



CANDIDATE TRAINING PROGRAM

The Next Step to a Civilian Career

Interview Training

MODULE
5



BRADLEY-MORRIS, INC.

RECRUIT MILITARY®



Review from Part 4

- *What is a resume?*
- *Getting Started*
- *Format*
- *Using Your Resume*

Why Interview for Jobs?

When you interview for a job there are three parties usually involved, each with their own goals and motivations; the Employer, Candidate, and Recruiter (if applicable). It is important to touch on this and give a moment's thought to how this impacts your preparation process. Your goals as the candidate and the recruiter's goals are likely the same, to successfully pass the first step in the screening out process leading to an offer. The company likely shares this goal, with the added burden of ensuring that the candidate is screened properly to assess professional competence, organizational fit, and motivation or drive. When a hiring manager at a company decides to bring someone onto their team, the success of their organization as well as their own reputation within the company are at stake. This key difference should help candidates align their strategy and expectations not only to demonstrate the ability to do the work described in the position description, but to create a meaningful connection to the employer to assure them that their reputation and organizational health will be safe if you are offered the job.

Employers

- Prevent good candidates from being screened out.
- Clarify real job needs, demonstrate to the candidate that the assessment is professional and that the company has extremely high hiring standards.
- Discuss career growth to understand the long-term value of the hire.

Candidates

- Offer insight into your personality and abilities.
- Discern whether your credentials and career goals match up with what the company seeks.
- Sell yourself to the company; express interest and forge a genuine connection with future team mates.
- Discover whether the supervisor or team you will be working under match your personality style and offer attributes you seek in a leader.

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- Create a valuable interaction for the Employer and Candidate that hopefully leads to an offer.
- Demonstrate the applicability of military skills and training to positions in corporate America, bridging the gap between service and civilian employment.
- Use each interview opportunity to better understand the experience and background the client desires for the role and understand how they assess cultural fit.
- Gather feedback about the candidate's job preferences and skills in the interview environment. Each interview gives us the ability to better understand the overall direction of the candidate's search, as well as learn from our clients where the candidate's interview skills require further refinement.

There is a lot at stake early in the interview process, but knowing these motivations and incentives helps you put your focus on the most impactful areas of preparation. The dark secret of the hiring industry is that the most qualified candidate on paper is rarely the person selected for the job. In many cases, employers get scared away from overqualified candidates and hire the person that made the most authentic connection with them during the interview process. There is no mathematical formula for an interview, but if you view the interaction as 80% interpersonal and 20% technical, you'll have the right frame of mind when you begin creating a game plan.

Job Interview Format

Interviews usually flow from beginning to end along a standard trajectory:

- Greeting and introductions
- Interviewer gives a brief overview of the job or company
- Candidate introduces their background
- The interviewer asks follow up questions to the candidate to assess fit
- The candidate generally gets a few minutes to ask questions about the job, company, corporate environment
- The close, exchange of contact information, management of expectations

The order of those steps can be re-arranged slightly, but in general this is the way almost every 30-45 minute phone interview will be scripted. In-person interviews might differ slightly, and some technical positions may have a skills assessment, or a written test included in the process, but generally this is a reliable structure around which to plan.



“Tell me about yourself..”

This is a typical first question for an interviewer to ask a candidate and comes in many forms but is always driving towards the same answer – walk them through your resume up to today. Whether they ask, “What brings you here today?” or “Tell me why you think you’re a good fit for this role,” the answer will remain the same. You have an opportunity to introduce the story that is your career and do it in a way that will hopefully bridge the gap for the interviewer to understand why you might be able to fulfill the work they need done. Because this happens at the very beginning of the interview it is important for you to have a well-rehearsed answer that lasts between 30-90 seconds so that you can quickly jump into the Q&A portion where the big wins of a job interview are made. An ideal answer to this question includes the following:

■ Your background

- ▶ Your motivation to join the military and select your branch/designator/MOS
- ▶ The basic training and fundamental skills you received early-on
- ▶ Walk through your career, explain the roles you held and where you were stationed
- ▶ Explain the scope of major responsibilities and hallmark achievement(s) during that role.
- ▶ Connect these achievements to the job or focus on areas of your service that relate directly to the employer.

