

Topic: Interviewing Instructor Lesson Plan

Time Required: 2 hours

Instructors are encouraged to provide VR&E Service with appropriate comments on this lesson plan and the other training materials via the VR&E Comments Webform so that we can continually refine and improve our training.

CONTENTS

- ADVANCE PREPARATION i
- INSTRUCTOR’S PREPARATION i
- DAY OF CLASS PREPARATION iii
- INTRODUCTION (10 minutes) 1
- CORE PRESENTATION (105 minutes) 3
 - I. The Interview Process (10 minutes) 3
 - II. Pre-Interview (15 minutes) 5
 - Practice Exercise: 64 Toughest Interview Questions (10 minutes) 8
 - III. Day of the Interview (15 minutes) 9
 - Practice Exercise: PBI Questions (30 minutes) 12
 - Day of the Interview continued (15 minutes) 13
 - IV. Follow-Up (10 minutes) 15
- CLOSING (5 minutes) 17





ADVANCE PREPARATION

Check Training Materials

Instructor's Lesson Plan (this document)—includes:

- Guide to presenting the topic (this comes in the form of an outline as well as script for you to read).
- Additional references on subject matter for you to review, as needed.

Make Arrangements and Duplicate Materials

- Coordinate with the training site to duplicate the Trainee Handouts.
- Reserve the training room.
- Arrange for equipment such as flip charts, an overhead projector, and any other equipment (**as needed**).

INSTRUCTOR'S PREPARATION

Review Content and References

Become familiar with all instructor and trainee training materials. It is recommended that you read this Instructor Lesson Plan and the corresponding PowerPoint slides at the same time so you can see how they fit together. Also at least glance over the Trainee Handouts just to become familiar with what type of content is contained therein.

Customize Training

You may make appropriate adjustments in order to accommodate the experience level and the size of your audience; however, **take care not to reduce the instructional effectiveness of the training**.

- Note on the training outline in the next sections of this document where you might interject your personal experience regarding this topic.
- Make a list of the people in your office who are most familiar with this topic and how you might call on them to share their experiences during the presentation. Note this on your outline.
- Highlight headings and key phrases and add any guidance notes to yourself in the margins to personalize this Lesson Plan.
- Throughout the remainder of this Lesson Plan specific recommendations for items to say to the class are included in this

type of font—as long as you do not change the meaning or take away from the lesson, do not feel that you have to say each of the items word for word. More experienced instructors may feel more comfortable changing the wording, while newer instructors may want to follow the wording more closely. For all other material in outline format, feel free to paraphrase the information to suit your teaching style.

- Items you should say to the class are also included—these are noted with the word **Say** in front of them.

Rehearse the Presentation

Practice is the best guarantee of providing a quality presentation. At a minimum, do a complete walkthrough of the presentation to practice coordination between this Instructor Lesson Plan, the Trainee Handouts, and the PowerPoint slides. This Lesson Plan contains icons as references (see page iv below).

Check Arrangements

- Ensure completion of arrangements (room, equipment, duplication of materials, etc.).
- Ensure you have enough copies of the Trainee Handout packets.



DAY OF CLASS PREPARATION

Before trainees arrive

- Establish a “Parking Lot Area”

Note: The Parking Lot Area can be a whiteboard, a paper tablet, notepad, or a flipchart attached to a wall near the front of the class, etc. This area is where issues or questions are “parked” that cannot be readily addressed during the presentation.

Please forward these issues to the developer and other designated officials in order to develop a response for the trainee before the end of training and, if necessary, so that they can be incorporated into the materials and addressed in future presentations.

- Check that you have in the classroom all the instructor materials and copies of the trainee handouts.
- Test the computer and LCD projector to ensure they are working properly (in order for the PowerPoint to be presented). If using a flipchart, make sure that you have markers with plenty of ink left in them.
- Pull up the first slide of the PowerPoint, in preparation for the training.

At the Beginning of Class

Make sure each trainee has:

- A set of Trainee Handouts.
- Signed the class roster.

