

# Interviewing

## *“Understanding & Communicating Your MBA Value”*



# Learning objectives

1. Gain insight into hiring manager's/ recruiter's thought processes
2. Understand the 3 major steps in mastering an interview
3. Identify your unique business skills which differentiate you in the marketplace

# Today's Guests

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IT Analyst-Acquisitions



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Marketing Production Mgr



# MBA-Oriented Job Prospects

## Entering Fall 07 P-T MBA

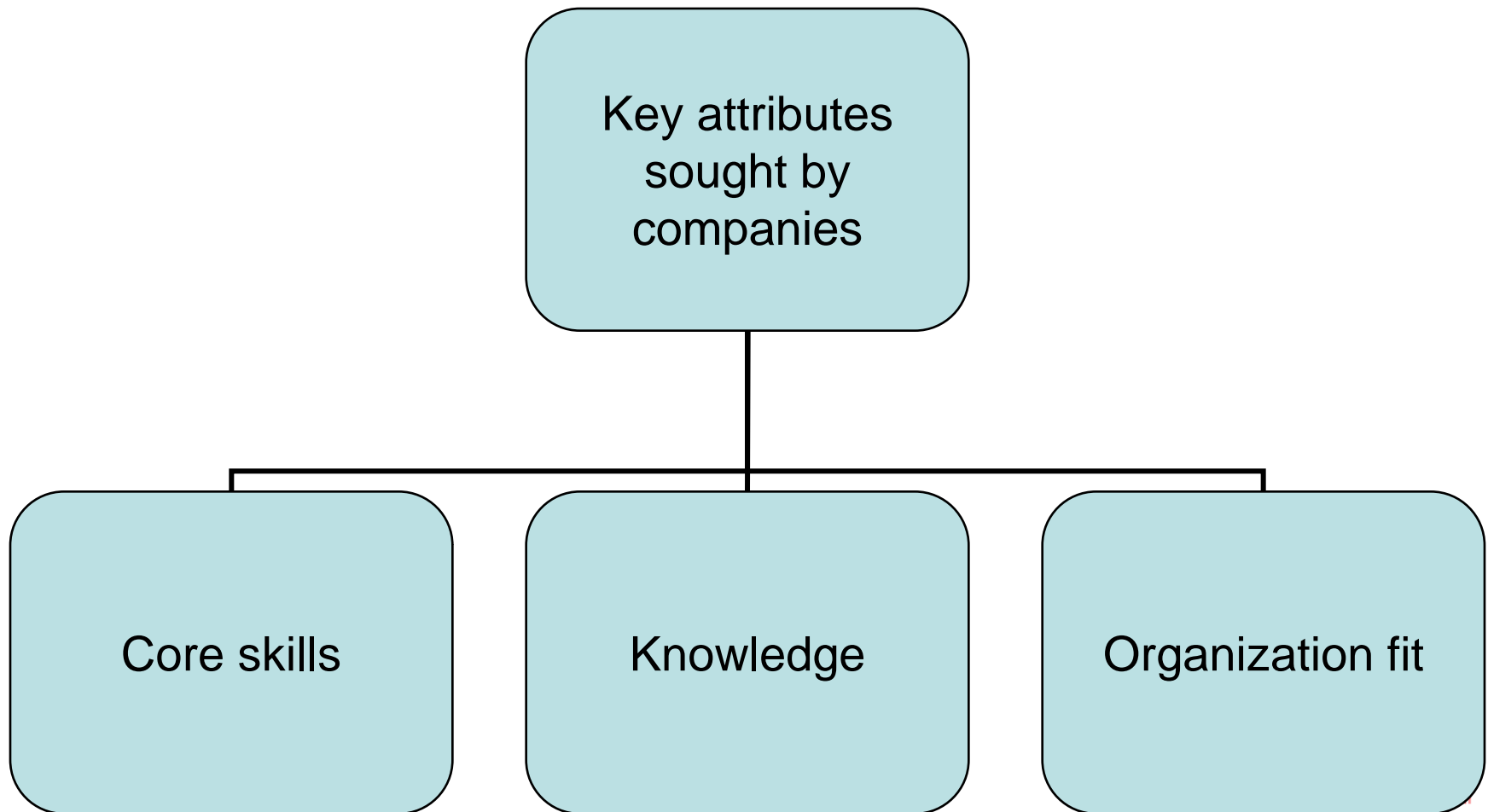
### Targeted Next Organization

		<u>Targeted Next Organization</u>	
		Same	Different
<u>Business Skills</u> <u>Technical Skills</u>	Ratio		
	Lower	Inter-department progression <i>(MBA "certification" required for next promotion)</i>	Company change <i>(MBA skills not appreciated by current co., but are in industry)</i>
	Higher	Intra-department progression <i>(MBA skills in diff function &amp;/or diff bus unit)</i>	Career change <i>(new function, new industry)</i>

