

# MODULE 3: SHARPENING YOUR INTERVIEWING SKILLS



## MODULE 3: **SHARPENING YOUR INTERVIEWING SKILLS**

**The purpose of this module is to:**  
focus on the interview process and use  
the employer's perspective to determine  
proper interview attire and prepare  
answers to common interview questions.

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# DRESS THE PART

**ALWAYS DRESS ACCORDING TO  
THE JOB YOU WANT.**

Actual attire will vary by company and by job.  
Here are a few tips that apply to all job interviews:

## DO

- Have a well-groomed hairstyle
- Wear natural-looking makeup
  - Start with dark or neutral-colored pants/skirt
  - Pair with a long-sleeved white or light blue shirt/blouse
  - Add a conservative tie/accessories for an office job

## DON'T

- Wear wrinkled clothing
- Wear tank tops, short skirts or shorts
- Wear shirts with words or graphics
- Wear too much cologne or perfume
- Wear large jewelry
- Wear athletic shoes or sandals
- Choose flashy colors or styles



## TYPES OF ATTIRE

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### Business Professional

For women, this usually means a business suit or pants suit, or dress and jacket. For men, professional dress means a business suit or a blazer, dress pants and a tie.



### Business Casual

Business casual often includes khaki pants, slacks and skirts; short-sleeved and long-sleeved shirts with collars, but ties are generally not required. Business casual usually excludes jeans, sneakers, tight or short skirts, t-shirts and sweatshirts.



### Casual

Usually, casual office attire allows employees to wear jeans and short-sleeved shirts regularly, and possibly tennis shoes but not sandals or flip-flops. If you are on your feet all day, wear comfortable shoes such as ballet flats, low-rise wedges, boots, penny loafers or oxfords.



## OTHER NON-VERBAL INDICATORS

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### Corporate Culture

Dress to match the culture and position you want at the company for whom you'd like to work. A nicely pressed pair of slacks and a polo with matching belt and shoes might be inappropriate for an office job but appropriate for work in a manufacturing plant.

### Quality Over Quantity

Wear your best but not ALL your best. Accessories can be distracting. A simple portfolio to hold resumes, reference lists, and a paper and pen for notes is the perfect accessory.

### Self-expression

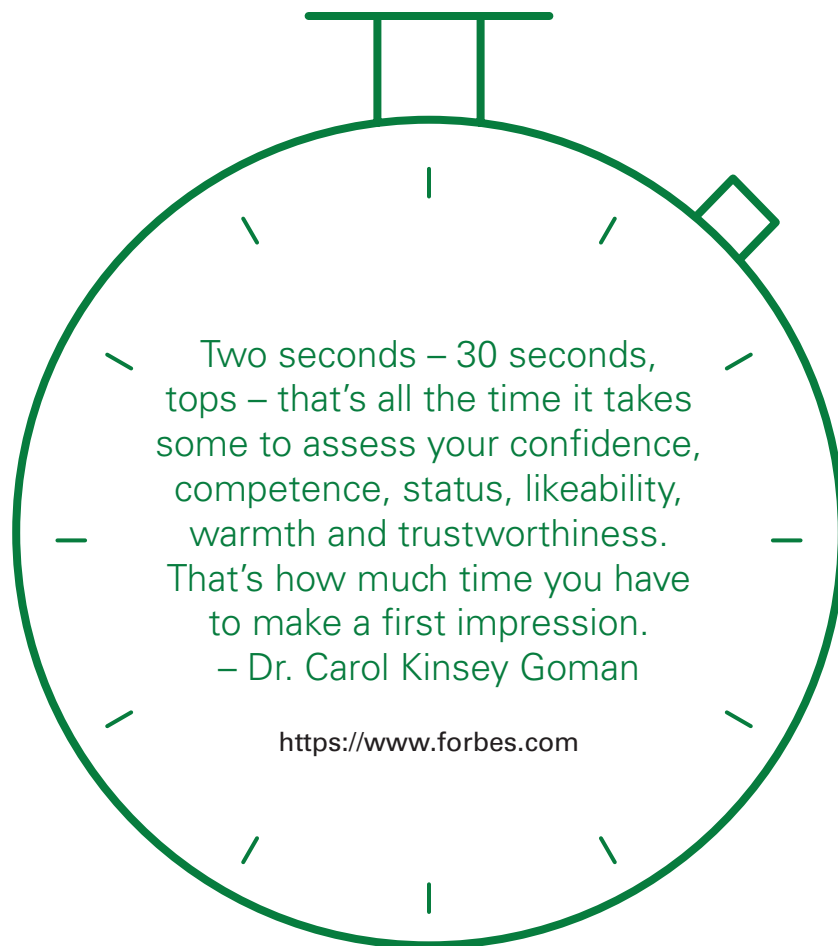
Showing how you are different from everyone else is a smart move, but be careful you don't stand out for the wrong reasons.