Conventions Used in This Lesson Plan

Slide #

This convention is used to show you on which slide of the corresponding PowerPoint presentation the information can be found. Use these notes to help guide your presentation.



Individual Activity



Small Group Activity



Large Group Activity



Handouts

Note: Instructor "Notes" contain direction for your presentation of the material.

The Instructor's Notes will appear in a box such as this to provide an easy differentiation between Instructor's Notes and script.

Slide 1**INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)****Slide 2**

- Introduce yourself.
- Ask trainees to make sure they have signed the class roster.
- Tell trainees they should all have a Trainee Handout packet and to let you know now if they do not have one.

Note: Orient trainees to the facilities. Point out such things as where the restrooms and breakroom are located.

- Inform trainees that they are going to learn about what to expect when they are called to a company to participate in a job interview.

Prerequisite Training

- Before beginning this lesson on Interviewing, trainees should have completed:
 - The lesson on Resume Writing.
 - Their functional/skills-based resume.
- Tell trainees that these prerequisites are very important because, without them, they will not be prepared to communicate to the potential employer about how they can fill the job opening.

Attention Getter/Motivator

Note: If you have an applicable, motivational *Interviewing* experience, you may include it in this section, instead of using the below example.

So you were asked to come and interview. Now what? Most people don't know what an interview entails. One of the main reasons why people interviewing for jobs don't get hired is because something has gone wrong with the interview. This class will help you gain an advantage over others by informing you about interviews.

Slide 3**Topic Objectives**

Say: At the end of this topic, with the aid of your handouts, you will be able to:

1. Recall what to expect during the interview.
2. Discuss how to prepare for the interview.
3. Discriminate between the different types of interviews.
4. Prepare answers for some of the toughest interview questions.
5. Utilize the STAR approach to answer Performance-Based Interview (PBI) questions.
6. Discuss follow-up tasks that you should complete after the interview.

CORE PRESENTATION (105 minutes)

Note: This time includes four sub-topics and two Practice Exercises. Each of the following sections will list the the recommended amount of time for you to spend on each sub-topic.

Slide 4

Let trainees know the following:

- Every step in the job hunting process leads to the interview.
- Potential employers use the interview to determine if a job applicant is right for the job.
- The more a job applicant knows about interviewing the better prepared they will be to show that they are the best candidate for the job for which they are applying.
- The purpose of this presentation is to ensure the trainees have a successful interview.

Slide 5

I. The Interview Process (10 minutes)

- Interviewing does not just involve talking with potential employers: it is a process that takes time and dedication.
- Interviewing generally takes place in a predictable format. The following is a brief overview of the three major steps in the interview process:

A. Pre-Interview

1. Potential employer reviews application/resume and develops an interview guide, questions, etc.
2. Job applicant reviews/researches information about the company and prepares/practices answers for potential questions.
3. Plan your dress appropriately (dress for success).

B. Day of the Interview

1. Potential employer greets with handshake, sets parameters for interview.
2. Job applicant shakes hand, establishes eye contact, and takes cues from potential employer about atmosphere.
3. Potential employer asks job-related questions about education, work experience, skills, abilities, motivation, and attitudes.
4. Job applicant answers questions.

5. Job applicant is invited to ask questions; shows good judgment and asks about job-related tasks and project goals, not questions related to personal issues, pay, or advancement.

6. Interview Closure

- a) Different than following-up on an interview.
- b) Potential employer reviews his/her notes, clears up any outstanding issues, and ends interview.
- c) Job applicant verifies next steps and gets confirmation that the company will follow up.

C. Follow-Up

1. Immediately following the interview, sit down and list your immediate feelings and thoughts about how it went. Doing so will help you:

- a) Work on your next interview.
- b) Compose your thank-you letter.

2. Write a thank-you letter

- a) The art of letter writing gives you a great opportunity to stand out of the crowd applicants.
- b) It is recommended that you send a typed or handwritten letter through the mail.

(1) It is usually more thoughtful, more professional and enduring.