## *Three Steps to Mastering the Interview Process*

1. Understand the needs of the hiring mgr/org
2. Position yourself as adding value
  - Differentiate yourself from competition
3. Persuade hiring mgr/org you fit the needs of position

# Understanding Hiring Mgr Needs



# Core MBA Skills

<u>Leadership</u>	<u>Analytical skills</u>	<u>Creativity</u>	<u>Teamwork</u>
•Seize opportunity	•Logical reasoning	•Original approach	•Collaboration
•Take action	•Quantitative skills	•For complex problem	
•Build a team	•Strategic thinking		
•Share vision	•Abstract reasoning		
•Clear focus on ultimate goal	•Dealing w/ambiguity		
•Willingness to take risks	•Comfort w/numbers		

# Core MBA Skills (cont.)

<u>Communication</u>	<u>Mgmt skills</u>	<u>Drive</u>
• <i>Listening skills</i>	• <i>Poise</i>	• <i>Motivation for achievement</i>
• <i>Express ideas clearly</i>	• <i>Meet deadlines</i>	• <i>Energy level</i>
	• <i>Multi-task</i>	• <i>Perseverance</i>
	• <i>Coordinate multiple projects</i>	
	• <i>Perform under pressure</i>	

# Knowledge

- Functional knowledge
  - Terminology
  - Principles
  - Frameworks
  - Theories
- Industry knowledge
  - Industry trends
  - Core competencies
  - Competitive dynamics
- Global knowledge

# Organization Fit

- Personality fit
  - Would other people want to be with you?
- Commitment to organization
  - Would you truly be interested working for organization?
- Interest in functional area

# Experience vs. expertise

- Can you get it done?
- Don't shy away from communicating knowledge gained from MBA
  - Most up-to-date training
- Don't be intimidated by stated years of experience
  - Identify specific behaviors and capabilities

# Communicating Your MBA Value

When presenting yourself for a business position, you must speak the language of business, conveying your experiences and skills in a way that uses terms familiar to the business interviewer and that emphasizes skills relevant to the business world.

-- *Mastering the Job Interview* by Alexander Chernev

# *Tell me about yourself*

## A Typical Answer

As a project manager my roles is to implement the information technology projects requested by our clients. I match the specifications of their systems to the products we offer, and I work with other engineers to ensure that the projects can be implemented in timely fashion. Sometimes, I find incompatibilities between the servers they use and the Internet interfaces they need to develop. Similarly, if they need to have remote access to computing services, the type of databases they use can pose problems. In much of our work, I have also found it is better to work using some of the older matrix configurations, rather than using some of the more recent derivatives. My work has not involved much business strategy work, which is why I am applying for this position. I am hoping to pick up the skills that will help me to achieve my long-term goal of running my own company.

# *Tell me about yourself*

## An NCSU MBA Answer

My role as a project manager at our computer company centers on leadership and on effective team management. In my projects, I manage teams of seven or eight talented individuals on complex projects designed to help our clients offer better products and services. We are the point of contact between my company and our clients, so it is key that our work goes well. We are responsible for keeping my company's client base strong and growing our business. Part of my role, of course, is technical—I match our best IT products to our clients' needs. I am able to draw on my analytical skills to ensure a great match. But more importantly, I harness the energy and talents of the team to come together and brainstorm about these issues, and together we always emerge with excellent alternatives for the clients. I enjoy implementing our solutions.

