

Research Yourself

Stephen F. Austin State University | Center for Career and Professional Development

Who knows you better than you know yourself? No one! You must be your own spokesperson and capitalize on what it is you have that the employer is seeking. Do this by reviewing the job description and relating what the position is looking for with what skills you have to offer. Expand your thinking to areas outside of work experience: extracurricular activities, classroom projects, athletics, volunteer work, and internships.

Review the following areas thoroughly in preparation for your interview.

Career goals and interests

Projecting a sense of your career direction demonstrates planning and forethought. You may not know exactly what you will be doing in the next 5-10 years, but you can articulate what you want to do professionally along with possible career paths.

Abilities and skills

Employers seek many of the same abilities and skills whether they are in business, government, or education. Know the abilities and skills you have developed through coursework and experiences. Prepare to discuss the aspects of your background that qualify you for a specific position.

Strengths and weaknesses

Know your strengths and weaknesses and be prepared to discuss them. When asked about your strength(s), this is your opportunity to prove that you have the most important strength required for the position. Don't blow it by offering some off-the-wall strength that isn't even on the recruiter's checklist.

Everyone has a weakness and it's okay to admit it! Discuss a weakness that you have worked to improve upon. For example: "I tend to have trouble delegating tasks to others, but I've realized that teamwork is a much more effective way to get the job done than trying to do it all myself." However, do not offer a weakness that could be a deal-breaker (ex. Bad with numbers, and it's an accounting position).

Successes and failures

Employers will ask questions regarding your past performance and experience, whether it be negative or positive. When discussing a failure, end with how you learned from the situation. Success can also be treacherous ground, so make sure not to sound too cocky.

“ Describe your duties and responsibilities in terms of quantities and accomplishments, when possible. For example, “As you’ll see on my resume, when I was Treasurer of XYZ Club, I managed a budget of \$10,000.” ”