(2) Besides, people are usually deluged with e-mails and phone messages and might not pay attention to another.

(3) However, you should also go by the company culture. If everything seems to be done via e-mail, then by all means send a thank-you using e-mail.

- c) Thank the potential employer for their time and interest in you.
- d) Think of this as the last opportunity you have to sell yourself to the potential employer.

(1) Try to reiterate the most pertinent points you made in the interview or ones you forgot to make.

(2) Restate your skills and how they are a perfect fit for the position.

Say: Before we cover each of the three steps in more detail, are there any questions regarding the basic interview process?

Slide 6**II. Pre-Interview (15 minutes)**

Note: This time does **not** include the Practice Exercise that is in this section.



Note: Have trainees turn to page 2 (*Interview Information*) of their handout packets for some tips on making sure that they stay on track before, during, and after the interview. Make note that this handout also gives information about interviewing with a disability.

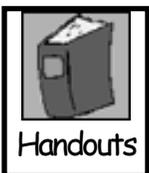
A. Research the company for which you are interviewing

1. This will help you prepare to answer the potential employer's questions effectively/appropriately.
2. Based on this research make a list of questions to ask your potential employer(s).
 - a) Examples of areas where you can ask questions include:
 - Corporate culture
 - Mission statement
 - Types of jobs
 - Size of Company
 - b) Page 4 of the Interview Information handout contains resources that can be used to help formulate questions.
 - c) Make sure the answer to your question is not addressed on the company website.

B. Interview Questions

Note: Have trainees turn to page 10 (*How to Answer the 64 Toughest Interview Questions*) of their handout packets for a list of interview questions, along with appropriate responses.

- Let trainees know that:
 - During an interview, there are common questions that employers frequently ask: they should be prepared to answer these questions in order to ensure that they present themselves in a favorable manner.
 - They will practice answering some of them today, and that they should familiarize themselves with the entire list prior to the day of their interview.



- Practice makes perfect and that they should go into their interview prepared and comfortable with interview questions.
- Tell trainees that they will now be presented with some additional things that they can prepare and practice in order to answer questions effectively.
 1. The most effective way to become comfortable and 'polished' with interviewing is to practice. One very effective way to practice is to participate in a mock interview. Ask your EC, VRC, friend, or relative to play the role of a potential employer.
 2. Anticipate/predict what questions the potential employer might ask
 - a) Put yourself in the employer's shoes and think about what you would want to know if you were hiring.
 - b) Choose several questions that an employer might ask; then write out, and memorize, your answers.
 - c) Review these questions during your mock interview(s).
 3. Be believable—the way you answer questions can be as important as what you say
 - a) Maintain eye contact.
 - b) Give short, crisp, smooth answers that do not sound memorized.
 - c) Be sure not to talk too much (50% is a good rule of thumb).
 - d) Modify your verbal style and actions to match those of the potential employer.
 4. Have a positive attitude
 - a) Say positive things about your former supervisor, previous companies, and working conditions.
 - b) Show that you focus on solving problems rather than broadcasting them.
 - c) Find ways to let your potential employer(s) know you are a team player: employers want to hire people who have a "can do" attitude.

Slide 7

Handouts

C. Prepare to come “dressed to impress”

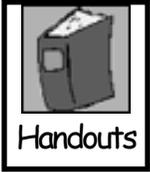
Note: Have trainees turn to page 8 (*Dressing for Success*) of their handout packets for good guidance on how to dress for an interview.

- Inform trainees that they should research the company to get an idea about the company's “culture” and should plan their outfit accordingly.
 1. How you dress will vary based on the position for which you are applying (i.e. professional versus technical). Regardless of the **type** of job for which you are applying:
 - a) Your dress should be neat, clean, and pressed.
 - b) You should be well groomed (cover tattoos, remove piercings, trim facial hair, etc.).
 2. Dress for the job you want.
 3. Do not just prepare your outfit...remember to come prepared with “extras”. It is a good idea to bring:
 - a) Extra copies of your resume and your list of references.
 - b) A notepad so you can take notes during the interview.
 - c) Your pre-prepared questions that you plan on asking your potential employer(s).
 - d) Any notes that you may have taken while you were researching the company, in case you need to jog your memory.

