



Propel Your Career



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## Casing the Joint: Preparing for Behavioral and Case Interviews

By Get the Job -- *Diana Middleton*

Job interviews are a time to make your paper resume jump off the page. An effective interview will make you a more memorable candidate, convey your expertise and land you the job you want.

With applicant pools becoming more crowded, it's safe to expect an interview that is more pointedly geared toward uncovering your real-life ability to save or earn money with measurable results as well as your analysis of potential problems you could face on the job.

### The Difference Between the Two

In finance, interviews are split into two rough categories: behavioral interviews and case interviews (although there can be some overlap between topics). The former type aims to uncover how you've reacted in the past to specific problems during your career. The latter attempts to evaluate what kind of value you could add to the company.

### Behavioral Brush-up

Behavioral interviews are popular because they require real life examples of the way you have handled past situations, says Dr. Wendy Alfus-Rothman, president of Wenroth Consulting, a leadership and executive coaching firm. She recommends researching a company's areas of growth and decline, and to think about your own skills that dovetail into the company's needs.

"You need to have an arsenal of stories that quantify your skills and paint a picture of how you crafted your success," Alfus-Rothman says. "If you increased market share, tell how you did it and by how much. Keep track of your successes, so they're always on the tip of your tongue."

### Case Study

On the other hand, case interviews don't focus on your past experience, but your hypothetical actions to solve problems.

Despite your level of experience, it can't hurt to brush up on the finance basics, says Dave Ohrvall, founder

of MBACASE, a case interview coaching firm.

### Do Your Homework

Ohrvall suggests going back to your core finance reading to re-familiarize yourself with valuation techniques, the differences between debt and equity, and more. Next, look at all the examples of those finance principles, and then research current news so you can refer to real-life examples during your case interview.

If you're interviewing with a company in the throes of economic woes, you may be asked to determine which parts of the company would be valuable to sell. Research the company's current deals so you can use them in your examples.

### Scrambling, Recovering

If you get stuck on a question and honestly have no idea what to say, Alfus-Rothman says you can stall by asking the interviewer a series of questions that may shed some light onto the answer you want to formulate.

And if you fear you completely bombed a certain question, don't slink away. Do your research, decide how you really want to respond, and e-mail it to the interviewer.

"Look, people mess up," Alfus-Rothman says. "What's more important is how you recover. Follow-up is sometimes more important than the actual interview. The last one standing often wins."

Mostly, the companies want to hear how you present your line of reasoning, and usually, there's often not one right answer.

"An interview is a two-way street," Alfus-Rothman says. "If a case interview is puzzling you, ask more questions. Show you have an inquisitive mind and that you want to work your way through whatever problem they throw at you. Use your interview to show you have the tenacity and resilience you will need in real life."