■ Explain why you are leaving the military (or seeking a new job if already a civilian)

- ▶ Professional skills you have honed while serving
- ▶ Goals for that skill set that you cannot accomplish within the military
- ▶ How you think those skills or experiences will match the job/company
- ▶ How this position will facilitate your professional growth

At a very fundamental level, you’re answering two questions if you follow this structure:

“Who are you, and what are you doing here?” Most employers will want to know what is motivating you to leave the service, especially if you speak about your experiences with fondness. In many cases, going to work for an investment bank doesn’t sound anywhere near as much fun as flying a fighter jet or operating a nuclear submarine, but the reality for the service member is that the transition represents much more than an outsider might imagine. This is your opportunity to answer that question up front while explaining how your career has not only reached its logical end in the military but has led you to this role at this company at this time.

In a very real sense, this is your sales pitch for yourself.



Rhythm and Pacing

Let's look back at the format for most job interviews and make some estimates about how much time we'll dedicate to each portion of the conversation:

- Introductions: 2-5 mins
- Tell me about yourself: 1-3 mins
- They ask you questions ?? mins
- You ask them questions ?? mins
- The Close: 2-5 mins

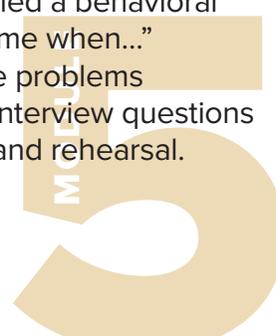
We can see that 5-13 minutes of the interview are already accounted for before you really dive into the Q&A about your background or about the company and the position. Most first round interviews happen over the phone and last 30 minutes, so that means 17-43% of your total time available to impress the interviewer and win the next step are already accounted for, baked into the format.

The key takeaway is that in any professional conversation, it's important to be clear and get straight to the point because time is always at a premium. Busy people don't respond well to long winded answers and rambling explanations that dance around the question. Just like in professional sports, clock-management is a key element to success and should give you a reason to feel more confident going into an interview if you know that 5-15 minutes of your interview can be based on well-rehearsed talking points about your career and your personal development. This means that you'll only have to think on your feet for 40-60% of the conversation. The other 40-60% of the conversation will be right in your wheel house because you will have had the ability to rehearse and practice with friends and family to feel confident in your responses.

Once you have crisp, concise, confident responses planned and have rehearsed the predictable portions of the job interview, you can begin working on your responses to the less predictable questions that the interviewer will ask during the middle of the conversation.

Responding to Questions

Assuming everything goes well with introductions and your scene setting from your resume, the interviewer will usually move the conversation forward by asking a variety of questions. Interview questions generally come in the form of questions about your resume, questions about your training or service-specific career path, or questions aimed to discover how the you acted in specific situations in the past. This last kind of question is called a behavioral interview question, and usually begins with the phrase, "tell me about a time..." designed to evoke a story from the past that demonstrates how you solve problems and work collaboratively with others. There is a list of sample behavioral interview questions at the end of this module that should form the basis for your preparation and rehearsal.



As a candidate, you should be equipped to answer the questions thoroughly. Obviously, you can better prepare for this type of interview if you know which skills that the employer has predetermined to be necessary for the job you seek. In the interview, your response needs to be specific and detailed. Candidates who tell the interviewer about situations that relate to each question will be far more effective and successful than those who respond in general terms. Ideally, you should briefly describe the situation, what specific action you took to influence the situation, and the positive result or outcome.

Use this four-step process referred to craft a S-T-A-R story

1 | Situation ▶ 2 | Task ▶ 3 | Action ▶ 4 | Result

<p>Situation or Task</p>	<p>Describe the situation that you were in or the task that you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past.</p>
<p>Actions you took</p>	<p>Describe the action you took and be sure to keep the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did, not the efforts of the team. Don't tell what you might do, tell what you did.</p>
<p>Results you achieved</p>	<p>What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish? What did you learn? Make sure you quantify each result achieved in at least one of the following three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 MONEY ▶ Remember, this is a perceived area of inexperience for military professionals so you need to overcome that by having as many “dollars and cents” examples as possible. 2 A % of IMPROVEMENT ▶ i.e., improved readiness rate by 20%, or decreased maintenance down time by 15%, etc. 3 MAN HOURS or SAFETY

As you're reviewing and revising your resume based on the job description, identify six to eight examples from your career where you demonstrated top behaviors and skills that employers typically seek. Think in terms of examples that will exploit your top selling points. Half your examples should be totally positive, such as accomplishments or meeting goals. The other half should be situations that started out negatively but either ended positively or you made the best of the outcome; keep in mind that the only way to fail is to not learn a lesson, so if a story results in unmet expectations highlight the value of the lesson you learned and how it shaped you. Vary your examples; don't take them all from just one area of your life or one billet/duty station. Ideally, the examples that are most relevant to the job for which you are interviewing will be recent, within the last three years if possible.