Transition to Practice Exercise

- Let trainees know that, before continuing with information about how they should prepare for an interview, they will participate in a brief Practice Exercise.

Say: Before we begin, are there any questions?

Slide 8**Practice Exercise: 64 Toughest Interview Questions (10 minutes)****Individual and Large Group Activity**

Note: Have trainees turn to page 10 (*How to Answer the 64 Toughest Interview Questions*) of their handout packets.

- In this exercise, trainees will prepare and practice answering some of the most commonly asked interview questions.
- Have each individual take a couple of minutes to quickly read the list in the handout packet and prepare their answer to one question.
- Afterward the class will come together as a group to discuss some of their answers and offer input.

Note: If, at any point in this exercise, the trainees have any questions that cannot be answered record them in the Parking Lot Area.

- Let the trainees know that the next part of this training will give them an idea of what to expect during the actual day of the interview. The first discussion point will be about the four different types of interviews that they may encounter.

Say: Are there any questions regarding how to prepare for an interview before we move on?

Slide 9**III. Day of the Interview (15 minutes)**

Let the trainees know:

- There are four different types of interviews that are conducted by various people within the company.
- They will have to respond differently based on which type of interview they encounter.

A. There are four different types of interviews:**1. Telephone/Teleconference or other Electronic Interviews:**

a) Often used as a pre-screening interview technique to narrow down the applicant pool.

(1) You should listen carefully to questions and answer appropriately.

2. One-on-One

a) Involves two people: you (the job applicant) and one potential employer.

b) You may be interviewed by the following types of people:

(1) Human Resources

(a) They will evaluate your overall potential and how you would fit within the company.

(b) You should focus on how you present yourself rather than your technical expertise.

(2) Supervisor

(a) They are directly responsible for getting the work done and want to know if you can handle the job.

(b) You should focus on the nuts and bolts of the job and show that you are a team player.

(3) Co-worker

(a) They are not trained interviewers but will evaluate if they can work with you.

(b) You should focus on being positive and pleasant. Give them a short statement about your background and show your willingness to be a member of the team.

Slide 10**Slide 11****Slide 12****Slide 13****Slide 14**

Slide 15

3. Panel

- a) Formal and structured, with a specific set of questions.
- b) Involves multiple people: you (the applicant) and two or more interviewers.
- c) Each panel member takes turns asking a question(s).
 - (1) Oftentimes they will ask performance based interview (PBI) questions.

Slide 16

Handouts

Note: Have trainees turn to page 37 (*Performance-Based Interview (PBI) Questions*) of their handout packets to see examples of PBI questions that they could be asked.

4. Performance-Based Interviews (PBI)

- a) Also known as Competency-Based or Behavioral Interviewing.
- b) PBI questions focus on multiple categories:
 - (1) Personal Mastery,
 - (2) Technical Skills,
 - (3) Interpersonal Effectiveness,
 - (4) Customer Service,
 - (5) Flexibility/Adaptability,
 - (6) Creative and Systems Thinking, and
 - (7) Organizational Stewardship.
- c) You must use the STAR approach to answering interview questions



Handouts

Note: Have trainees turn to page 48 (*The Star Interview*) of their handout packets to learn how to use the STAR approach when answering these questions.

- (1) STAR stands for:
 - (a) ST=Situation or Task (describe the situation or task you were given)
 - (b) A=Action (describe the action or steps you took)
 - (c) R=Result (describe how you successfully resolved the situation or completed task)
- (2) Using this type of approach when answering interview questions showcases your skills using concrete examples of your past performance.

This proves to your potential employer(s) that you:

- (a) Have had the necessary experience.
- (b) Are an effective problem-solver.

Say: Take the following real-life story, as told by an EC, as an example:

This EC sat in on interviews with seven veterans interviewing for a VSR position. The potential employer asked each job applicant the same set of PBI questions. One question was, "Tell me about a time when you had to work in a group and had difficulty with someone in the group. What did you do to resolve the issue? What was the outcome?"

