Our Agenda

Interviewing effectively means you:

1. **Know how to prepare for an interview.**
   - Sketching out your game plan by creating a tell/know list

2. **Articulate the goal, structure and strategy of an interview.**

3. **Can respond effectively to interview questions.**
   - Strategies to respond to any interview question clearly, concisely and on point.
1. Preparing for an Interview

- Go online and read the organization’s website
- Google the organization and anyone you know you’re going to meet
- Don’t prepare by trying to answer a long list of interview questions you found online.
- Instead prep by sketching out a game plan by creating a tell/know list

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Having a game plan: your Tell/Know List

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What is a successful interview?

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Your Turn!

Take 5 minutes and sketch your game plan.
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   - Strategies to respond to any interview question clearly, concisely and on point.
   - Bonus: Skillful phone interviewing
The goal of an interview

The employer’s goal:
1. Verify and better understand your skills & experience.
2. Assess if you are a fit with their organization.
3. Convince you to join them.

Your goal:
1. Assess their need.
2. Make the case that your skills & experience will solve their problem.
3. Determine if you’d like to work there.

The structure of the Interview day
The Hiring Manager

Your job talk

Panel of people whom you work with directly

Lunch with several members of team or the Hiring Manager

People you would supervise

Senior Leadership: The VP of Research, Pres. of Org.

HR

The Hiring Manager

The structure of the Interview day

Jean Grey is Hiring

The structure of each conversation

1. Last between 30 minutes - 1 hour
2. Time for 5-15 questions
3. Two styles: ‘super structured’ to ‘casual’
4. Because many folks were never trained to hire, they tend to ask 4 types of questions:
   - What they think is key
   - What concerns them most
   - What they were asked
   - ‘Catchy’ questions
5. But there are overall stages
The structure of each interview exchange

Typical Stage I Questions
- Tell me about yourself.
- Can you summarize your background?
- Why are you interested in the position/program?
- So you completed your PhD at UCSF?

Your Strategy: Summarize your tell list

What I want to tell

- **Academic Training**
  - Cell biologist: oncology, immunology, genetics research

- **Relevant Professional Skills**
  - 5 years experience in angiogenesis research
  - Productive: Collaborated with other labs, 6 papers, 4 first author
  - Interpersonal & project management skills: Comfortable presenting, managed techs, led PSA, managed lab move.

- **Interest in Position**
  - Interested in discovering therapeutics in breast cancer research
  - Like Eli Lilly: family experience with breast cancer/lilly products, establish company, colleagues say great place to work

Typical Stage I Questions
- Tell me about yourself.
- Can you summarize your background?
- Why are you interested in the position/program?
- So you completed your PhD at UCSF?
I am a cell biologist with a background in angiogenesis research, and experience in the areas of X, Y & Z. For the past ten years, I’ve been interested in improving human therapeutics for breast cancer.

Most recently, I’ve been working in Bruce Banner’s lab at UCSF, where I’ve been isolating....... 

I’ve been interested in Eli Lilly’s work for years, and the chance to work with researchers who have done A and B is an exciting opportunity.
Having a game plan: your Tell/Know List

What I want to tell

Academic Training
- Cell biologist: oncology, immunology, genetics research
- 5 years experience in angiogenesis research

Relevant Professional Skills
- Productive: Collaborated with other labs, 6 papers, 4 first author
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Typical Stage I Questions
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The structure of each interview exchange

4-Stage Interview Format: Drilling Down.

Stage I: Opening/Agenda Setting
Stage II: Key Skills & Experience for the Position
Stage III: Curiosity & Fears
Stage IV: Your ?s
The Mistake That Candidates Make

They take too long
(over 3 minutes)
... to answer the first question

Your Turn!

Q. Why are you interested in this position?
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Office of Career & Professional Development
Naledi Saul. Naledi.saul@ucsf.edu

Your Strategy: **Summarize your tell list**

**Academic Training**
- I am a cell biologist

**Relevant Professional Skills**
- With a background in angiogenesis research, and experience in the areas of X, Y & Z
- 5 years of experience studying a variety of renewable energy sources

**Interest in Position**
- Interested in discovering new (or improving existing) human therapeutics for breast cancer.
- Interested in developing and optimizing ocean wave energy production systems

**You, Summarized**
- Diana
- Yu-Ling

The structure of each interview exchange

4-STAGE INTERVIEW FORMAT: DRILLING DOWN.

**Typical Stage II Questions**
- Tell me more about your Ph.D. work.
- Can you talk about experiences where you had to plan and implement a project that had defined timelines.
- Have you trained lab techs, trainees or new employees before? What was your approach?
Your Strategy: Summarize your range of experience – but not chronologically

My team based experiences include research collaborations, my work as the head of the PSA and smaller projects, including a lab move in 20XX.

I’ve been both the lead and an actively member or both short and long term projects. Through these experiences, I learned three things about successful teams:
1. The importance of clarifying goals and role expectations, and confirming buy in at the beginning.
2. The need to recognize progress to keep people motivated and on track.
3. You’ve got to address inevitable conflicts immediately.

I really enjoy working with others – better ideas, better outcomes, and more enjoyable.

It’s one of the reasons why I am interested in Eli Lilly- the opportunity to work on multiple collaborative projects.

I’m happy to talk more about my experiences, but I’ll stop with that overview and see if there is something specific you’d like to know.

The mistake that people make: Responding chronologically

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Your Turn!