- **Attire** – keep the corporate culture in mind and avoid:
  - Evening attire – prom dresses, ball gowns, tuxedos
  - Rock star attire – leather, chains, ripped clothing
  - Super casual attire – sleeveless shirts and shorts or short skirts
- **Tattoos** – should typically be concealed when seeking work
- **Piercings** – consider removing for interviews in a professional environment
- **Hair and Make-up** – hair should be clean and conservative; keep make-up as light and neutral as possible
- **Accessories** – keep it simple and elegant; avoid:
  - Too much jewelry
  - “Baggage” that makes it look like you are moving in
  - Bringing children, parents or friends
  - Lotions, perfumes, colognes or cigarette smoke – smells can evoke memories and powerful feelings, both negative and positive

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS TIPS

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- Be friendly with the receptionist.
- Remember and repeat names to interviewer(s).
- Collect business cards from interviewer(s).
- Have a firm handshake.
- Make eye contact.
- Show appreciation.
- Express interest in the job.
- Ask for a decision date.



# ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

LESSON B

Write in tips for positive first impressions.

## Body Language

## Appearance

## Facial Expression

## Tone of Voice

# TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

LESSON C

The statement employers ALWAYS include in one form or another is, "Tell me about yourself." In the space provided below, write down your answer to this request.

A large rectangular box with a green border, containing horizontal lines for writing. The box is intended for the student to write their answer to the question "Tell me about yourself."



## TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. How would previous supervisors describe you?
3. How do you go about prioritizing tasks?
4. Tell me about a time you failed and what you learned from it.
5. Why should I hire you?
6. Do you have any questions?

## EVALUATION CHART

	If you score a <b>1-2</b> , your interviewing skill has <b>ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT</b>	If you score a <b>3-4</b> , your interviewing skill is <b>ACCEPTABLE</b>	If you score a <b>5</b> , your interviewing skill is <b>EXCEPTIONAL</b>
VOLUME	Speaker was quiet and hard to hear or too loud.	Speaker was easy to hear and understand.	Speaker was crystal clear, projected well, and had good tone, volume and speed.
EYE CONTACT	Speaker did not make eye contact or was staring.	Speaker made eye contact with panel at least part of the time.	Speaker maintained eye contact with all panel members throughout presentation.
BODY LANGUAGE	Speaker exhibited nervous habits.	Speaker had good posture and appeared open.	Speaker appeared friendly and confident.
CONTENT	Speaker left out one or more of the critical components.	Speaker included all the critical components: identified self, shared skills, accomplishments and target.	Speaker included all critical components in an engaging manner.

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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### Teamwork

- Talk about a time when you had to work closely with someone whose personality was very different from yours.
- Give me an example of a time you faced a conflict while working on a team. How did you handle that?
- Describe a time when you struggled to build a relationship with someone important. How did you eventually overcome that?

### Customer Service

- Describe a time when it was especially important to make a good impression on a customer. How did you go about doing so?
- Describe a time when you had to interact with a difficult customer. What was the situation, and how did you handle it?
- When you're working with a large number of customers, it's tricky to deliver excellent service to them all. How do you go about prioritizing your customers' needs?

### Ability to Adapt

- Tell me about a time you were under a lot of pressure. What was going on, and how did you get through it?
- Describe a time when your team or company was undergoing some change. How did that impact you, and how did you adapt?
- Tell me about the first job you've ever had. What did you do to learn the ropes?

## BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

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### Time Management Skills

- Describe a long-term project that you managed.  
How did you keep everything moving along in a timely manner?
- Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself.  
How did you go about ensuring that you would meet your objective?
- Give me an example of a time you managed numerous responsibilities.  
How did you handle that?

### Communication Skills

- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully persuade someone to see things your way at work.
- Tell me about a time when you had to rely on written communication to get your ideas across to your team.
- Give me an example of a time when you had to explain something fairly complex to a frustrated client. How did you handle this delicate situation?

