

## Interviewing Q&A from an HR perspective

By Caroline Francis

UK alumnus Derrick Chesser '09 BE, a HR and organizational development manager for Wayne Supply & Walker Machinery, headquartered in Louisville, shares his perspective on some typical questions heard from our alumni regarding interviewing.



**What are the most effective strategies in preparing for an interview?** Besides reviewing the job description and practicing typical interviewing questions, learn as much as possible about the organization. With that, all of your responses will naturally be more in tune with the organization's goals and will resonate best with the hiring manager.

**Give some examples of typical interview mistakes.** The most common interview mistake I've witnessed is candidates being surprised by how most interviews start: "Tell us about yourself." I've seen candidates begin their response by going back to high school experiences. This is way too much information. I've seen candidates at a loss for words. I've seen candidates talk about their family and love for travel — a little bit of personal information is great, but this is an interview, not a cocktail party.

**What do you recommend to rebound from an interview misstep?** Ultimately, this is the chance to make a great first impression. Be prepared to talk about your current position, education and relevant experience. The response to "Tell us about yourself" should be your typical "elevator speech" — a few brief sentences concisely summarizing what you are proud of in your career, what transferable skills you would bring to the organization and why you are interested in the position at hand.

**What's the best way to follow up after an interview?** Email a "thank you" message to the interviewers. Often decisions are being made on who to move onto the next round of interviews long before a mailed thank you note would ever arrive at the decision makers' desks. Another strategy to consider is to bring a few blank notecards to the interview. Fill them out after your interview before you leave and give to the receptionist on your way out.

**What post-interview follow up strategies would you recommend? How does timing play into the strategy?** If they have given you a timeline for when you would hear back and you have not heard back, then it would be appropriate to follow up. If not, wait a couple of weeks to follow up. Sometimes with scheduling challenges, there are still interviews to be completed, and following up too soon is not helpful or viewed as too persistent. When you follow up, be sure to express your continued interest in the role and "inquire as to the status of the position." It is appropriate to ask if you are still being considered.

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