Q. Tell me about your experience working on a successful team.

My team based experiences include research collaborations, my work as the head of the PSA and smaller projects, including a lab move in 20XX.

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The structure of each interview exchange

Typical Stage III Questions

- Give me an example of a time when you had to manage competing priorities effectively.
- Tell me about a time that you disagreed with a colleague. What was the situation and how did you resolve it successfully?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Why are you leaving academe?

Your Strategy: The S.T.A.R. Approach

Q. Tell me about a time you disagreed with a colleague? How did you handle it?
Situation

I’ve come to accept that conflict is very normal, and often very uncomfortable.

But my approach is usually to try to fully understand the other person’s perspective, try to be clear about my own, and focus on thinking about whether or not there is any way to get to a good outcome — which I define as one which we both can live with, because I’m probably going to be working with that person again in the future.

One disagreement with a colleague that comes to mind was over authorship.

Specifically, we had to decide who would be first author on a paper — and our PI told us to “figure it out”.

Task

We needed to figure out who would be first author on a paper — which was contentious.

Action

What became clear is that both of us thought that it was ‘obvious’ that each of us would be first author, based on the work that we contributed to the project. So we each had to get over the idea that the authorship was a given and focus on negotiating.

We then threw out ideas: co-first authors, splitting the paper, going back to our advisor, etc., and it seemed clear that the best choice was writing two papers.

We then had to tackle who would be first author on the first paper — which was contentious. Looking back, I really appreciated my colleague’s ability to say, “Let’s take a break and discuss it more tomorrow,” because we weren’t going to figure it out in one day.

Results

We figured it out — I was first on the first paper and he was first on the next two. One outcome I realized is to fight the urge to delay having clarifying conversations because the answer is ‘obvious’ or ‘will be difficult’ with a collaborator. It’s clearly much better to address difficult issues up front.
Your Strategy: The S.T.A.R. Approach

Q.
The person in this position will be required to manage several projects. Tell me about a time you had to manage a project. What was it? What was your approach? How did you know it was successful?

My approach to managing any project includes setting goals, and ensuring buy in from people on my team, regular check-ins with acknowledgement of progress, and closing out. One successful project included the funding of an NIH grant.

Specifically, I led a group in my lab in writing a $1.2 million grant to fund our work in X.

- When we began the project, the group wasn't sure we had time to meet the 2-month submission deadline.
- But at that first meeting we met to assess if it was possible - outlining specific, detailed, step-by-step milestones we would have to meet in order successfully submit on time.
- Then I assigned each person a milestone, and a completion date, and we all got started.
- We met weekly, reviewing progress and troubleshooting issues. I was responsible for setting the agenda, crafting the different sections into one document & communicating with the NIH grants officer and the IRB at UCSF.

We pulled it together and were funded. This worked, not just because we had a fundable idea, but because the process was clear: we set clear expectations, had the timeline, divided the tasks & communicated between ourselves constantly. Now, these steps are how I approach any project I manage.
Your Turn!

Q. Tell me about a time that you had a conflict with a colleague. How did you handle it?

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<td>Task</td>
<td>Give 1-2 sentences to summarize a specific example.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Walk them through 3-5 steps of what you specifically did, so they can see how you would handle a similar situation if you worked for them.</td>
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<td>Results</td>
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The structure of each interview exchange

Typical Stage III Questions

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- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Why are you leaving academe?
- What’s your weakness?

Responding to the “What’s Your Weakness?” question in 5 easy steps:

- **Put boundaries** and context around the identified weakness
- **Be a problem solver** (articulate what you plan to do to fix it)
- **Talk about what you plan to do to address the issue you’ve identified**
- **Ask for help.**
- **Express your commitment to doing good work.**
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Identify strengths for the skills required for the job
Based on our conversations about the position, I feel confident with the areas of research, the required techniques and the project management responsibilities.

Identify the specific weakness/growth area required for the job
Where I see my learning curve/weakness is in transitioning from an academic to an industry environment.

Talk about what you plan to do to address the issue you’ve identified
Realizing this, for the past 3 months, I’ve been reaching out to my industry contacts, conducting a series of informational interviews, and generally talking to people about their own first 6 months transitioning to industry. If I was the selected candidate, I would continue to reach out to those individuals for mentorship.

Ask for help.
What I would appreciate, if I’m the selected candidate, is any feedback that you offer, on anything that you think is affecting my success- that includes communication style, understanding the culture, etc.

Express your commitment to doing good work.
My goal, ultimately, is to meet your goals, and I’m confident that these steps would address that potential weakness.

The structure of each interview exchange

4-STAGE INTERVIEW FORMAT: DRILLING DOWN.

Typical Stage IV Questions
- What is the time frame in which you are seeking to fill the position?
- What is the next step in your hiring process?
- What is a challenge that the selected candidate will face in the first 6 months?
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1. Make sure you know their hiring time frame before you leave!
2. Have the contact information: email/written thank you to everyone within 48 hours.
3. Sample thank you letters at: career.ucsf.edu
The structure of each interview exchange

4-STAGE INTERVIEW FORMAT: DRILLING DOWN.

Stage I: Opening/Agenda Setting
- Academic/Training
- What is known
- Situation

Stage II: Key Skills & Experience for the Position
- Research/Professional Skills
- What you know
- Task

Stage III: Curiosity & Fears
- Interest/Position
- What you can say
- Action

Stage IV: Your ?s
- Yes, Sanitized
- Say what you like
- Results

Ask questions from the “Know” part of your Tell/Know list

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