Acing the Interview (Slide 1)

- The interview is one of the most commonly used tools to select job candidates

Objectives (Slide 2)

- Identify differences among interview types
- Identify how to prepare for an interview
- Develop and practice your professional introduction
- Identify proper interview conduct
- Identify how to follow up after an interview

Opening Quote (Slide 3)

- "I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed"

What Is an Interview? (Slide 4)

- An opportunity to describe your relevant experiences and skills and to get an idea of what is happening within the organization
- Remember that being invited to an interview means that the employer wants to know more about you
  - Additional information not provided in your resume or cover letter can be gained, such as seeing how you perform under pressure in the interview, learning how you believe your personality would fit in with the current team, finding out what motivates you, determining how well you communicate, and recognizing if you are a leader or a follower

Types of Interviews (Slide 5)

- Interviews can take place in an office setting or in a social setting
- Phone interviews are often used as a screening tool to narrow the pool of candidates who are invited to take part in a one-on-one interview
  - Phone interviews are as important as other types of interviews
  - Keep a copy of your resume, copies of your answers to commonly asked questions, copies of questions that you may need to ask at the end of the interview, and something you can take notes on nearby
  - Ensure you are in a quiet space and you will not be disturbed
  - Do not smoke, vape, eat, or drink alcohol during the interview
  - Smile while you are talking
  - At the end of the call, thank the interviewer and state that you look forward to possibly meeting in person
    - If you realize the position is not a good fit for you, thank the interviewer for his or her time and the opportunity to learn about the position but let him or her know this position does not seem to be a good fit for you at the present time

- Live virtual interviews, along with phone interviews, allow you to interview with one interviewer or a group of interviewers
    - The more people with whom you engage in an interview, the more opportunities you have to showcase your skills
- Recorded or “on-demand” virtual interviews are typically used in the initial screening stages of the hiring process
- The following are tips for virtual interviews:
    - Test and familiarize yourself with the software prior to the interview
    - You will probably need a camera and a microphone on your computer
    - It is ideal to have a strong internet connection in a quiet, secure setting
    - It is not recommended that you attempt interviewing on your phone/mobile device unless you have downloaded the specific mobile app for the software being used
    - Your ability to use technology effectively may be part of your evaluation
    - Be mindful that you are interviewing in front of a camera, which means that you need to be dressed in professional attire and sitting in front of a neutral backdrop
    - If using notes, consider that interviewers may be able to see you doing so
- Group interviews are usually conducted with two or more candidates and can often include two or more interviewers
    - Allows interviewers to observe how the candidates interact with each other
    - In this type of interview, if appropriate, you should acknowledge the other candidates by introducing yourself and offering a handshake
        - If a handshake is not appropriate, you can offer another type of greeting such as a nod and smile or a head dip
    - You will be observed as an active participant throughout the process
    - Try to show confidence by volunteering to respond first to a few questions, but do not dominate the entire interview
- Panel interviews are conducted with one candidate and include two or more members of a hiring committee
    - This type of interview may be indicative of a company that values teamwork and relies on team decision-making procedures
    - It is important to establish a rapport with members of the panel when you are introduced, whether you are in a face-to-face or virtual setting
        - Make eye contact with the panel member asking a question, but remember to scan your gaze across each member when answering
- Behavioral interviews are interviews where you will be asked questions about past behavior and may be asked to provide examples of what you did in the past that may be similar to what you may need to do in the position
    - Performance Based Interviewing (PBI) is one technique used, and it allows employers to focus directly on the behaviors or skills that are necessary to do a job and then assess an interviewee’s ability to demonstrate examples through past performance

        - Instead of asking what you would do in a hypothetical situation, PBI questions focus on what you have done in the past to demonstrate the skills required on the job
    - Some questions may ask the employee to demonstrate required skills
        - For example, an IT specialist may be given a technical issue to troubleshoot
        - For example, a teacher or trainer may be asked to deliver a sample lesson
- A one-on-one interview is where you are invited to meet with one person in either a face-to-face or virtual setting

Preparing for the Interview (Slide 6)

- Being well prepared will demonstrate that you are thorough and willing to take the steps necessary to get the job done
- **Handout 1**: Interview Checklist *Before the Interview*
- Interviewers may see an interviewee who lacks knowledge of the company as unprepared
- Be prepared to answer questions concerning the company and its industry
    - Review the company website, and follow them on social media
    - Check information on the internet about the organization including their mission statement, financial reports, product development, and logistics
    - Check latest news, annual reports, and other printed material
- Do not miss the opportunity to get firsthand information from current employees, customers, and vendors about the organization and its culture
- Avoid being late. Travel to the location ahead of time at the same time of day as your interview
    - Review parking situations and consider how far you may need to walk
- Bring a notepad and pen; turn off your phone upon arrival
- Bring copies of your resume and references for interviewers
    - Look over your resume before the interview
- Wear clothes that are appropriate for the job and industry
    - It is better to be overdressed than underdressed
- Ensure you are rested, fed, and hydrated prior to the interview
- Inform your references prior to your interview

Telling Your Story (Slide 7)

- A professional introduction is a statement that describes the skills and services you have to offer an employer

The Professional Introduction (Slide 8)

- **Exercise 1**: The Professional Introduction
- **Handout 2**: Professional Introduction
    - Create a greeting that includes your first and last name

- List your accumulated experience in your specific industry and jobs
- Include some areas of expertise with regard to major job functions and skill categories
- List your strengths - the specific skills you possess
- Summarize your specific accomplishments that emphasize your strengths
- Explain what your job search strategy is and what you want to do with your experience

