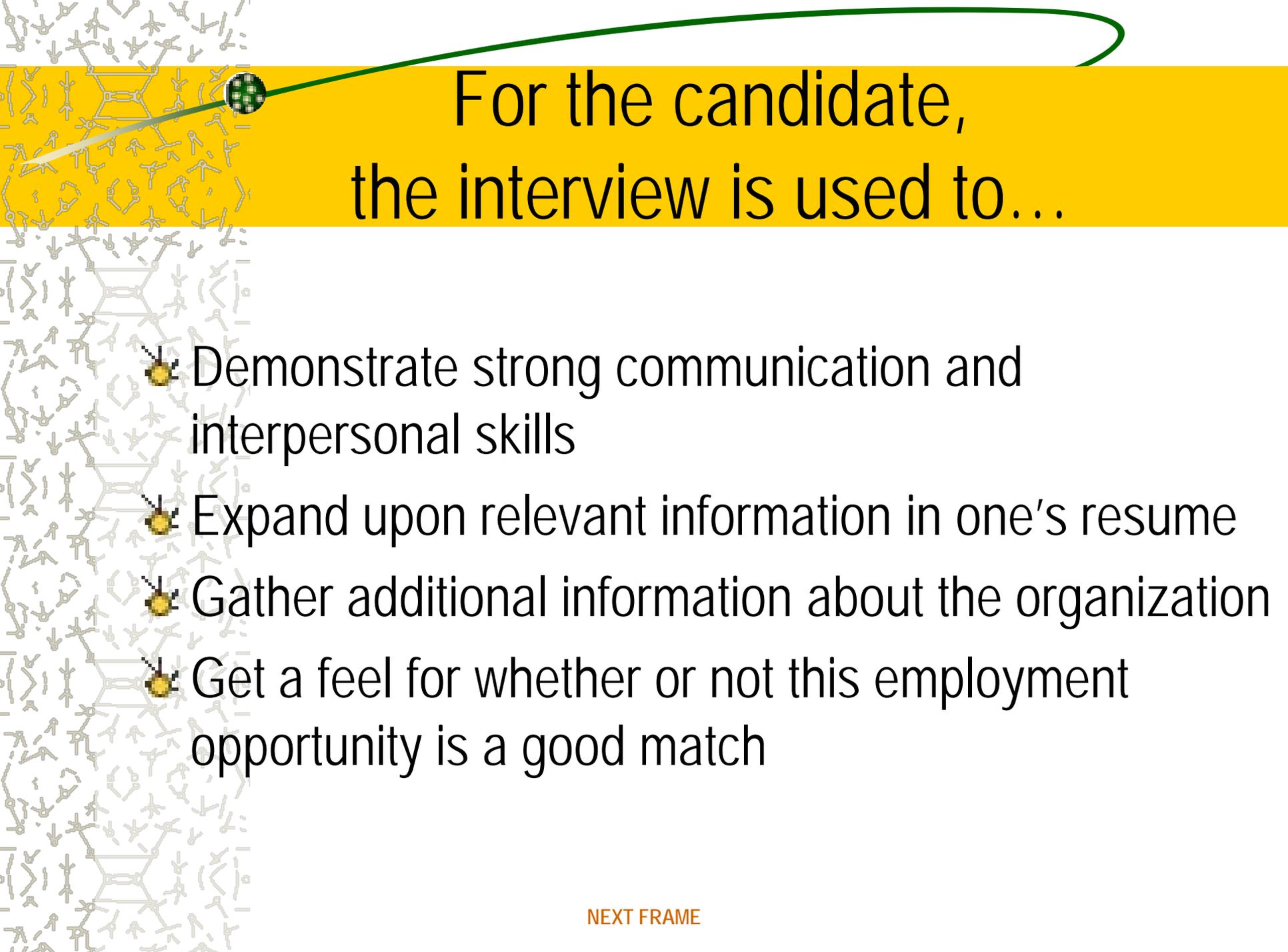




# INTERVIEW with CONFIDENCE

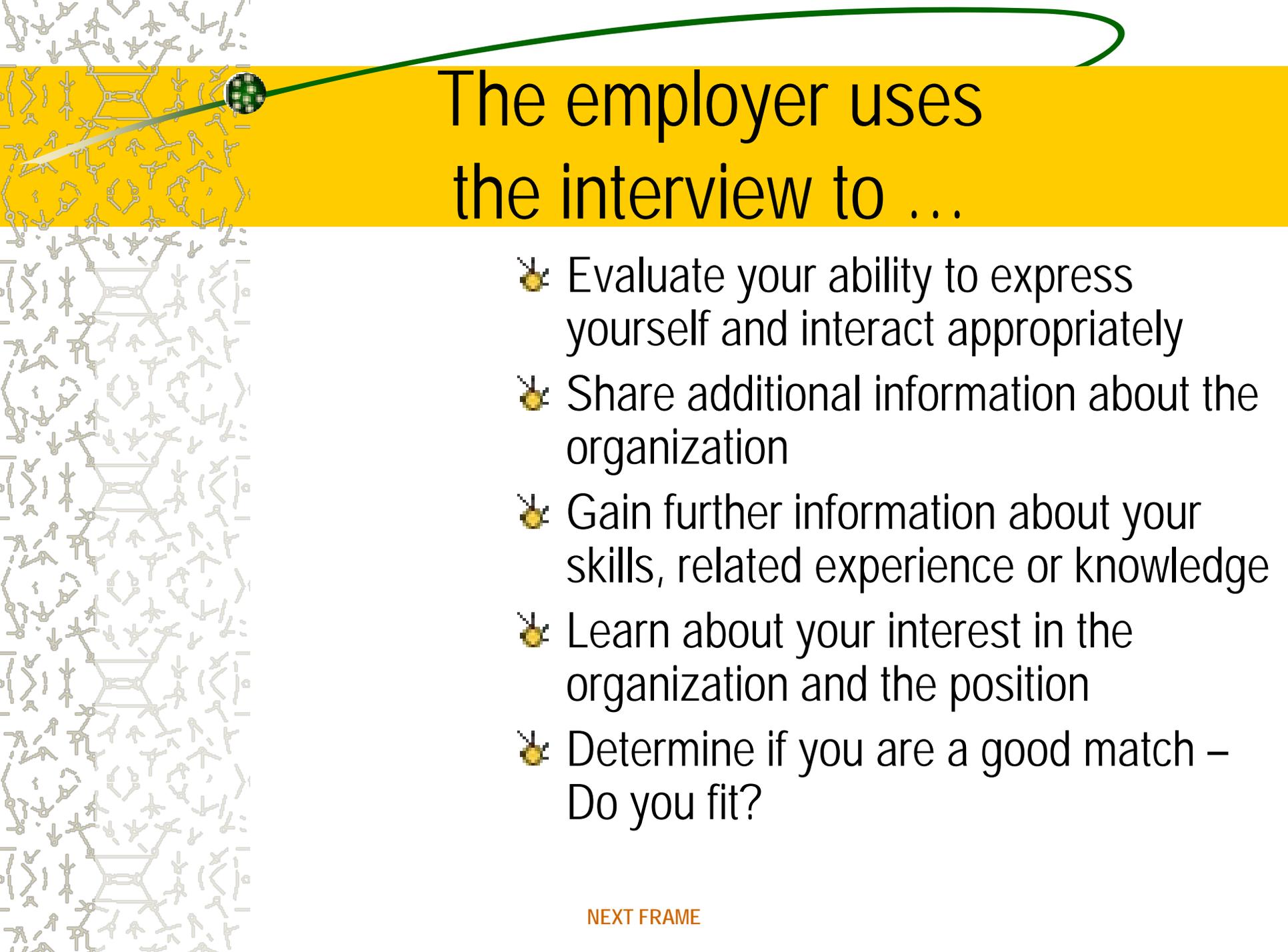
What you need to know before you start talking

Let's begin...



# For the candidate, the interview is used to...

- ▶ Demonstrate strong communication and interpersonal skills
- ▶ Expand upon relevant information in one's resume
- ▶ Gather additional information about the organization
- ▶ Get a feel for whether or not this employment opportunity is a good match



# The employer uses the interview to ...

- ✦ Evaluate your ability to express yourself and interact appropriately
- ✦ Share additional information about the organization
- ✦ Gain further information about your skills, related experience or knowledge
- ✦ Learn about your interest in the organization and the position
- ✦ Determine if you are a good match – Do you fit?