## Step 2: Positioning and Differentiating Yourself

- Identify the key attributes for the position
- Prove that you have demonstrated the attribute in a STAR story
- As an MBA, you will be judged on your ability to get things done, not only what you know

# S-T-A-R

**S** = Situation

- Context of the situation

**T** = Task

- Specific problem/challenge that you faced
- What you were expected to do

**A** = Action

- Your specific action, be detailed

**R** = Result

- Impact and benefit of what you did – quantify

## STAR Answer: What has been your most rewarding accomplishment at your last job?

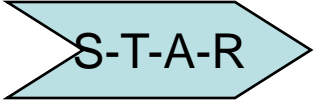
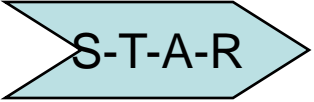
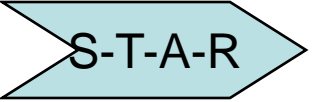
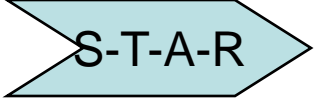
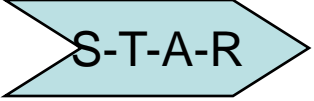
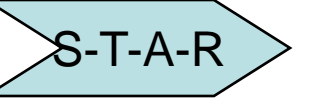
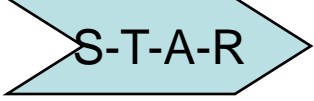
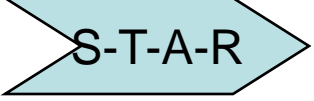
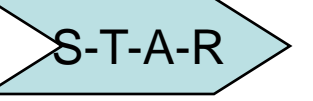
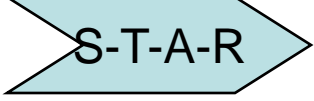
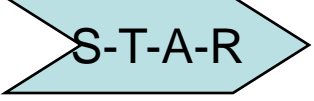

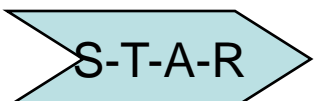
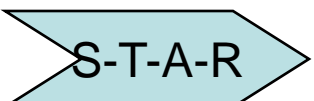
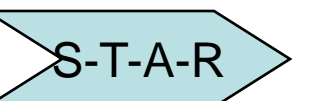
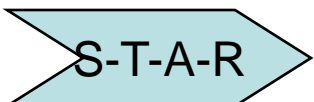
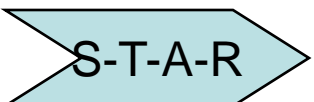
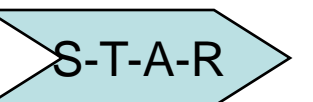
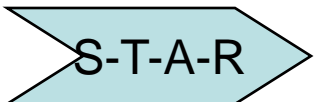
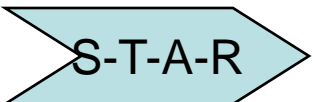
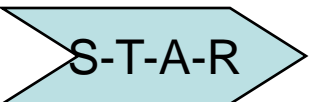
- Situation:
  - A rewarding accomplishment at my last job was that I was sent to one of our lower performing branch banks. The branch was not growing their loan base. It had logged only \$75,000 in new loans in an 18-month period prior to my arrival.
- Task:
  - My job was to increase loan production
- Action:
  - I streamlined the loan process and was successful in the solicitation and booking of many new loans {creativity}
- Result:
  - I booked \$700,000 in new loans in my first six months at the branch.

# STAR Example

- **S=** Small family-run software development company was losing money
- **T=** As a financial analyst I was tasked with studying the company's financials and making recommendations for improvement
- **A=** Set up Excel model and identified inappropriately high commissions and capital equipment loans (re-negotiated both) **{Leadership, analytical skills}**
- **R=** Returned to profitability within 5 months

# Step 3: Persuading hiring mgr you fit the needs of position

## *Skills-in-context matrix*

	NCSU	Current Job	Prior Job
Leadership			
Analytical skills			
Creativity			
Teamwork			
Communication skills			
Management skills			
Drive			

# Purpose of the Interview

When companies interview you they are trying to answer three questions:

## **CAN YOU DO THE JOB?**

Skills, knowledge, experience and accomplishments, learning potential

## **WILL YOU DO THE JOB?**

Your interest in the industry, company, position, your work ethic, your energy level, any influences that may affect your ability to perform

## **DO YOU FIT IN?**

Chemistry, communication, values, style, dress and appearance

# What Employers Want to Know

- Can you add value to the bottom line?
- Can we save significant cost by hiring you?
- Can you demonstrate that you can improve our profitability/**mission**?
- Can you make a contribution to quality?
- Can you add to our ability to compete?