Six of the seven applicants replied the following way, "If I had difficulty in a group or with someone, I would try to resolve it with them but, if that doesn't work, I would take it to the supervisor." Note that these six did **not** answer the question; instead they speculated about what they would do.

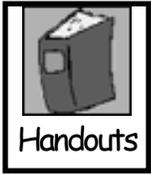
When answering questions that begin with "tell me" or "describe" or "give me an example" it is best to use the STAR approach. One of the veteran job applicants used this approach and told a story of how she, an older woman, was assigned to a group project with younger students and how she felt out of place. She told how she realized that she was the one who was uncomfortable and insecure, not her group members. Upon this realization she started speaking up and contributing to the project. The younger classmates valued her life experiences and her help and they all got an A.

With this story the veteran got the job because she incorporated real-life problem-solving experience into her interview.

Transition to Practice Exercise

- Let trainees know that, before continuing with learning about the interview itself, they will participate in a practice exercise.

Say: Before we begin, are there any questions?

Slide 17**Practice Exercise: PBI Questions (30 minutes)****Individual and Small Group Activity**

Note: Have trainees turn to the following pages of their handout packets:

- Pg. 37 *Performance-Based Interview (PBI) Questions*
- Pg. 48 *The STAR Interview*

- In this exercise let trainees know that they will be applying some of the information that was just covered.
- Have each individual take ten minutes to look through page 37, a listing of Performance-Based Interview (PBI) Questions. Tell them to answer one question found there using the STAR approach, discussed on page 48 of their handouts.
- Afterward direct trainees to break into small groups and practice asking and answering the questions that they have chosen.
- Remind the trainees that the key factors when answering interview questions are to be believable and have a positive attitude.

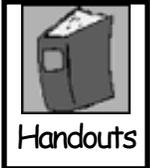
Note: During the group exercise walk around the room, listening and offering advice as warranted. If the trainees have any questions that can not be answered record them in the Parking Lot Area.

- Let the trainees know that the next part of the training will cover the actions trainees should take on the day of the interview.

Say: Before we move on are there any questions regarding any of the four different types of interviews or about how to answer Performance-Based Interview questions?

Slide 18**Day of the Interview continued (15 minutes)**

- Remind trainees that knowing the types of interviews and how to prepare for them is not the only thing to think about on the day of the interview.
- They also need to take into account how they present themselves and what actions they should take during the interview itself.

B. Create a good first impression

Note: Have trainees turn to page 9 (The First 10 Minutes Are Top Priority) of their handout packets. Let trainees know that it offers some good information for before and during the interview.

1. Dress Appropriately
 - a) Be clean and neat.
 - b) Be well groomed.
 - c) Bring extra copies of your resume, references, and a notepad on which to take notes during the interview.
2. Arrive on time
 - a) Better yet, arrive early and, while sitting in your car, envision yourself making a good impression.
 - b) Employers use being on time as a measure of how well the applicant will perform the job.
 - (1) If you arrive late, they will assume the worst about your attendance and work habits.
3. Be friendly and courteous to everyone you meet
 - a) Receptionists and secretaries are often asked for their first impression about a job applicant.
 - b) You never know who has the deciding vote on who gets the job.

Say: Consider this true story—

One woman arrived to the place of her interview and greeted the male receptionist with courtesy and enthusiasm. The receptionist and she talked briefly and he asked her to have a seat and she would be called back shortly. Not long after she sat, the male receptionist got up and a female receptionist took his place at the front desk. The female receptionist escorted the woman back to her interview.

It turned out that the male receptionist was the one conducting her interview. Not only that but, whom the job applicant had *assumed* was the male receptionist, turned out to be the Vice President of the company who immediately offered her the job. He told her that if she was that courteous and friendly to someone she thought was the receptionist, he wanted her working for their company. She happily accepted the job.

- Tell trainees that creating a good first impression is not the only important aspect on the day of the interview: they should also be working during the interview.