### Motivation and Values

- Tell me about your proudest professional accomplishment.
- Describe a time when you saw some problem and took the initiative to correct it rather than waiting for someone else to do it.
- Tell me about a time you were dissatisfied in your work.  
What could have been done to make it better?
- Discuss a time when your integrity was challenged.

# CAR STATEMENT

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## CAR STATEMENT EXAMPLE

**Challenge:**

A customer called complaining that they'd waited more than two weeks for a reply from our office staff after completing an online application.

**Action:**

I apologized and promised to have someone return her call the same day. I passed the details to our supervisor who contacted the customer within the hour. I investigated why we had not responded to the customer's original request. I discovered that it was a combination of a wrong cell phone number and an obsolete email address that wasn't being checked. I let the customer know we updated that email address and offered additional time to complete the application process.

**Results:**

The customer completed the application and wrote a thank you email to our office manager.

**Brainstorm challenges you have faced and the skills used to resolve them:**

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## CAR STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

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**Challenge:** What challenge was being faced that needed to be resolved?

**Action:** What actions did you take to make sure that the challenge could be solved?

**Results:** What were the results for you or the company?

**Write your CAR statement:**

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## SCENARIO #1

### Courtesy Call – Sarah

Sarah has been pursuing a mortgage company for about six months and finally receives a call. Human resources calls and sets up an interview for the following Monday. On Sunday evening, Sarah gets the flu and becomes very ill. She has aches, pains, brain fog, and feels terrible! She is afraid to miss the interview and believes they will not reschedule. It is a panel interview of at least eight, and Sarah has been preparing intensely and feels she is the perfect fit! What should Sarah do?

### Group Discussion Questions

- What are Sarah's options? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Should she go to the interview? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Should she ask to reschedule? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the employer's perspective? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SCENARIO #2**

**Overqualified, but Lack of Courtesy – Derrick**

Derrick is an experienced corporate trainer. He applies at a company in a different industry. The employer feels that Derrick is a great candidate, but his skills exceed the requirements of the posted position. The employer calls Derrick to find out more about his expectations. During the conversation, the employer spends fifteen minutes sharing information about the position and explains that the salary is substantially less than Derrick’s previous position. At the end of the conversation, the employer asked Derrick to consider the position and call back if interested in meeting for an interview. Derrick felt like it was not a good fit and did not follow up with the employer.

**Group Discussion Questions**

- Should Derrick have followed up? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What could Derrick have done differently? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the employer’s perspective? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SCENARIO #3**

**Stalking the Employer – Daisy**

Daisy uses her resources to get the hiring manager’s name and contact information. Daisy tries to schedule her own interview by simply calling the hiring manager’s phone. She receives a voicemail recording that says, “Thank you for calling me, your call is important to me. I will return your call by 5 p.m. today.” Daisy decides to leave a message that will get the hiring manager’s attention saying, “I am sorry for missing your call, but I look forward to our interview on Tuesday, please call me back to confirm.”

**Group Discussion Questions**

- Is this a good strategy? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What dangers lurk? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the employer’s perspective? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



### SCENARIO #4

#### Social Media – Tom

Tom was fired from his last job and was frustrated about his dismissal. So much so, that he logged into his Facebook and Twitter pages and blasted his previous employer. He told the world about his woes, and spent the next six weeks getting drunk and posting pictures to his social media because of his misery. Tom tweets that, "My world has just been turned upside down and drinking is the best way to make me feel better!" Fast forward six months, Tom is searching for work, applying for jobs, and going to interviews. He has stopped drinking and posting pictures with his friends. Now he is serious about his job search. He has attended job search classes, has a good resume, and has practiced his interviewing skills. Tom's job search has been stagnant, but he finally gets a job interview that meets his skills sets. During the interview, the employer tells him that he has been looking at his social media.

#### Group Discussion Questions

- Should Tom address his social media history? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How can Tom minimize the damage? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What is the employer's perspective? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# 30-SECOND COMMERCIAL

LESSON G

## INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_.

## TARGET

I'm looking for work as a \_\_\_\_\_.

## EXPERIENCE

I have \_\_\_\_\_ years of experience in \_\_\_\_\_.

and \_\_\_\_\_ years of experience in \_\_\_\_\_.

I would describe myself as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## SKILLS

Examples: Customer service, data entry, answering phones, construction, handling cash, designing websites, auto mechanics, etc.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

State your accomplishments with action verbs and measurements such as: numbers, percentages (%), and/or amount of money (\$).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_





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