Asking Questions

Near the end of the conversation and after the interviewer feels they've had their questions sufficiently answered, you will have an opportunity to ask the interviewer questions about the position, company, industry, or about their experience working for the company. This is the ideal moment to break out from the other candidates being considered and ensure that you accomplish everything you came to do during this conversation. Of all the clients Bradley-Morris has worked with throughout the years across almost every end-market in the US economy, the feedback is almost unanimous from interviewers that candidates who ask good questions make a more positive first impression than those who do not.

No questions means no interest, period.

Search engines and AI make it possible to find a resume that promises any combination of skills a hiring manager might imagine, but what cannot be captured through technology is the genuine intellectual curiosity, dedication, and passion that the right employee brings to a team. This is the part of the interview where you can make a sincere connection to the employer and demonstrate that your interests and curiosities are aligned to their business's needs. This is such an important part of the interview that it's not uncommon for some interviewers to immediately follow up introductions by asking the candidate to lead the conversation with their questions.

There are some simple rules when deciding what kinds of questions to ask:

■ **Avoid 'me first' questions where the answer is intended to highlight a benefit or perk you would receive from the job. This includes things like:**

- ▶ Compensation
- ▶ Benefits
- ▶ Time off and vacation
- ▶ Relocation policy, work from home

While there is no doubt that the answers to these questions are important, there will be much more time in the hiring process to discover those answers; the first interview is the wrong time to focus on these elements given the relatively limited time available.

■ **There are some standard questions that make sense for any job interview you would go on, by asking those, you can understand how opportunities compare against each other. For example:**

- ▶ Why is this role available, why are you hiring now?
- ▶ How do you measure success in this position? What metrics define the performance expectations of someone in this role?
- ▶ Are you considering veterans for a specific skill or attribute, or is this open to any potential applicant?
- ▶ Is there someone at the company that has done this job before and been highly successful? Can I speak with that person to understand what they did before deciding about an offer?



- ▶ When someone succeeds in this position, what usually comes next in terms of development and progression and what new responsibilities are added?
- ▶ What projects or objectives are on the horizon for the company? How will I be involved in those objectives in this role?
- ▶ Can you give me a 'day in the life' walkthrough of this role?

■ **Leading questions about things you already know also make for good questions.**

When you're conducting research on a company's website, look carefully into their about-us or news sections and try to discover interesting facts about the organization; some companies invest heavily in extensive career or HR sites for prospective candidates. You can weave this information into the conversation to demonstrate you've done your research:

- ▶ "I noticed on the site that the company has made a commitment to go paperless by 2022, how will that affect what we're doing at this location and throughout the time remaining on that initiative?"
- ▶ "Your employee site mentioned a quarterly all-hands meeting at an off-site event, can you tell me more about the last couple of those; what was the format and how did it go?"

■ **Interview your future boss.** If you are transitioning directly from the active duty, it might be the first time in your professional life where you were given an opportunity to decide if the person sitting across the table from you was someone you wanted to work alongside. If you remember from our earlier modules, a part of the transition process is understanding what kinds of leaders you work best for and why; evaluate the interviewer and use the opportunity to ask them a question about their leadership style or goals for the team if they'll be your direct supervisor. If they're an HR rep or a recruiter in between you and your future supervisor, ask them what people love about the company. If nothing else, be observant when the interviewer is speaking, you'll have to decide at some point if you want to see this person all day every day for a few years.

Ending the Interview

Once yours and the interviewer's questions are answered, the conversation will likely wind down. You have two goals before getting off the phone or shaking hands and leaving the interview room:

- 1 | Find out how you did
- 2 | Understand what comes next in the hiring process

Focusing on these two objectives gives you a clear way to manage your expectations and prevent a critical misunderstanding that might limit your potential to move forward with the position. The easiest way to try to do this quickly and to get honest feedback is to ask a question like: "Is there anything that we discussed today, or didn't discuss, that might preclude (prevent) me from being considered for the next step in the hiring process? If not, what is that next step?"

There are roughly three kinds of answers to this question:

- 1 | "No, nothing I can think of, this went great. The next step is a phone interview with the President and then a visit to our location."



This answer means your answers were satisfactory and you understand what comes next. Since you're working with a recruiter, we'll manage the scheduling of follow up, but it's appropriate to ask, "Can I reach back out about setting up the next steps if I haven't heard from you or BMI by this time next week?"

2 | "Yes, there are a couple of areas where I didn't quite understand your answer or some requirements I'm not sure we discussed."

