What to Expect on Second-Round Interviews

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Objective of this Workshop

Provide tools and tips for students to have successful second round interviews.
Organizational Opinion

“You give me the right people and I don’t care what organization you give me. Good things will happen. Give me the wrong people, and it doesn’t matter what you do with the organization. Bad things will happen.”

- Colin Powell
Overview

- Cornell Career Services
- Preparation
  - Self evaluation
  - Employer research
  - Job descriptions
- Performance
  - Itineraries
  - Interviews
    - STAR Technique
    - Practice
  - Tips
- Company Perspective
Cornell Career Services

- Mock interviews
- Resources online
- Carpenter Hall
- Barnes Hall: Job offer assistance
Self-evaluation will enable clear and concise answers to interview questions

- Technical skills
- Performance skills
- Future plans
Technical Skills

Technical skills are the core capability you bring to a potential employer

Examples include:
- Education (classes)
- Design tools
- Development processes
- Analysis methods
- Programming languages
Performance Skills

Performance skills are reason you will be successful at a potential employer

- Leadership
- Teamwork
- Creativity
- Decisiveness
- Commitment to a task
- Communication
- Attention to detail
Future Plans

Future plans enable focused growth within an organization.

Examples include:

- Senior technical engineer
- Senior consulting engineer
- Program management
- Technical management
- Continuing education (graduate school, MBA, etc.)
Prepare by Knowing Yourself

- Read your resume and know what’s on it!

- Areas to examine:
  - Education
  - Past work experience
  - Personal activities
  - Strengths
  - Weaknesses

Identify technical and performance skills you acquired and applied
Employer Research

Presenting knowledge about your potential employer demonstrates sincere interest in the company

- Employer Facts:
  - Name!
  - Where are they located?
  - How big (people and money)?
  - How many divisions?
  - What industry?
  - What products?
  - Who are the competitors?
Resources (and what they have about Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems)

- **Employer websites**
  
  The Electronic Systems Sector provides a variety of defense electronics and systems, airspace management systems, navigation systems, precision weapons, communications systems, marine systems, space systems, oceanic and naval systems, government systems and logistics services.

- **Wetfeet.com**
  
  Developed Joint Stars, an advanced targeting and battle management system that was implemented in the Persian Gulf War and NATO peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- **Current news articles**
  
  Northrop Grumman won a $72.5m contract from the US Air Force to provide a Space Awareness and Global Exploitation system.

- **Industry blogs**
  
  The most important improvement to the [Navy Hawkeye] E-2D AHE is the new APY-9 radar, which can detect and track smaller (or stealthier) targets, in larger numbers, and at greater ranges.
Understanding a Job Description

Job descriptions will inform you of your responsibilities and opportunities at a company

- Universal technical and performance skills will apply to nearly all potential jobs
- Specific skills
- Responsibilities
- Opportunities
- Location

Use external resources again!
- Vault Online Career Library (job guides)
- Don’t forget about Cornell alumni
Job Description Example:

Northrop Grumman Software Developer

**Software Engineering** positions involve full life-cycle product development on architectures ranging from **distributed networks of workstations and PCs** to custom designed **real-time embedded systems**. Applications include real-time control, target class/detect/tracking, data acquisition and analysis, **signal processing**, networks and communications, intelligence data cross correlation, image processing, database management and GUI development. Software engineering technologies utilized include **Object Oriented Design/Programming**, **C/Architectures**, **C/C++**, **Java**, **Embedded Real-time Development**, **Database Design**, **Web Technologies**, and the **Unix, Linux, Windows, VxWorks and Mercury Operating Systems**.
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Second Round Interview Itineraries

- Logistics
  - Travel
  - Meals
  - Lodging

- Activities
  - Interviews
    - What type?
    - How many?
    - Where?
  - Facility tours
    - How much walking?
  - Group events
    - Social?
Example Itineraries (I’ve been on)

- Fly Syracuse to Chicago
- Driver pickup at airport
- Overnight stay in hotel
- Breakfast with HR
- Morning interviews
  - On-site with 3 program managers
- Lunch with director of division
- Afternoon interviews
  - On-site with 3 technical consultants
- Depart via taxi to airport

- Fly Ithaca to Boston
- Bus from airport to hotel
- Overnight stay in hotel
- Morning interviews
  - On-site 3 technical interviews with managers
- Lunch with new hires
- Depart via taxi to airport
Example Itineraries (I’ve been on)

