

MBA/MSF Interview Overview & Preparation

Goals: All MBAs should be able to:

- Make small talk.
- Provide an impressive 90 second introduction.
- Clearly articulate why they are a fit for a particular career and industry.
- Provide relevant examples of strengths and explain the steps they are taking to minimize their weaknesses.
- Explain where they see themselves in the future.
- Discuss their leadership, management, communication, interpersonal, and problem solving skills as well as demonstrate their ability to handle ambiguity and overcome obstacles.
- Give multiple examples of their success in working in teams and individually as well as how they contributed overall to an organization.
- Handle tough or stressful questions.
- Give examples of why they are the best fit for the position.
- Ask questions of the interviewer that demonstrates their knowledge of the position, company, and industry.
- Wrap up the interview by inquiring about next steps, communication and collecting contact information.

Write out the main points for your 90 second introduction here:

MBA/MSF Types of Interviews

Informational Interview

- An informational interview is a networking tool which allows job applicants to learn about different careers and industries in a professional yet low stress environment.
- The goal is to get advice and connect to others in the field.
- This is an indirect way to get a job and access the hidden job market.

To Prepare:

- Research the industry and the individual.
- Arrange a time and place convenient for the professional - Set time for the discussion (30 minutes).
- Ask well-prepared and thought-out questions.
- Do not ask for a job
- Offer to pay any bill associated with the meeting (from coffee to dinner tab).
- Email or write a personalized thank you note within 24 hours of the meeting.

First Interview/Phone Screen

- Human Resource/Recruiter screens candidate to determine if qualifications, experience, workplace preferences and salary needs are congruent with the position and organization.
- Lasts about 30 minutes.
- Typical questions include: strengths, weaknesses, review of resume.

Behavioral Interview

- Use the STAR method: Situation, Task involved, Actions taken, Results/outcomes of action.
- Interviews can last 1 – 2 hours.
- Hiring managers/HR managers use behavioral situations to assess fit for the position and organization.

Conversational Interview

- Interview method used to relax the interviewer to create rapport and build relationships.
- Used to assess fit within the organization.

Panel Interview/Group Interview

- Two or more people interviewing at the same time, taking turns asking questions.
- Questions are usually determined in advance.
- Each interviewer has a separate agenda.
- Keep each interviewer involved with good eye contact.

Series Interview

- Interviews conducted within the same day by various levels of professionals within the organization.
- Usually interview conducted by 1 -2 managers at a time lasting 1 – 2 hours each (may be segmented into 30 minute increments).

Meal Interview

- Typically used during final round of interviews to observe social skills/etiquette.
- Relaxed environment, but need to be alert.

Case Interviews

- Generally a business problem or estimating exercise designed to evaluate critical thinking skills/ability to think on your feet.

- Use logic and common sense to solve the problem – your process of solving the problem is important.
- Interviewer wants to see how you would under stress, how you formulate answers and brainstorm.

MBA/MSF Interview Preparation

Preparation:

- Confirm interview the day before.
- Have a plan, arrive early, and look great.
- Know the company, the job, the interviewer.
- Prepare: Individual, department, corporate and industry level questions.
- Practice:
 - Interview Stream: <http://tinyurl.com/q84uohh>
 - Mock interview with Rockwell Career Center: www.hirebauer.com

Interview Survival Kit:

- Career Portfolio with work samples, resumes, and references, notepad, pen.
- Breath mints.
- Driving directions.
- Cash for parking.
- Cell phone – turn off before the interview.
- Interviewer contact information.

Closing the interview:

- Thank the Interviewer.
- Reiterate interest.
- Ask if any outstanding concerns.
- Next steps and timing.
- Ask when okay to follow-up.
- Get a business card.

Follow up:

- Handwritten thank you on professional paper or professional email within 24 hours of interview.
- Alert your references.
- Continue to interview.
- Follow-up with a telephone call.
- Be patient.
- Continue following-up.
- Don't burn any bridges.

Dress for Success

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: You never get a second chance to make a first impression! Interviewers can make negative hiring decisions in the first 30-60 seconds.

Attire

- A classic, tailored suit in a dark color, (gray, navy blue), is an excellent selection. It should fit well and be in good condition. A moderate length skirt, rather than pants, is preferred for women. For women who choose to wear a suit with pants: the fabric should be like that of a standard suit and should fit loosely, as men's suit pants fit.
- Choose a solid colored, long sleeved shirt or classic styled blouse in a color such as ecru/beige, white, or very pale blue. The sleeves should extend just a bit beyond the suit jacket.
- Demonstrate moderation and good taste in your accessories.
- Wear minimal or no jewelry.
- Select men's ties in subdued or muted prints in a conservative color.
- Men – dark socks to match shoes. Women – panty hose of a natural shade is a good choice.
- Shoes – dark dress shoes for men, fairly low heeled pumps for women, (avoid open-toed and open or strapped heeled styles).

Grooming/ Hygiene Checklist

- Bathe/shower and shampoo.
- Brush teeth, use mouthwash.
 - Don't smoke before interview.
 - Avoid spicy food for a day before interview.
- Wear deodorant, no cologne, perfume or aftershave.
- Clean, trim, file fingernails, no bright polish.
- Style hair conservatively, keep away from face.
- Shave, trim facial hair closely and neatly.
- Natural looking makeup.
- Clean and press clothes.
- Shine shoes.

Body Language

- Both men and women should give a full, firm handshake.
- Maintain good eye contact when shaking hands (and during the interview).
- SMILE during the handshake, and often throughout the interview.
- Express enthusiasm and confidence through your voice, eyes and posture.
- Sit slightly forward in your interview chair.
- Avoid crossing your legs, ankles or arms.
- Speak clearly and loudly enough so the employer can hear you well.