

# The Workplace

Volume 2, 7

April 15, 2001

## A Fact Sheet

### Highlights

Most interviews fall into one of three groups:

1. The screening interview is designed to narrow or "weed out" the number of applicants to one or two.
2. The individual interview is used to establish how well the candidate fits into the company.
3. The committee interview is conducted by several people who have a stake in who is hired.

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## Job Search 101: Types of Job Interviews

The goal of any job search is to land the job of your choice. One of the hurdles you must get over is the interview. Since there are many types of interviews, knowing the type in which you will participate helps you better prepare. Most interviews fall into one of three groups: (1) screening, (2) individual, or (3) committee.

1. The **screening interview** is designed to narrow or "weed out" the number of applicants to one or two and may be handled in one of three ways:

- You may meet one-on-one with a company representative, or interviewer, who may ask a set of pre-determined questions. The interviewer may be looking for inconsistencies between the answers to your questions and the information provided in your cover letter and resume. It is a good idea to read both prior to going for any type of interview. Keep your answers factual and brief. If you volunteer too much information, you may be perceived as exaggerating; if you offer too little information, you may be perceived as unprepared. You want to leave the screener thinking that you are knowledgeable and professional and wanting to know more about you.



One of the hurdles you must get over is the interview.

- Group interviews are another type of interview designed to screen applicants. During this type of interview, several candidates are brought together in an informal, discussion-oriented setting. The interviewer introduces a topic and facilitates the discussion. The objective of this type of interview is to see how you interact with others. Those who do well are generally asked back for a second interview.

- The company may set up a telephone interview. Most telephone interviews are scheduled, but if you are called unexpectedly, ask to reschedule when your calendar is clear. When preparing for a telephone interview, make a list of possible questions with brief appropriate answers. Keep your question and answer list, a pad and pencil, and a copy of your cover letter and resume next to the phone. When the call comes, be friendly, but professional. Being overly chatter or funny puts your interview at risk because of not being able to see facial expressions. Keep answers short and concise, focusing on your skills and experiences. Take notes you can refer to when you have the opportunity to ask questions; then ask appropriate follow-up questions. The purpose of telephone interviews is to see how well you can “think on your feet”.
2. The **individual interview** is generally reserved for the top two to three candidates who have the necessary skills. The purpose of this type of interview is to establish how well the candidate fits into the company and to what degree his/her skills complement those of co-workers and colleagues. Individual interviews may be conducted in an office or business setting or may be conducted over a lunch or dinner. Regardless of where the interview is conducted, the applicant’s goal is to find common ground with the interviewer. The conversation should clearly demonstrate how your skills and experience would benefit the company.
  3. The **committee interview** is also reserved for the top two to three candidates who have the necessary skills. During this type

*Knowing the type of interview in which you will participate helps you better prepare.*

of interview, several people who have a stake in who is hired will be allowed to ask questions. Direct your comments to the one who asked the question. It is a common practice to be asked to give a presentation or a demonstration as part of the interview process. As with the individual interview, all or part of the interview may be over lunch or dinner. The proper protocol for ordering food and for meal etiquette in such instances is to follow the lead of the one who set up the interview.

How can you know for which type of interview to prepare? If the interview requires a presentation or demonstration, you will usually be told in advance. If not, ask the one setting up the interview. Occasionally, the one setting up the interviews will not be a part of the process and truthfully will not know. In such instances, take extra copies of your resume and be prepared to be open, friendly, and knowledgeable. Remember, at this point, you want to convince the interviewer(s) that you are exactly the right person for the job.

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**Sources:**

CareerBuilder, Inc. (2001). Job Interview Types. <http://careers.latimes.com/>.



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