- Drive Ithaca to New York
- Overnight stay in hotel
- Breakfast with other interviewees
  - Off-site with 3 managers when they are available
- Drive back to Ithaca
- Fly Ithaca to Baltimore
- Shuttle back to hotel
- Evening dinner and social event in Inner Harbor
- Breakfast presentations
- Morning interviews
  - Off-site 3 technical interviews with engineers and 1 with HR
- Lunch presentations
- Afternoon tour of facility
- New-graduate panel
- Depart via bus airport
Interviews

- Warm-up
- Probing
- In-depth Questions
  - Technical
  - Performance
- Your questions
- Closing
- Paperwork
S-T-A-R Technique

- Nearly all performance skill oriented questions can be answered with the following procedure:
  - S – Situation
  - T – Task
  - A – Action
  - R – Result

- “Tell me a time when … you dealt with an adverse situation in a project you were working on”
  - S – Product was two weeks from delivery and key component failed during testing
  - T – Repair component while simultaneously preparing product for delivery
  - A – Created repair team to plan and execute key component rebuild while tasking remaining team members to move ahead with product delivery preparation
  - R – Product shipped without key component, but we were otherwise prepared, therefore the key component was integrated at the customer site.
Warm-Up Dialogue

Make a good first impression by giving clear and sincere answers – the interview has already begun!

- How is your day going so far?
- Have you found this trip interesting? If so, what part?
- Are you enjoying the Baltimore area?
- How’s the semester progressing for you?
- Did you have a good lunch?
Probing Questions

- Tell me about yourself
- Why did you decide to interview with Northrop Grumman?
- What area do you most want to work in?
- How would you describe your study/work habits?

Provide opportunities for follow-up questions that will expose the unique talents you can bring to the company.
In-Depth Questions (Technical)

Differentiate yourself from other candidates by demonstrating ability to problem solve under pressure

- Write MATLAB code to perform matrix-vector multiplication as if there were no built-in function.
- Design a finite-state-machine to run a soda machine.
- What does this C++, Java, C code do?
- Describe a device that you know how it works, what can you do to make it better?
- How do you decide which one of two designs is better?
In-Depth Questions (Performance)

Convince the interviewer they want to work on a project with you

- What are two or three accomplishments that have given you the most satisfaction – why?
- What skills did you acquire at your internship with IBM?
- What accomplishment demonstrates your willingness to work and show initiative?
- What quality or attribute do you feel will most contribute to your career?
- What was the most complex assignment you have had? What was your role?
In-Depth Questions (Performance) – con’t

Persuade the interviewer you are a future leader of this organization

- Describe a specific problem you have solved for your professor or employer?
- Describe how you deal with conflict in group projects?
- What is the responsibility of a group leader in a large project?
- Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a coworker or classmate understand a task?
- What’s the most important presentation you have ever had to give?
Your Chance to Ask the Questions

Demonstrate your preparedness!

- How do the participants in your professional development program feel it benefits their career development?
- Do many new-hires take advantage of your opportunities for continuing education?
- Can you tell me more about the application process for your leadership training program?
Closing and Paperwork

Continue the interview all the way out the door!

- Do you have a target salary?
  - Cornell Career Services Postgraduate Report
- Do you have a desired start date?
- Do you have any other employment offers?
- Ask about the next steps in the hiring process
- Ask about the best way to follow-up with your interviewer

- All interviewers are required to fill-out an interview evaluation, be prepared to wait while they finish up
Interview Practice

Practice with somebody who will give you honest feedback

- Create a real interview experience
- Are your answers clear to somebody who is meeting you for the first time?
- Are you convincing?
- Do you get across the most important information?
- What can you do to improve your responses?
- What messages are you sending with your body language?
Interview Tips

- Be prepared
- Give clear and concise answers
- Be honest
- Expect difficult questions
- Come with questions to ask
  - Show up on-time
  - Dress professionally
  - Sell your strengths
- Admit your weaknesses
- Demonstrate poise
Company Viewpoint of New-Graduate Hiring

- Most likely you are not an expert in the product line we design and manufacture
- Do you have the technical skills to become an expert in our field?
- Will you embrace the company environment and perform to the best of your ability in that situation?
- Can I see myself working with you on a critical project?
Final Thought

Employers build a model of future on-the-job performance based on past experience, and future plans. Therefore, the ability to clearly articulate your abilities and plans will enable a company to offer you employment.
Questions?