Tips for a Successful Interview

✓ Remember to bring the Padfolio, your writing instruments and extra resumes.

✓ Before the interview begins chew any mints and get rid the gum!

✓ Show up early for the interview, preferable 15 minutes or more. You can always wait in the lobby, read a newspaper or magazine, walk around the building, etc. if you are too early.

✓ Remember to be yourself! Do not try to play a certain role, for you will come across as fake and insincere. The company wants to find out about you, not some role you are playing.

✓ Turn off your cell phone! This includes turning off the vibrating option.

✓ Be truthful and do not exaggerate.

✓ Treat the first person and everyone else you meet with a smile, good humor, and dignity. All employees who make contact with you may have a say in your hiring, so do not assume that a secretary or receptionist is not important.

✓ Immediately stand when the interviewer meets you, and firmly shake his or her hand.

✓ Wait to be seated until the interviewer sits down or until you are invited to sit.

✓ If anyone else enters the room, stand up, and greet them.

✓ Call people Mr./Mrs./Ms. Until you are asked to do otherwise. To a lot of people this is a really important demonstration of respect. You may have fallen into habit of referring to your professors by just their last or first names at Muskingum. This is initially unacceptable in the work place. Wait until people ask you to call them by their first names.

✓ Thank interviewers before the formal interview begins for their time and interest in you.

✓ Watch your posture! For instance, do not put your hands behind your head, slouch, put your feet on the desk, etc. Sit straight, show interest through your body language, and try not to speak too loudly with your hands.

✓ During the interview, be proud of your educational background and do not apologize for coming from a small, private liberal arts college. Instead, if asked about your education, stress that you have received an excellent foundation in your particular field of study and a well-rounded education as well. Play to your
strength that this combination has transformed you into a person who can handle a wide variety of assignments and that you are flexible in your thinking. Many firms want students just like you, so reinforce their positive image of liberal arts students by being excited about Muskingum and the education you have received here.

✓ Show enthusiasm! Let them know you are truly interested in the position and want to learn and contribute.

✓ Try to stay focused, but do not stare a hole through their head! Eye contact is important, but you do not want to freak them out by continually staring at them. They might think you are a little too intense and quite frankly weird.

✓ Listen carefully, jot down a few notes if appropriate, and follow-up on a few points the interviewers may have focused on during the give and take of the interview. For instance, they might mention that other interns have been hired by the organization after graduating and are now successful with the organization. A good follow-up question might be what career opportunities would be available if you were fortunate enough to be hired. You will notice that the word “if” is used in the previous sentence, not “when.” Why? Because you do not want to appear too cocky and assume you will be the one hired. By using “when” you would appear arrogant and the attitude would generally not be appreciated.

✓ Always be respectful, polite, and charming.

✓ Use your research when appropriate. For instance, you may be asked where in the organization you would like to work. You may have read about a new branch office or retail location near your home, so why not ask to work there? Then again, you may be the adventuresome type, so off to Chicago you go! The fact you have researched the company and know something about its locations will impress the interviewer. That is why learning about the company is so vital.

✓ Near the end of the interview, use a few of questions you have prepared in advance, without getting to personal. Be very careful in asking about the interviewer’s life, because a lot of interviewers may not want to share their feelings about work, positive or negative. Therefore, stick to non-personal questions versus personal questions regarding their inner most feelings about the careers they have chosen. Those types of questions make you appear nosey and are generally considered inappropriate.

✓ Near the end of your interview ask what the next stage of the process might be.

✓ Be sure to shake their hands and say thank you.

✓ Exit with a smile (sounds like a country song), take a deep breath, and remember that the more you interview, the easier it gets. Really!