# Different Types of Interviews

## Mock

Simply means a practice or simulated interview.

Like any other skill, interviewing improves with practice!

## Informational or Networking

A technique used to gather information about a job, a career field or industry. Not for the purpose of asking for a job. Short in duration. You initiate the meeting and ask the questions.

## Phone

Used to determine if you meet the minimum qualifications for the job. Can be conducted by an individual or a group, by phone and sometimes by video. Difficult in that there are no non verbal cues to guide the interviewee.

## Screening

A first round interview typical of on-campus interviews or those one might have at a job fair. Usually 30 – 45 minutes, the same questions are asked of each candidate. Goal: to be passed on for further consideration.

## Selection (Second)

You've made the initial cut and are invited onsite to see the setting and meet potential coworkers. Often a half or full day. Travel may be involved.

## Behavioral

A technique based on the premise that one's future performance can be predicted by exploring past performance in similar situations. Questions are focused on how one behaved given a certain situation: "Tell me about a time when you..."

NEXT FRAME

# Tips for Informational Interviews

- A strategy to gain first-hand information on a particular career field
- You identify people doing jobs you might like to do. Call and request 20 – 30 minutes of their time. *"I am interested in the job you do and wonder if you could meet with me to answer a few questions?"*
- Prepare questions ahead of time
- Only take the amount of time that was agreed to upfront
- Don't ask for employment
- Ask if you can include them in your network and contact them again when you are ready to start a search?
- Follow up with suggestions and referrals
- Write a thank you note!

NEXT FRAME

# Suggested Informational Interview Questions

<i>Could you describe a typical work day? Are there seasonal fluctuations in this work?</i>	<i>What skills do you use on a day-to-day basis?</i>	<i>What parts of the job do you find most challenging? Most enjoyable?</i>
<i>How would you describe the organizational culture?</i>	<i>What future developments could affect opportunities in this field?</i>	<i>Why do people leave this field or company?</i>
<i>What would be a reasonable salary range to expect if I entered this field? What is the long term salary potential?</i>	<i>What is the typical career path for people in this field?</i>	<i>What education and training would you recommend for someone wanting to advance in this field?</i>
<i>What qualifications do you seek in a new employee?</i>	<i>How does your company compare with others in the industry?</i>	<i>Would the work involve any lifestyle changes, such as frequent travel?</i>
<i>What are the professional journals or organizations of which I should be aware?</i>	<i>Are there other professionals in this field with whom I should speak? When I call, may I use your name?</i>	<i>Is there anything else you think I need to know?</i>

NEXT FRAME

# Tips for phone interviews

- **Set up a quiet area and have everything you need** including tissues, a glass of water, company information and something on which to write. Turn off call waiting.
- **Don't script your answers ahead of time but outline the key points you want to make.** You'll sound more natural.
- **Put yourself in an interview frame of mind.** Dress up for your phone call.
- **Smile when you respond to questions** - it will be reflected in your tone of voice. Set out a mirror so you can monitor your nonverbals. Stand up too.
- **In the absence of nonverbal cues, test whether you've answered the question:** "Would you like more details about X?" "Did I answer your question?"
- **Do your research on the web or request information ahead of time. Be prepared to ask 2-3 questions about the organization or the position.** (And not about salary or benefits – save those Qs for later!)

# Pass the Screen Test

Screening interviews are used to narrow the candidate pool. They are limited in time and all candidates are given the same set of questions. They can be conducted by an individual or a panel.

**Introduction** - Icebreaker period where interviewer sets the tone. Be ready, *first impressions are really important.*

**Body** - Interviewer(s) will request specific information about skills, knowledge abilities and attitudes. You will also get a chance to ask a few questions toward the end.

**The Close** - Summarize your understanding of the position and why you would be a good fit. Express your sincere interest.

**At the conclusion**, make sure you know the next step. "After talking with you today I continue to be very interested in this position. What's the next step of the interview process?"