In this case, you might have missed the intent of a question, failed to remember a relevant example or STAR story, or used jargon or military-speak that didn't convey the depth necessary to satisfy the interviewer. If you get this sort of answer, the goal prior to ending the conversation is to ask another question that hopefully hones-in on what you left out. If there truly was a miscommunication, you might have an opportunity to add more detail or clarify terminology that allows the interviewer to better understand what you mean. This question is your reserve parachute!

3 | "The next step would be another interview, but unfortunately I'm not sure this role would be a great fit given what we've discussed today."

Sometimes interviewers will let you down on the spot instead of waiting until after the call ends to let you know they didn't think they found what they are looking for. This is the most honest feedback and saves everyone a lot of time. If they give you reasons why, thank them and let them know you appreciate their honesty and hearing from the horse's mouth. If they don't offer reasons why, it's appropriate to let them know that you'd be open to hearing from them or one of their peers if there is ever another opportunity available to interview for a position that's a better fit. Remember, even though this interview didn't go exactly as you might have hoped, this person is now in your career network and could be a valuable ally in the future. Not being an exact match to every job shouldn't be surprising, most people do a greater number of unsuccessful interviews than successful.

Once you've ended the interview with a clear sense that you've answered all of the interviewer's questions and have left no potential for a miscommunication or misunderstanding on the table, it's polite to thank them for their time and then follow up by connecting on social media or when possible, by sending a hand written thank-you note. In an increasingly digital and always-on world, hand-written mail leaves a lasting impression and helps truly motivated candidates stand out from an otherwise cluttered email inbox. Physical mail also takes a couple of days to arrive, so it gives you an opportunity to passively remind the interviewer of your conversation and prompt them to take follow up action on your behalf if perhaps hiring for this role isn't their top or only priority. For the cost of some stationary and a stamp, you can stand out from your digital competition in a clear and unmistakable way. If you need help researching the work address of your interviewer, ask our team as we often have that information on file and would be happy to provide it if it improves your odds of being hired!

Up Next

- *Succeeding in Person*

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Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

- 1 | How would you describe yourself?
- 2 | How do you determine or evaluate success? Give me an example of one of your successful accomplishments.
- 3 | How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?
- 4 | What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
- 5 | Given the investment our company will make in hiring and training you, can you give us a reason to hire you?
- 6 | How would you evaluate your ability to deal with conflict?
- 7 | Tell me about a major problem you recently handled. Were you successful in resolving it?
- 8 | What quality or attribute do you feel will most contribute to your career success?
- 9 | What personal weakness has caused you the greatest difficulty in school or on the job?
- 10 | Describe the characteristics of a successful manager.
- 11 | Describe a situation in which you were able to use persuasion to convince someone to see things your way.
- 12 | Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- 13 | Give an example of a time in which you had to be relatively quick in coming to a decision.
- 14 | Give me a specific occasion in which you conformed to a policy with which you did not agree.
- 15 | Give an example of an important goal which you had set in the past and tell me about your success in reaching it.
- 16 | Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- 17 | Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully communicate with another person even when that individual may not have personally liked you (or vice versa).
- 18 | Tell of a time when you worked with a colleague who was not completing his or her share of the work.
- 19 | What steps do you follow to study a problem before making a decision?
- 20 | Give an example when as a supervisor or group leader, you had to discipline or counsel an employee or group member. What was the nature of the discipline? What steps did you take?
- 21 | What kind of supervisor do you work best for? Provide examples.
- 22 | How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time? Give examples.
- 23 | Give me a specific example of something you did that helped build enthusiasm in, or motivated others.
- 24 | Tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult person. How did you handle the situation?
- 25 | Describe a time when you failed to meet a deadline or a goal. What things did you fail to do? What did you learn?

Interview Preparation Worksheet

NAME	
COLLEGE	
Degree and concentration(s)	
I chose this college and major because	
List accomplishments and awards	
List sports and activities	
HIGH SCHOOL	
List accomplishments and awards	
List sports and activities	
MILITARY BACKGROUND	
I chose the military and my area of specialty because	
Summarize <i>the military schools / certifications</i> you have completed that are applicable to the jobs you are seeking:	
Discuss your <i>most recent job in the military</i> along with the primary skills and accomplishments from it:	
Summarize your <i>previous job(s) in military</i> along with the primary skills and accomplishments from them:	
TRANSITION INFORMATION	
Please list your significant accomplishments, <i>awards, military citations, etc.:</i>	
I made the decision to leave the military for a civilian career because:	
I am seeking a new civilian position because:	
List the top three strengths / personal traits that you are bringing to a civilian job:	