I’ve had many interviews over the course of my career, but one is particularly memorable because of the interview question that completely stumped me. I was in the third and final phase of an interview, having already met with a team of potential peers and the person I would report to. The last interview was with the team that would report directly to me. I always think being interviewed by potential direct reports is the most difficult of all interviews, probably because while you think you know what peers and the boss are looking for, you have no idea what the staff is looking for.

Everything was rolling along well, and as that final hour was ending I could feel the relief of a runner being able to see the finish line. Then came the stumper:

**What do people assume about you that would be wrong?**

Wow! That was a loaded question in so many ways. With 5 pairs of eyes fixed on me, I scrambled for an answer. What do people assume about me? I don’t really know. So how could I say they were wrong? Should I admit I’ve never thought about that before and see if they would let me off the hook? Should I make something up that people might assume about me, or should I pick a terrible characteristic and deny it? No, that would be wrong because then I would be admitting that there is a reason why people would assume that. Yikes! This was an impossible trick question. I took a deep breath and looked inward, asking myself if I was really interested in this position after all.

Then it came to me. One of the greatest challenges of my managerial career has been curbing my natural tendency to give people every possible chance right up until the moment when they cross the line for the last time and I yank them off their feet. In other words, nice...nice...nice...nice...nice...nice...mean. That might not describe it completely, but you probably understand. Someone advised me once to "start off mean, you can always get nicer," but that's just not me. So, through the years I have tried to let people know that while I would do everything to help them succeed in their position, I don't believe that every person is a fit for every position.

In essence, the challenge of the stumper question is basically: how honest can you be while still trying to promote yourself as a good fit? It would be extremely easy to tell if the person was giving a response designed to make themselves look good (e.g. "People assume that because I’m beautiful, I’m not intelligent!")

The best answer to this question is the most honest one. By taking a deep breath and looking inward, I was able to come to that conclusion. If a question of any kind ever stumps you, remember your experience and who you are as a person has ultimately prepared you for this moment. Even if you get initially stumped, there is a place inside of you that has the answer you need.

What was my answer?

**People assume that just because I am nice, I’m a doormat.**

The next week they offered me the job.

Mary Pat Whaley, FACMPE, CPC
Physician Advocate
June 18, 2013

http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/
Employers Report a Four-Week Window between Job Interview and Offer

BETHLEHEM, PA—How long can a college student expect to wait for a job offer after an interview? And, after an offer is extended, how long will he or she have to accept or reject it?

NACE’s 2012 Recruiting Benchmarks Survey found that, on average, employers hiring new college graduates take 24.2 business days to extend an offer to a college student after an interview. Once an offer has been extended, employers then give the candidate an average of 14.1 business days to make a decision.

“The average interview-to-offer cycle time in the 2012 survey is consistent with that from previous years,” says Marilyn Mackes, NACE executive director. “These results show that there tends to be a relatively narrow timeframe during which the offer follows the interview.” (See Figure 1.)

There are significant differences in interview-to-offer cycle times across industries. Government agencies have one of the longer interview-to-offer cycles with a 38-day average. However, they are not alone as employers in other industries—such as recreation and hospitality (39.5 days), engineering services (30.3 days), and construction (30 days)—have similar timeframes.

By contrast, recruiters from computer and electronics manufacturers (16 days), accounting services (17 days), and miscellaneous business services (17.5 days) take an average of fewer than 18 days to deliver their offers.

Four Tips for Video Interview Preparation

Now that video technology is no longer location-specific, laptops come with built-in webcams, and Internet-based video services offer free options, video interviewing is becoming a convenient and cost-effective alternative to the traditional in-person interview.

There are format-specific elements interviewees need to understand and consider as they prepare for a video interview. Following are some recommendations for students to follow in preparation for video interviews:

1) Know the technology and be comfortable with it—Students shouldn’t sign up for a video interview until they’re comfortable with the process. They should know what they can and can’t do with the audio and video controls, what their image looks like, and where to look once the interview begins. Being adept with the technology gives students credibility as professionals.