# Selection Interviews

Usually on site and often half or full day in length

<i><b>Before you go</b> → coordinate your travel plans with the designated contact.</i>	<i>Know what the terms are about who pays. If you pay upfront, know the reimbursement policy.</i>	<i>Ask for an agenda ahead of your visit. You want to know how your day will be structured.</i>	<i>Know all you can about the organization via web, library research, and read the company's literature.</i>
<i><b>Travel light.</b> Carry on your interview apparel, if possible. You don't want your suit ending up in another city.</i>	<i>Try to plan an early arrival so you have a chance to do a drive by and get your bearings.</i>	<i>Find out where the site is in relation to where you are staying. Note nearest parking.</i>	<i>Get a good night's sleep, be rested so you have energy for a full day. Have something to eat prior to going.</i>
<i><b>During the interview,</b> arrive 15 minutes early. Be pleasant with everyone you meet.</i>	<i>Appear enthusiastic, ask questions.</i>	<i>Salary really shouldn't come up, but be prepared if it does. Know your worth.</i>	<i>Make sure you know the next step. When will you hear? Restate your interest.</i>
<i><b>Upon your return</b> complete any expense reports promptly.</i>	<i>Write a thank you note to everyone with whom you spent significant time.</i>	<i>Follow up and restate your interest if you haven't heard by the deadline.</i>	<i>Write thank you notes... Was that mentioned already?</i>

NEXT FRAME

# Behavioral Interviewing

The premise: The most accurate predictor of future performance is past performance in a similar situation.

The interviewer will be probing to determine if you have the key competencies identified for the position.



# The best way to prepare for behavioral questions

- Have numerous stories and examples prepared in advance. Seek clues from the job description and in your contact with the organization about the key skills they are seeking – prepare examples for those skill areas. Be ready to describe in detail each situation.

- Tell your story concisely, and in this form:

situation - action - result “My supervisor and I were trying to determine the best approach for boosting our use numbers. I suggested X, Y and Z. We acted on Z and saw an immediate rise in participation. This strategy resulted in a net increase of 20% for the month.”

# Pay attention to your body language

- Walk slowly when entering a room
- Sit completely back in your chair with a slight forward lean to portray interest.
- Sit up straight and do not slouch it shows lack of confidence.
- Eye contact (not staring) is very important and keep your head up
- Do not cross your arms or legs, this can lead the interviewer to think you are unapproachable. Ankle crossing however, is not a problem

By having open body language you will convey the message that you are an open person. By communicating both with body and verbal interview skills you are sure to leave a positive lasting impression.

*(Doug Stites CEO, Capital Area Michigan Works)*

# Sample Behavioral Questions

<i>Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to successfully convince someone to see things your way.</i>	<i>Tell me about something for which you recently took responsibility that was outside your job description.</i>
<i>Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to extricate yourself from a difficult situation.</i>	<i>Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.</i>
<i>By providing examples, convince me that you can adapt to a wide variety of people, situations and environments.</i>	<i>Give me an example of a recent successful teamwork experience.</i>
<i>Describe the most significant or creative presentation which you have had to complete.</i>	<i>Tell me about how you addressed a conflict with a coworker.</i>

*After asking the initial question, a behavioral interviewer would probe deeper. "In what ways would you say this was successful or unsuccessful?" "If you could do it again, what would you change?" "How did you respond when the proposal was rejected?" "Tell me more about ..."*

NEXT FRAME

# What are they really asking?

## TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

Be ready for this one because it will come in one form or another. This open-ended question is often asked at the beginning to break the ice. Keep your response related to the job. This is not the time to rattle off your life history. Response time: shoot for two minutes.

## WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST STRENGTHS?

You should be able to come up with these fairly easy. Choose 2-3 strengths that relate to the position. "I am very persistent and don't give up easily. Given the research nature of this position, you'll be able to count on my tenacity to help us get reliable data to use in our decision making."

## WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST WEAKNESS?

Try to avoid choosing a trait that directly relates to the job. If you tell them you tend to procrastinate then you're giving them a good reason not to hire you. You could say, "I used to have trouble meeting deadlines but then I adopted the use of a day planner. Now I set out goals for the month, week and day. This strategy has increased my productivity tremendously."

Only mention one weakness!

NEXT FRAME

# More ????

Where do you hope to be in five years?

This question gives candidates a chance to show that they are aware of career advances in their field. It also lets the interviewer know the ambition of the candidate. Avoid talking about graduate school or plans to start a family. "I am aware that most management trainees are store managers within that time frame. I hope to be on the fast track and meet that goal in year three."