C. Job applicant should develop intelligent, thoughtful, questions to ask during the interview

1. Demonstrate your interest and curiosity about the company and/or job.
2. Since you did your research on the company as part of preparing for the interview, make sure that you don't ask basic and easily available information.

D. Job applicant should take good notes during the interview

1. Make them descriptive and detailed.
2. Focus on noting why you are a good match for the job and how you could help improve the company.
3. We will discuss how you will use these notes after your interview is over.

E. Interview Closure

1. Different than following-up on an interview.
2. Potential employer reviews his/her notes, discusses next steps, and ends interview.
3. Job applicant reiterates interest in the position, verifies next steps, and gets confirmation that the company will follow up and the timeframe for when they will follow up.

Say: Before we move on to our last topic does anybody have any questions?

Slide 19**IV. Follow-Up (10 minutes)**

- Emphasize to the trainees that their task as a job applicant does not stop after they leave the interview: they can make an even bigger impact on their potential employer if they follow-up after the interview is over.
- Tell trainees that a job offer seldom comes after the first interview so follow-up is important. It can make a difference by setting them apart from other applicants and keep them in the running for a job offer.
- For appropriate follow-up actions, instruct trainees to do the following:
 - A. Reflect on the interview and look over any notes that you took during the interview**
 1. Immediately after the interview write down why you are a good candidate for the job and any immediate feelings and thoughts about how the interview went. Doing so will help you:
 - a) Recall what went well during the interview and what you could improve
 - b) Figure out what you should include in your thank you letter
 2. Take the employer's perspective and ask yourself questions like: did I show that I can do the job? What should we have discussed but didn't?
 - B. Draft a brief follow up letter**
 1. Gives you a great opportunity to stand out of the crowd applicants.
 2. Send a typed or handwritten letter through the mail.
 - a) It is usually more thoughtful, professional, and enduring.
 - b) Besides, people are usually deluged with e-mails and phone messages and might not pay attention to another.
 - c) However, you should also go by the company culture. If everything seems to be done via e-mail, then by all means send a thank-you using e-mail.
 - d) This letter should include the following:
 - (1) Thank the potential employer for *their* time and interest in you
 - (2) Express *your* interest
 - (3) Show positive matches between what you want and what the company has to offer

- (4) Refer to related experience or education. Restate your skills and how they are a perfect fit for the position
- (5) Reiterate the most pertinent points you made in the interview and provide information that you may have forgotten to mention during the interview
- (6) Offer to give references
- (7) Reiterate sincere interest in the job
- e) Have someone proofread your letter:
 - (1) Specifically look for conflicting information and spelling and grammatical mistakes
 - (2) If you feel that the potential employers will not look through mail or if they encourage electronic communication have someone proofread an email
- f) Mail letter no later than two days after the interview.

C. Make a follow-up call two days after the potential employer gets the letter

1. You will have to estimate this time frame
2. Use this call to further express your interest in the job

Say: Are there any questions regarding the actions you should take on the day or day-after the interview?

CLOSING (5 minutes)

Note: This should only be a very brief summary of all the material that was just covered. Ask review questions if time permits.

Slide 20

Summary

Remind trainees that, today, they have learned about all aspects of a job interview. what to expect, how to prepare, the different types of interviews, and what they should do during and after their interview.

Say: Now that you have completed this lesson on Interviewing, you should be able to:

- Recall what to expect during the interview.
- Discuss how to prepare for the interview.
- Discriminate between the different types of interviews.
- Prepare answers for some of the toughest interview questions.
- Utilize the STAR approach to answer Performance-Based Interview (PBI) questions.
- Discuss follow-up tasks that you should complete after the interview.

Slide 21

Questions

Say: Are there any other questions or issues regarding the material we have covered today?

Note: If you have extra time ask the trainees if any of them would like to share a question that they have been asked at a job interview which they found particularly memorable/unusual/difficult to answer.

End of Training

Note:

- Thank Trainees for their time and attention.
- End the course by having trainees sign out.