

# Gabelli 2012 - Junior Advising Program

## Guide to Succeeding in an Interview



### Research for the interview

- **Be aware of current events**

- In any interview, you'll be held to a high standard. Academically, professionally, etc. There will also be a great deal of competition for you to contend with. After all, you're not just competing with other Fordham students, but also with students from many other colleges. Because of that, you need to distinguish yourself and one way to do so is through an awareness of current events. You want to be able to relate what you're learning to what's going on in the world – and have informed opinions based upon that.

Here are some suggestions:

- Read the **Wall Street Journal** on a regular basis. The WSJ is simply synonymous with business news. If they devote page space to a topic, it's important.

The WSJ makes it easy to keep up on events, too: on the front page of each issue there are two columns of "What's News." If you read nothing else, just read those. From them, your curiosity should be piqued enough to go read at least a few of the full stories on some of those highlights, but at the very least, you'll have a general idea of what's going on in the world.

You can find the paper, as well as a variety of databases and other resources to aid your research, online at: <http://online.wsj.com/>

[If you don't have your account set up, please E-mail Rosanne Conte ([rconte@fordham.edu](mailto:rconte@fordham.edu)) with your name and E-mail address]

- Listen to **Marketplace** on public radio. It's a concise, easy-to-understand, half-hour radio show that focuses on the day's events in business. You can find it on your local NPR station or just

listen to it online at: <http://marketplace.publicradio.org/>

- Watch the **Nightly Business Report** on PBS. The show has been on for over 30 years, so it has definitely become an institution for serious coverage of business news. You can find them online at: <http://www.pbs.org/nbr/>
- **Know what's going on specifically in your industry (or industries) of interest**
  - For example, if you're looking for a Sales & Trading job, research current events in that industry. If you're looking for an auditing position, research that industry. And so on.
  - In particular, you should be able to answer the following questions:
    - Has that industry been in the news lately?
    - Who are the biggest players in that industry? What are their differences?
    - How has the market been industry-wide for these companies? As a whole and individually?
    - Have there been any advancements in the industry? Are there any expected soon?
    - Have there been any new government regulations regarding that industry?
    - Are there any important people in the industry who you should be aware of?
- **Know what's going on with your company of interest**
  - What do they do? Who's their competition? What distinguishes them from their completion?
  - Read their latest annual report – if this is what they want their investors to know, it's the least of which what you should know.
  - Review their website – especially their Human Resources or Campus Recruiting sections. Many companies will explicitly tell you what they expect of you in terms of resumes and interviews. For example:
    - Goldman Sachs: <http://www2.goldmansachs.com/careers/begin/interview-skills/index.html>
    - KPMG: <http://www.kpmg.com/ca/en/joinus/campusrecruiting/apply-now/thekpmginterview/Pages/default.aspx>
    - McKinsey & Co.: [http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/how\\_do\\_i\\_apply/how\\_to\\_do\\_well\\_in\\_the\\_interview.aspx](http://www.mckinsey.com/careers/how_do_i_apply/how_to_do_well_in_the_interview.aspx)
  - See if they've been mentioned in the WSJ for the past 6 months.
    - Not only is this helpful in understanding the company, but this can also be very helpful in terms of making conversation and asking questions. For example, "I saw that article on X in the WSJ a few weeks ago. How has that been developing since?"
  - See how they've been doing in the market recently.
    - Know what their latest stock price is when you walk into the interview (especially for Finance firms, as some companies will ask you that point blank).

*If you have any questions, please contact your Junior Class Dean,  
Alan Cafferkey – [cafferkey@fordham.edu](mailto:cafferkey@fordham.edu)*

- **Be aware of as much as possible about the specific position you're applying for as well as the department it's within**
  - What does this department do? How does it differ from other departments in the firm? How does it differ from similar departments in other firms? To whom does it report?
  - What exactly will your position require you to do? What are you responsible for?

## Practice for the interview

- Practice your "2 Minute Story"
  - Who are you? What's special about you? Why should they be interested in you? Tell it to friends and say it out loud to a mirror
- Have an answer prepared for why you want to work there and why they should want to work with you.
- Look up general questions online and come up with answers. For example:
  - Tell me about yourself.
  - What are your passions or interests?
  - How do you know if you've done a good job?
  - What would others say about you?
  - What do you know about us?
  - Why do you want to work here?
  - Why do you want to work in this industry?
  - What's your opinion of the market?
  - Who are your mentors? Who do you look up to?
  - Tell me something that's not on your resume.
  - Why'd you go to Fordham?
  - How would you benefit our company?
  - Why should we hire you?
  - What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
  - What do you expect from this job?
  - Tell me about a time you showed great leadership skills.
  - Tell me about a time you showed great teamwork.
  - Tell me about a time you showed great initiative.
  - What are some mistakes you've learned from and how did you do so?
  - What are your goals for the next five years? How will you achieve them?
  - What activities were/are you involved in and how have they prepared you for this job?
  - Remember to keep your answers concise!