What do you do in your spare time?

Keep your response related to the position at hand. If attention to detail is important then mention your model car hobby or your love of photography – activities where detail is inherent.

Why did you leave your last position?

The answer might be quite simple: It was time to return to school. Always be positive in your response even if the work setting/conditions were not ideal. Find something good to say. If you were terminated – tell the truth but no need to give a blow-by-blow account. "My new supervisor and I did not agree on key issues and we decided it was best for me to seek out other opportunities."

What kind of salary did you have in mind?

The money question comes up later... stay tuned.

# What shouldn't be asked

A variety of laws protect the job candidate from being asked questions that are not related to the specific job for which one is applying. If you are asked such a question – one related to age, national origin/citizenship, marital/family status, social affiliations, personal data, disabilities, or military services, then you have three choices:

You are free to answer the question but you may be giving information that could harm your candidacy.



You can refuse to answer an illegal question – that is within your rights.

If your response is tactful you might be okay. If you appear confrontational or uncooperative that could prove to be a problem. Two responses:

“Hey, you can’t ask that. That’s an illegal question!”

“If you can explain how that relates to the job duties I would be happy to answer the question.”

Examine the question for its intent and respond with an answer that might relate to the job. Example:

Q: You look rather slight of build. How tall are you and how much do you weigh?

A: If you are concerned about me being able to lift 40 lbs. repeatedly throughout the day, you need not worry. I lift weights on a regular basis and my physical endurance is exceptional.

# "AND WHAT KIND OF SALARY DID YOU HAVE IN MIND?"

If salary comes up in an interview it should be from the employer side. Some organizations have detailed salary scales and information that is given to candidates upfront. Others prefer not to make salary info public.

If you are asked about salary try to avoid giving a specific number. Instead, mention that, "Salary is negotiable/flexible/open and can be discussed once we've determined we have a good employment match."

## Advice

Send the question back to the interviewer



## Possible responses to the question

"What is a typical starting salary for someone in this position?"

"Are you ready to offer me a position? "

Demonstrate your research



"I've investigated salaries for similar positions in this geographic region and learned that an "X" earns in the range of \$28,000 to \$32,000.

Give a range and then be prepared to live with the lowest end of the range

Be general in your range



"I would like to start in the low \$30s."

Think you should start at the high end?



"My year as an intern at XYZ gives me a head start in the industry. I had an opportunity to participate on a work team..."

Money isn't everything – Remember to calculate the value of benefits including paid sick and vacation leave, retirement savings plans, stock options, etc.