# What Employers Want To Know

- **Can you show how you can deliver a payback on our investment in you?**
- **Can you think on your feet?**
- **Can you grasp opportunities that could be an advantage?**
- **Can you perform in an environment with increased demands and fewer resources?**



# What Makes The Difference

“What are the qualities that allow one person to be asked for a second interview and another person not to be?” The major attributes sought were:

- **Ambition and motivation**
- **Ability to communicate**
- **Good personality fit**
- **Fit with company and goals**
- **Creativity and intelligence**
- **Specific college courses taken**
- **Dress and appearance**
- **Experience, initiative and responsibility**
- **Potential to adapt**
- **Leadership ability**
- **Teamwork capacity**
- **Past record of achievement**
- **Strong work ethic**
- **Broad range of interests**
- **Strong interpersonal skills**

# Interview Sequence

Introduction

Personal Experience Questions

Case Analysis (optional)

Your Questions

Closure

Follow-up



COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT

# First Impressions/Introduction

- Dress appropriately
- Arrive early
- Professional Note Pad and Pen
- Copies of Resumes, Cover Letters and Needs Contribution Statement
- Shake hands
- Wait to be asked to take a seat
- Use interviewer's last name

# Interviewing Steps

## Case Analysis (optional)

Consulting, Management, Marketing Interviews

## Your Questions

## Closure

# Follow-up

- **Send a thank you letter within 24 hours (Hand-written, email)**
- **Elements of the letter:**
  - **Thank them for their time**
  - **Mention specific strengths**
  - **Plan next steps**
- **Know when to follow-up. How? Ask!**
- **If you are turned down, send a gracious response. You never know when you'll meet again!**

# Interview Do's

- **Be positive**
- **Be an interested listener**
- **Keep eye contact**
- **Follow the interviewer's pace**
- **Mirror language**
- **Answer directly, but be brief**
- **Talk in concrete terms**
- **Make connections for the interviewer**
- **Be yourself**
- **YOUR HOMEWORK (industry, company, job and people)**

# Interview Don'ts

- **Don't talk too much**
- **Don't discuss controversial issues**
- **Don't discuss any personal problems**
- **Don't discuss salary prematurely**
- **Don't be modest**
- **Don't exaggerate, use boisterous talk or tell risky jokes**
- **Don't slouch**
- **Don't talk about your need for the job**
- **Avoid speaking negatively about your past employers**

# Interview Mastery

**Interview Mastery is the Internet's first and only web-based eLearning application designed to rapidly improve job seeker interviewing skills. It is the leading software of its kind and is used in 21 countries worldwide. This fully web-enabled application delivers before, during, and after interview skills. Interview Mastery shows job seekers how to turn job interviews into job offers and give them a competitive advantage.**

## **INTERVIEWMASTERY**

<http://www.interviewmastery.com/login.cfm?returninguser=1&affiliate=ncsu>

**username: mba@ncsu.edu, password:mba**

# Expect These Questions

1. Tell me about yourself
2. What are your strengths?
3. What are your weaknesses?
4. Why did you leave your job/pursue your MBA?
5. What is your biggest accomplishment?
6. What is your biggest failure?
7. What is your work style?
8. What is your management style?
9. What are your future career plans?
10. What do you like to do in your free time?
11. How would your peers describe you?
12. Why should we hire you?

# Interviewing Wisdom

1. Know yourself
2. Know your resume
3. Know the company/industry
4. Look great, exude confidence. You don't get a second chance to make a first impression.
5. Smile, stand tall, make eye contact
6. Listen two thirds of the time, speak only one third
7. Ask only open ended questions
8. Focus on your benefit to the company
9. **Ask for the job!**

# Resources

[http://www.mgt.ncsu.edu/career\\_resources/students/manual.php](http://www.mgt.ncsu.edu/career_resources/students/manual.php)

Leane, Shelly (2004), How To Interview Like A Top MBA.  
McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.

Chernev, Alexander (2005), Mastering the Job Interview.  
Brightstar Media, Inc., Chicago.