2) Consider image and the interview environment—Students should dress professionally as a video interview is an interview. Is the background of the interview area consistent with the image the student wants to portray to recruiters? The student should remove or silence all distractions, such as cell phone ringers, e-mail alerts, and music.

3) Test all settings and connections beforehand—Students should make sure the settings are optimized and all connections are working prior to the interview to avoid any issues during the interview.

4) Be prepared for a system hiccup—Students should have a Plan B ready in case the technology fails during a video interview. For example, a student participating in a video interview should have his or her cell phone ready to use in case the connection is unacceptable or drops. Being prepared in such a manner and making a smooth transition to another method in light of unexpected problems can impress an employer.

See more at: http://www.naceweb.org/s12052012/video-interview-preparation/#sthash.zFGBSzR8.dpuf

December 5, 2012
How to “Draft” Your Message for a Second Interview

Institutions manage their interview processes differently, but, for most, the first interview is about screening the candidate. The objective of the second interview is always different than the first. After all, why would they do it?

"The second interview is very conversational," said Domonic Rollins, the assistant dean of students at DePaul University. "It follows up on the things you talked about."

The conversation determines your fit. The follow-up - and notice he didn’t say repeats - determines your ability to evaluate.

"Demonstrate that you did your homework since the first interview," Rollins added. "Think of some of the ways you can differentiate yourself."

Rollins led a roundtable discussion for job seekers at The Placement Exchange in Orlando last month called "How to Succeed in Second Interviews."

He emphasized packaging your second interview message so that, while consistent with your first interview, it elaborates with new stories that keep the employers excited about you. Even if you meet with different people the second time around, new stories tailored to their interests will resonate. The new people will almost certainly compare notes with the first interviewers.

But how do you construct your second interview message?

As a nod to being an employer’s "draft pick," the way professional athletes are selected, Rollins used the acronym D.R.A.F.T. during his roundtable discussion. He recommends candidates focus on five areas of evaluation before entering the second interview.

**Differentiation**
Share unique but relevant information about yourself not shared previously. You want your potential employer to see you as multi-faceted with a range of interests and talents. Articulate your passion for the position while delivering new information.

**Readiness**
Focus on how ready you are for the new challenge. Discuss how you translate your experiences to demonstrate that you are prepared for new responsibilities. Share reflections of your past supervisors and peers, like 'My boss has complimented me on...' or 'My peers think of me as a team leader and believe...'.

**Actualize**
Help your potential employer envision you in this role and support this vision with specific examples of tasks, perhaps ones discussed by the employer in the first interview, that use your transferrable skills.

**Fit**
The second interview is mostly about assessing fit - both ways. Often soft questions are asked about your hobbies and interests, your ability to emotionally connect with colleagues, and the culture you desire. Be prepared to answer these questions honestly, not how you think an employer wants you to answer them.

**Transition**
Employers will want to know if you can manage the transition and thrive, not just in the new role but in the new campus and location. Demonstrate the following: flexibility, adaptability, independence, and a history of managing varying transitions in the past.

Rollins also reminded the group, "Corn fields do not become cities, and cities do not become corn fields."

Justin Zackal
Marketing and Social Media Coordinator
HigherEd Jobs

http://www.higheredjobs.com/Articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID=427&Title=How%20to%20%22Draft%22%20your%20Message%20for%20Second%20Interview

---

**Upcoming Career Services’ Events**

**September 18:** STEM Career Development Seminar

**September 25:** STEM Career Development Seminar, Noon

**September 26:** Psyched About Careers in Psychology, 3:00 p.m., Guyon Auditorium, Morris Library

---

**Career Services Tip of the Month**

To practice interviewing skills, schedule an in-person mock interview with a career services staff member or practice online interviewing via InterviewStream.

You can access information about mock interviews through the Career Services’ website:

http://careerservices.siu.edu/students/interview/index.html