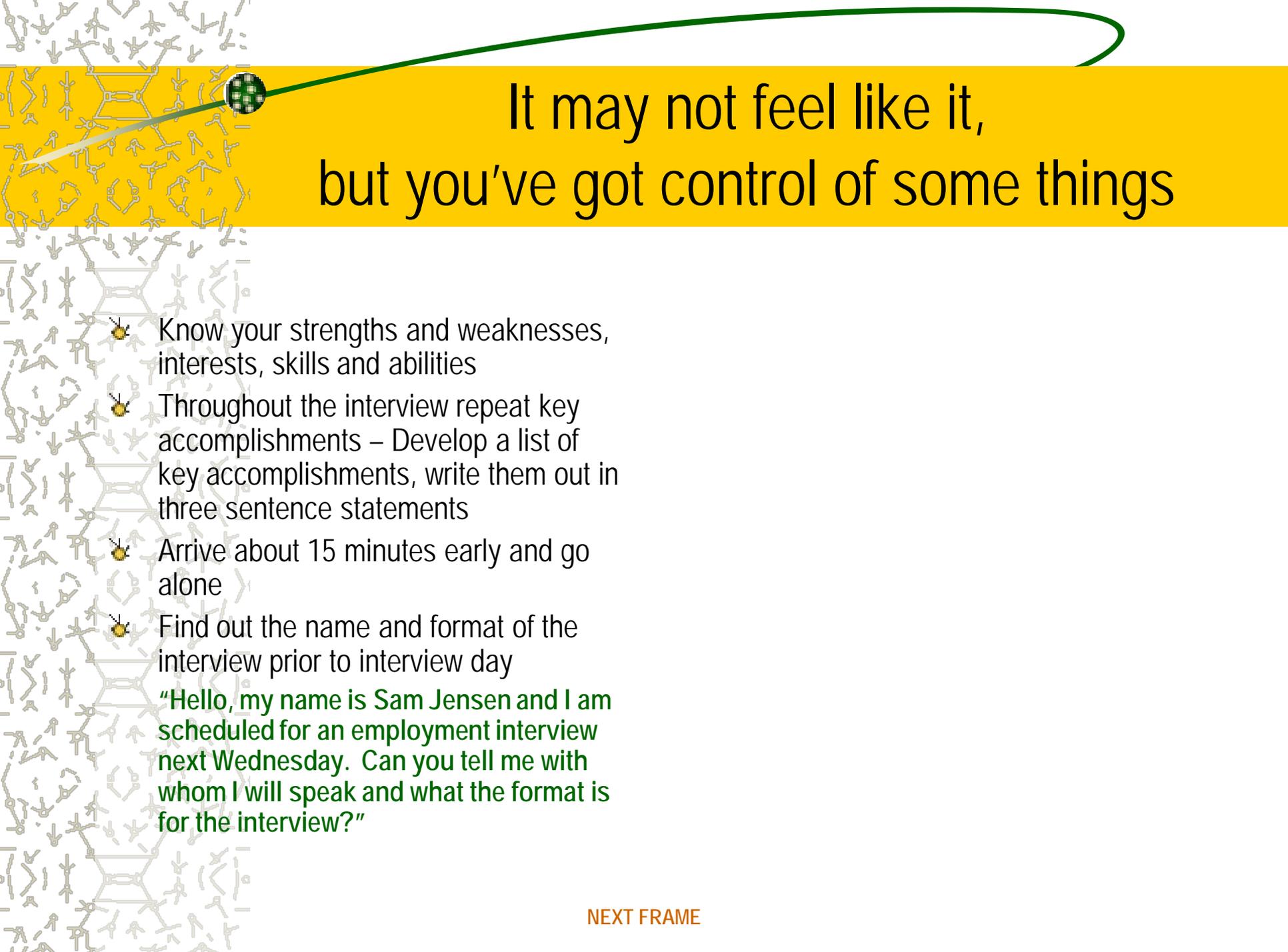
NEXT FRAME

# Questions You Ask

Candidates are given opportunities to ask questions during the interview. Be prepared. Demonstrate your research about the organization. Consider some of these Qs:

Would you describe an average day on the job?	What caused this position to come open?	Who would be my immediate supervisor? Who would I supervise?	Would you like to hear about...? (An important quality or experience)	What kinds of training and mentoring are available to new hires?
Can you give me examples of projects on which I would be working?	Please describe the advancement opportunities that might be available to me. What is the typical timeframe for these advancements?	How has the company changed in the last 10 years? What growth areas are expected?	Is there anything I have spoken about today that needs clarification, or more detail?	When will you be making your hiring decision? May I call you?

NEXT FRAME



# It may not feel like it, but you've got control of some things

- Know your strengths and weaknesses, interests, skills and abilities

- Throughout the interview repeat key accomplishments – Develop a list of key accomplishments, write them out in three sentence statements