Your Professional Introduction (Slide 9)

- Emphasize your strengths, and link them to the needs of the employer
- Use descriptive statements or specific examples of your skills and abilities
- State the kind of position you are seeking
- Have the basics of your professional introduction memorized
  - Doing this will ensure you have the ability to tailor your statements to the audience and position for which you are applying
- PRACTICE so your presentation seems more natural

Interview Questions and Answers (Slide 10)

- Even if you do not have experiences specific to the workplace in which you are interviewing, it does not mean you do not have transferrable skills
  - Highlight your transferable skills by preparing stories about experiences from your prior work that relate to the job of interest
- There are questions that are illegal for interviewers to ask
  - It is illegal for employers to make hiring decisions based on the following: race, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientations, and pregnancy), national origin, age (40 and older), disability, or genetics
    - It is not recommended to disclose this information in an interview or on a cover letter or resume
  - While generally illegal for an employer to ask if you have a disability or ask for your medical information, employers are permitted to do so for affirmative action purposes
    - Employers are also allowed to ask if you are able to perform job-related tasks with or without reasonable accommodations
    - It is the employee's choice whether to disclose his or her disability during the interview process, after an offer is made, or not at all
- There are state/geographic region-specific laws pertaining to interview questions
- Be mindful when using military-specific language and jargon when applying for jobs outside of the military
  - Examples: Using 24-hour clock or using MOS and other acronyms

STAR (Slide 11)

- Listen for requests from the interviewer that begin with phrases, such as, "Tell me about a time when…" or "Describe a situation in which you…"

- STAR technique
  - Situation: What was the situation and the context?
  - Task: What was the specific problem that had to be addressed?
  - Action: What specific skills/tools did you use to address the task?
  - Result: What was the result of your behavior?
- Example of an interview response using the STAR technique

Prepare Your Own Questions (Slide 12)

- Often an interviewer will judge your critical thinking skills by examining the kind of questions you ask the interviewer
  - Make a list of 5-10 standard questions, and revise based on the information gathered from your research on the employer
    - Example: How would you describe a typical day on the job?
    - Example: How would I be trained and introduced to the job?
- Salary and benefits questions can be asked after an offer has been made unless the interviewer brings up the subject
  - In the event you are asked what your salary requirements are, offer a range
    - Get an idea of an appropriate range by researching prior to the interview
    - Remember to always say that salary is negotiable

During the Interview (Slide 13)

- **Handout 1**: Interview Checklist *At the Start of and During the Interview*
- The importance of body language
  - If everyone interviewing is qualified for the position, having the best body language might be the advantage in receiving the job offer
  - During a phone interview, stand up to take the call as doing this may make the call seem more official and encourage you to be more attentive (make sure your computer camera is directed on your face and upper body)
- Interviews and introductions often begin with a handshake
  - Offer a whole-hand, firm handshake
  - Be sure to shake hands with men and women the same way
  - If handshakes are not feasible, an acceptable alternative is permitted
- Use direct eye contact while you are being questioned
- Sit up straight or lean slightly forward while the interviewer is talking, or sit with your back straight with knees together and feet flat on the floor or crossed at the ankle
- If you have nervous habits, become aware of them, and work to stop them
  - Watch yourself in a mirror while you are talking
  - If you are still uncomfortable, clasp your hands loosely in your lap, or place them on top of the table or on the arms of your chair
- Active listening involves blocking out distractions and concentrating on what the

interviewer is saying
    - If you are in doubt about a question or need clarification, paraphrase the question and summarize what you think your interviewer wants to know, and, then, ask for confirmation before proceeding
    - It's OK to take down a few notes while the interviewer is talking – but keep your attention on the interviewer
    - Speak clearly and at a natural pace, take a deep breath, and pause slightly to compose your answer and control your voice
    - Be careful not to speak in a monotone voice
    - Be aware of pronouncing your words correctly and use proper grammar
- **Exercise 2**: Posture, Gestures, Listening

Practice Interview Questions and Answers (Slide 14)

- **Exercise 3**: Practice Interview Questions and Answers
- **Handout 3**: Commonly Asked Interview Questions and Answer Tips
- Have key points prepared rather than memorizing your answers

After the Interview (Slide 15)

- **Handout 1**: Interview Checklist *At the End of and After the Interview*
- Remember the interviewer is watching your body language
- It is acceptable to ask how the rest of the hiring process will work at the end of the interview
- Do not make phone calls or do a victory dance until you are out of eyesight and earshot
- Write down notes from your meeting while they are fresh in your mind
- Thank you notes are a professional way to thank the interviewer for his or her time and a good way to reiterate why you are right for the job
    - Send a thank you note to anyone who spent his or her time with you
    - Use professional language, regardless of whether via email or hand-written
- Do not forget to notify your references that you have had an interview, and inform them that they might be contacted on your behalf
- Realize there are many reasons why you may not get the job offer
    - The company will not hire anyone or will only hire from within, your style may not fit the company's style, and you may be overqualified or underqualified
- If you are not offered a job after an interview, you may wish to ask the employer what the basis was for his or her decision and for feedback on your interview
- You may wish to send a follow-up thank you note or email if you are not offered the position
    - Employers may remember this when they have other openings or if the person selected does not work out
- Employers may utilize reference checks, background screenings, fingerprinting,

drug testing, credit reports, social media reviews, driving record review, and/or personality assessments as part of their process

Review of Objectives (Slide 16)

- ☐ What is an interview?
- ☐ What are some of the ways you can prepare for an interview?
- ☐ How should you behave in an interview?
- ☐ What should you do to follow up after an interview?