interview

- Research Company
  - What do they do, where are they located, qualifications, job description
- Come up with 30 questions to ask
- Think of 5 solid stories about yourself
  - Brainstorm list of everything you've done past 3 years
  - Narrow it down to 5 strongest ones
  - Write down as many details and go over stories in your head
  - Find 10-15 sample questions and write sample responses to each

## Sample Questions to Answer

- How did you become interested in Actuarial Science?
- Three words to describe yourself?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What is your education? Credentials?
- What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
- How do you deal with others? With those who irritate you?
- What type of an environment (or supervisor) do you work well in? Poorly?
- Have you had supervisory experience? What type?
- Why are you looking for a job?
- What mistakes have you made? How did you handle them? Successes?
- When was a time I had to give a person bad news and how did it make me feel?

## Day of the Interview

- Dress conservatively and neatly
- Avoid scents
- No gum
- Bring resume, transcript, paper and pen
- Review and remember your resume
- Arrive early
- Turn off your cell phone
- Keep self calm and relaxed

## Interview – Nonverbal

- Make eye contact
- Good handshake
- Don't slouch or slump
- Relax and lean in to show interest
- Keep both feet flat on the floor

## Interview – Attitude

- Show passion and excitement
- No trash talking
- Be confident but not arrogant
- Optimism not cynicism
- Decisive not unfocused

## Interview – Verbal

- Speak clearly
  - Pause before you answer and speak slowly
- Answer questions clearly and concisely
  - Too few or too many words are bad
  - Avoid rambling answers
- Give examples
- Be HONEST – no little lies
  - Companies can tell
- Sell yourself, don't present facts

## Questions to Ask

- Figure out what is important to you
- Ask questions that show understanding and that you did research
  - Toastmaster program you read about online
  - Don't however ask questions just to take up time or that you can find online
- Request examples
- Never ask about salary

## Sample Questions to Ask

- Are there any speakers that come in and discuss other areas within the company?
- Will I have the opportunity to talk with upper level management about the company and how my work is affecting the company as a whole?
- What type of projects do your interns typically work on?
- Describe the job in more detail.
- Do you have a mentor program or something where I can always go to a specific person if I have any questions?
- What opportunities are available for me here when I have reached my fellowship?
- Other than the people, what do you enjoy most about your job?
- How many interns received fulltime offers and how many accepted
- How many interns are you hiring (sometimes online) ...how many from U of I?
- Do I work with other interns on a regular basis or do we each have exclusive assignments?

## Sample Questions to Ask Continued...

- What are some things that you feel make your program better than others?
- What are some specific activities that would help me develop my skills further while working?
- What kind of study program do you have for exams?
- What computer skills do you feel are especially important for interns?
- What he or she is looking for in an employee (top 3)?
- I've heard a few things about the In-House Education for employees and how it helps to continually develop the skills necessary to be a successful employee. Could you elaborate on what this is and would there be any opportunities as an intern to take one of these classes?
- Why s/he decided to go the direction s/he did (PC, Life and Health, Pension)?
- Will I be challenged with a variety of assignments?
- Are any of your corporate leaders past actuaries?



# Interview 1

## Horribly Bad Interview

- Don't introduce myself and say their name
- Bad handshake
- Bad attitude
- Don't act interested
- Poor posture
- Bad jokes
- Swearing
- Slang
- Speak badly of another company



## **Interview 2**

## Nervous Interview Bad

- Limp handshake
- Talk really fast and quiet
- Lack detailed and in depth stories
- Shy and lack confidence
- Nervous bad habits
- Say umm
- Don't have questions ready to ask



## **Interview 3**

## Nervous Interview Good

- Wipe off sweaty palm
- Take deep breaths
- Pause before questions
- Speak slowly and calmly
- Don't let my nervousness get in the way



# Interview 4

## Perfect Interview

- Calm and collected
- Confident handshake
- Ask them how their trip down was and how their day is going
- Have a beginning, middle, and end to stories
- Well rehearsed answers
- Questions for them ready

## After the Interview

- Ask them for business card
- Ask them what next step is and when you can expect to hear back from them
- Take notes about the interview
- Thank you letter is optional but if written well never hurts



## Final Thoughts

- Relax and have fun
- If an interview didn't go well it is not your fault

## Resources

- Great articles on Career Builder and MSNBC
- Career Center Mock Interviews
- Brian's Sample Questions to Answer and Ask