- Arrive about 15 minutes early and go alone

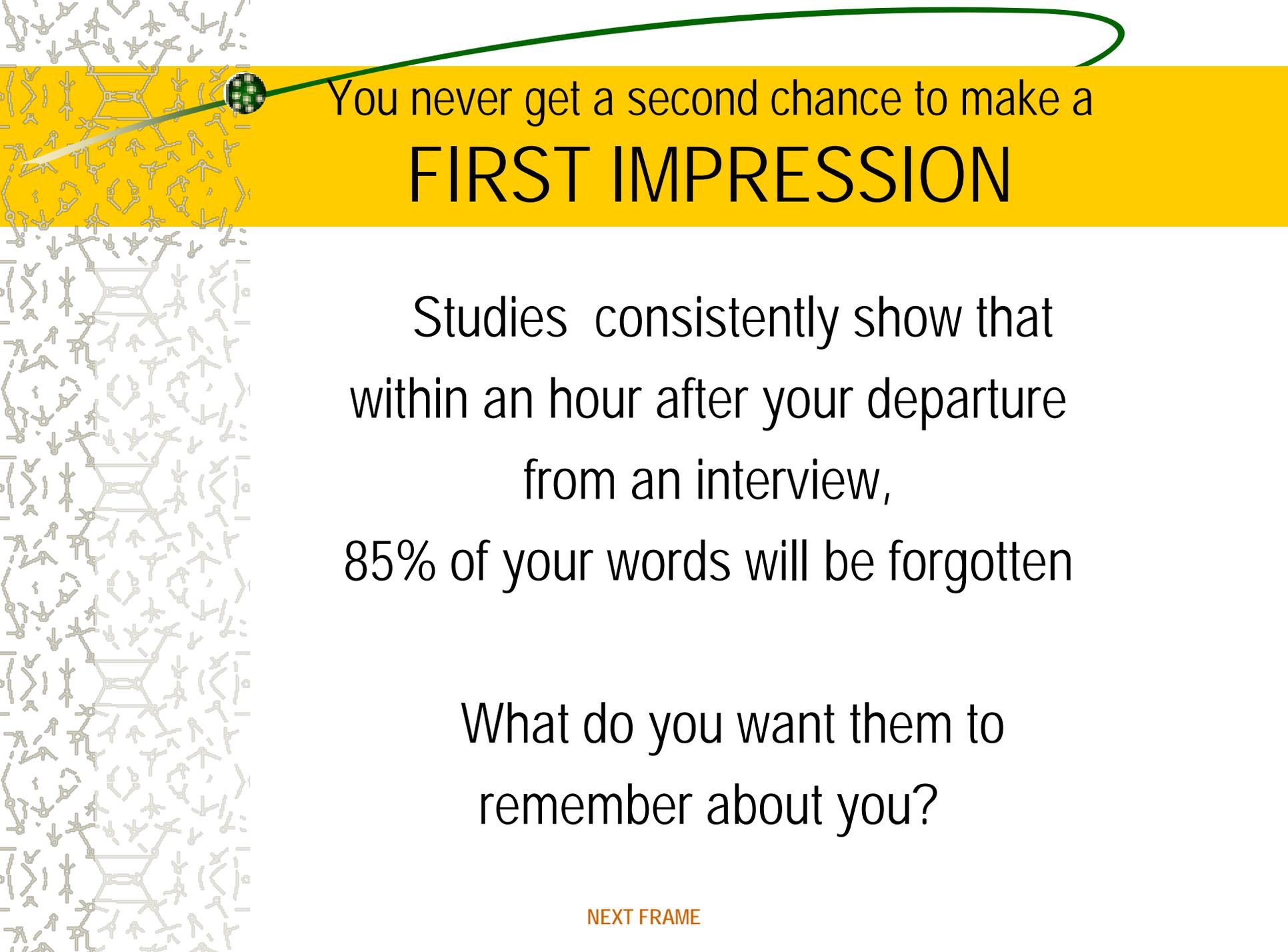
- Find out the name and format of the interview prior to interview day

“Hello, my name is Sam Jensen and I am scheduled for an employment interview next Wednesday. Can you tell me with whom I will speak and what the format is for the interview?”

# Things to keep in mind

Say what you CAN do, not what you cannot	Mention your accomplishments – no one else is going to	Strengthen your answers by giving examples	Focus answers and questions on how the employer can benefit, not on why this will be good for you
Bring extra copies of your resume and distribute as appropriate	Don't be afraid of an awkward silent moment –Take this opportunity to say, "Would this be a good time for me to discuss X... ?"	Talk about half the time, listen about half the time	Prepare your questions in advance
PRACTICE	PRACTICE	PRACTICE	Practice in front of someone

NEXT FRAME



You never get a second chance to make a

# FIRST IMPRESSION

Studies consistently show that  
within an hour after your departure  
from an interview,  
85% of your words will be forgotten

What do you want them to  
remember about you?

NEXT FRAME

# How you deliver the message is as important as *what* you say

Your smile?



Your firm  
handshake  
and direct  
eye contact?



Your interest and enthusiasm?



Your confidence?



NEXT FRAME

# Keep These In Your Back Pocket

Have a ten-second pitch you would give someone that essentially says, "I HAVE THIS and I WANT THIS."