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- Come up with a list of questions to ask
  - It's important that you seem interested, engaged, and curious. The best way to do this is to have questions ready to ask. You want the interviewer(s) to remember you positively. The best way to do this is to make sure there was a good conversation. And since a good conversation can't be one-sided, you have to ask questions. So, be prepared and have specific questions lined up from your research. You can also have a few "safety" general questions at the ready, though. For example:
    - What qualities do you look for?
    - What kind of projects will I be working on?
    - Could you describe a typical day for this position?
    - What kind of mentoring or evaluations do you offer your employees/interns?
    - What's the most important thing I can do starting out?
    - What do you see the future of the industry being? The future of your company?
    - Could you tell me about your experience working here?
    - How would you describe the corporate culture here?
    - What are some of the career paths of those who've had this position previously?
    - What are some of the challenges in working here?
    - What are the next steps in the interview process?

## During the actual interview

- **Relax**
  - If you seem anxious or stressed during an interview, that will concern the interviewer. However, put yourself in their position for a minute: Interviewing someone is a very awkward thing to have to do. Generally, no one likes having to pick and choose people or have to say "no" to someone. However, their job is to find the right person and since they asked you to come in, they want you to be the right person (especially so that they don't have to interview too many more people). So, generally, interviewers will be positive and encouraging with you, and as such that should put you at ease.

Also, keep this in mind: you submitted a resume and they chose to speak to you based upon that. You should feel encouraged that you've already done something positive as far as they're concerned.
- **Be enthusiastic**
  - Nothing is worse for an interviewer than interviewing someone who doesn't seem interested. You have to show you *want* the job. You have to show you're interested in the company, the position, and the industry. Don't be fake, but at the same time, look them in the eye, smile when you greet them, and ask questions – be engaged.
- **Be confident**
  - Speak clearly. Sit up straight. Be considerate of your body language.

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- Don't apologize for anything on your resume. Instead, find and stress the strengths in what you've done and accomplished.
  - For example, if you're applying for a Finance job, and you haven't had any Finance internships, don't start making excuses. Instead, find the positive qualities that you've shown in other jobs/activities on your resume, and then sell those. "I learned a lot about responsibility and service when I was a little league coach."
- **Be positive**
  - Always stress the positive. Don't bad-mouth old employers, teachers, schools or whatnot. The old adage is true: "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all." After all, an interview is not just to see if you're qualified for the position. It's also to see if you will work well with their particular team – and people want to work with others they genuinely like. So be pleasant.
- **Listen carefully, consider the questions fully, and answer directly**
  - If you need time to mull over the question, or if you're unsure of what exactly they're asking, don't be afraid to restate the question back to them to confirm you know what they're looking for.
  - Always give examples. Details help fill out a picture.
  - If the interviewer interrupts your answer and asks you to focus on something else (for example, "Actually, what I really wanted to focus on is this..."), don't be offended or get nervous. Just figure out what they're looking for, change course, and answer their question. They're not looking for you to go off on a tangent – they just want the answer that they're looking for.
- **Ask questions**
  - Whether you fall back on the questions you've prepared or the interview inspires your curiosity, you have to ask questions. After all, most interviewers begin to wrap up by asking you directly, "Do you have any questions?" Thus, you need to be prepared.
  - Also, consider this: a memorable conversation is one with some back-and-forth. If you're not engaging the interviewer – asking questions and then following up with more questions – then you hardly have a chance to stand out in their memory.
- **Dress professionally**
  - You should always wear your best business suit to an interview. The two words that should strike you immediately when you're looking in the mirror are "polished" and "conservative."
  - It would also be a good idea to have a portfolio with some blank paper to take notes and a few extra copies of your resume.

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## Following up on the interview

- After the interview, send a “Thank You” note to each person you spoke to, as well as any staff you may have dealt with who may have helped put the interview together. I have a guide for writing these at [www.fordham.edu/Gabelli/Juniors](http://www.fordham.edu/Gabelli/Juniors) under “General Advising.”

## More Resources

- If you have any questions, or would just like to chat more about career paths in depth, feel free to contact any of these advisors, and they’ll be happy to talk to you:
  - Nancy McCarthy - Director of Personal & Professional Development - [namccarthy@fordham.edu](mailto:namccarthy@fordham.edu), FA 356
  - Gina Hill – Pre-professional Advisor for Marketing students - [Ghill102@aol.com](mailto:Ghill102@aol.com) - FA 359
  - Rosa Romeo – Pre-professional Advisor for Accounting students - [romeo@fordham.edu](mailto:romeo@fordham.edu) - FA 359
  - Lisa Henkoff – Pre-professional for Finance students- [lisa.henkoff@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.henkoff@gmail.com) - FA 359
  - Career Services - McGinley 224 - 718 817-4350

Hope that helps. Good luck!

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