Be prepared to give your pitch any time, anywhere.

"Hello. My name is Susan Jones. I have a degree in Sociology and practicum experience with teen addiction programs. I am seeking a position with a youth offender program, one with an emphasis in job skills training.

When you're asked, "Tell me a little about yourself," have a 30-second commercial prepared:

"I've always been interested in computers. Throughout high school and college I worked as a computer lab tutor. It was a natural step for me to declare computer science as a major. In my first summer after starting college I was employed by the University to assist in a major systems upgrade. After that summer I was given increasingly responsible tasks that culminated in my being assigned as a project leader this past summer. My immediate career goal is to become a systems analyst and working for a state or federal agency is the desired target.

# Be Thankful



Stand out from the pack - take the time to write a thank you note to all of the people who spent significant time with you during the interview process. That includes those who have written letters or spoken on your behalf.

Where do your notes end up? Letters are often channeled to the HR Office. There can be six *identical* thank you notes in your file or *if you really want to stand out* – write something unique to each person. Discuss some aspect about your time together.

HINTS:
Letters may be handwritten – IF you write legibly.
Pick business conservative note cards – avoid kittens and bunnies.

*Dear Mr. Peabody –*

*I truly appreciate the time you spent with me during my interview on Tuesday. It was helpful to hear your perspective on the future of the company and the promising developments coming from R & D. ACME is clearly on the move and I would love to be part of this dynamic organization.*

*Please be aware of my continued interest in the management training program. I look forward to hearing from ACME soon.*

*Sincerely,  
Abby Applicant*

NEXT FRAME

# Dress to Impress



Interview day is a day to look your absolute best!

The clothing you wear must be a fit with your prospective employer.

Always choose the more conservative route if you are unsure about what to wear.

NEXT FRAME

# Interview Fashion Tips

## ✦ For Men

- Traditional business attire means a dark conservative suit and a long-sleeved white shirt.
- Ties should be silk. Also conservative choice – not the time to prove your individualism.
- If you wear an earring, consider leaving it at home.
- Make sure to polish your dress shoes.
- Consider the condition of your hands and fingernails – Is it time for a manicure?
- Facial hair should be kept neat and trimmed.
- Go easy on the cologne.

## ✦ For Women

- Traditional business attire is a conservative suit or dress.
- Do keep your midriff covered. Conservative dress is the key.
- Avoid wearing jewelry and makeup that is showy or distracting. That is true for excessively long fingernails.
- Go easy on the cologne.
- Hair should be clean and neatly groomed.
- Shoes polished and coordinated with your suit.

In all cases, be pressed and wrinkle free!

# Job Search Portfolio

*A collection of materials that demonstrate skills, knowledge and experiences*

## Why Develop a Portfolio?

- To market capabilities in job interviews
- To negotiate promotions and raises
- To apply for bonuses, scholarships or grants
- To document the quality of your professional development
- To demonstrate prior learning experiences for educational credit

## Benefits for a Job Search

- Demonstrates a high level of preparation for an interview
- Demonstrates your experiences, skills and abilities in a visual way - Validates what you say about yourself
- Helps interviewers remember your application
- The actual process of preparing a portfolio helps us to recall our skills and abilities

## It Should

- Look professional
- Reflect an individual's actual skills
- Support information in your resume
- Be occupationally focused
- Be easy to update
- Be easy to review quickly
- Be able to stand alone without explanation

# If you bring your portfolio to an interview...

- The interviewer leads the interview, the candidate follows.
- Avoid forcing the portfolio into the discussion, instead say, "I have several examples of my writing skills in the portfolio I brought today. Would you like to take a look?"
- If you get the nod, pull out your file.
  - Don't be discouraged if they say no. There just may not be enough time. You can prepare high quality copies to leave – Never leave your original portfolio.



# Employers Want to Know...

## Can you do the job?

Do you have the skills, knowledge, experience, background and intelligence?

## Will you fit in?

Can you get along with the people there?  
Are you a team player, positive, flexible, use good communications skills, tactful, cooperative...?

## Will you do the job?

Do you have interest and motivation to do a complete and accurate job? Are you enthusiastic? Are you punctual? Do you persevere? How does this opportunity mesh with your goals & desires?

***With every response demonstrate you CAN, you WILL and you DO!***