

# IIDA SHIFT21 Prep Sessions



The Do's and Don'ts of Interviews

# What is the purpose of an interview (for interior design)?

- Employers want to know
  - Your critical thinking and design thinking skills
  - Your personality and how you would fit in the team
  - What you can bring to the table (software skills, communication skills, independence level, etc.)

Think of a portfolio as Step 3 in a 3-step process  
(1. Resume, 2. Portfolio, 3. Interview)

# Get in the Mindset - In-Person vs Virtual

- In-Person
  - Small talk from waiting area to interview room
  - Taking in the sights and sounds of the work space
  - Walking into a room and meeting others, doing introductions
  - Sitting down and organizing your documents
  
- Virtual
  - Suddenly appearing on the screen
  - Trying to figure out when to start and who will start
  - Not being able to see faces or read body language while sharing your screen
  - Muting/unmuting, talking over each other, awkward silences

*“Can you see my screen?”*

*“Oh, you’re on mute.”*

# Interview Do's

## Before the Interview

- DO look up the location, parking, drive time
  - DO research on the company - what they do, who works for them, who are their clients, Glassdoor reviews
  - DO prepare materials appropriately - assume no WiFi, charge devices, consider other materials needed besides resume & portfolio
  - DO present yourself professionally - investigate company culture, wear a full outfit for virtual interviews
  - DO check your tech - audio, camera, microphone
  - DO practice - say it out loud, practice with a friend, anticipate their questions
    - <https://high5test.com/>
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# Play Up Your Strengths

- What are your top 5 strengths?
- How can these traits make you more desirable to an employer?
- What scenarios can you share with employers where your top strengths would come in handy?
  - A Deliverer is:
    - responsible
    - ethical
    - reliable
    - gets sh\*t done!
    - would be a great teammate (now hire me)

## YOUR HIGH **5**

SHARE RESULTS | [f](#) [in](#) [t](#) [g](#)

### **1** DELIVERER

Your objective is to take responsibility. If there is a person who is emotionally bound to follow through on all promises - then it's you. Your strong ethical principles do not let you to simply write missteps off on excuses and rationalizations. It holds true no matter how small or large is the issue you are dealing with. Your name and reputation depend on you being responsible for your commitments. That's why people love to have you in their team. When assigning new responsibilities, they look at you first. They are 100% sure that what'll get on your desk - will get done no matter what.

### **2** BELIEVER

### **3** PHILOMATH

### **4** PROBLEM SOLVER

### **5** COACH

# Interview Don'ts

## Before the Interview

- DON'T freak out - breathe, stay calm, keep anxiety at bay
  - DON'T wait until the last minute to print, charge your electronics, leave your house, set up your virtual area
  - DON'T be late!  
10-15 min. early in-person, ~5 min. early virtually
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# Interview Do's

## During the Interview

- DO introduce yourself - in-person or virtual
- DO make eye contact, continue to breathe
- DO be respectful of time - pacing and cadence of your presentation
- DO be yourself! Be ready to talk about interests outside of design
- DO be aware of your surroundings - what are other employees doing/wearing/saying
- DO be flexible - go with the flow
- DO be prepared to ask questions - What else do you need or want to know?
- DO be aware of things employers shouldn't ask -

<https://www.betterteam.com/illegal-interview-questions>



# Interview Don'ts

## During the Interview

- DON'T overthink it - this can have a snowball effect of stress/anxiety
- DON'T have any distractions - no computer or phone notifications, no people or pets around
- DON'T get too comfortable - eating, drinking, browsing on phone
- DON'T have tons of folders/tabs/browser windows open if screen sharing
- DON'T ask about salary/benefits (unless they bring it up). Typically employers will follow up with this info in an email, phone call, or 2nd interview







# Interview Do's

## After the Interview

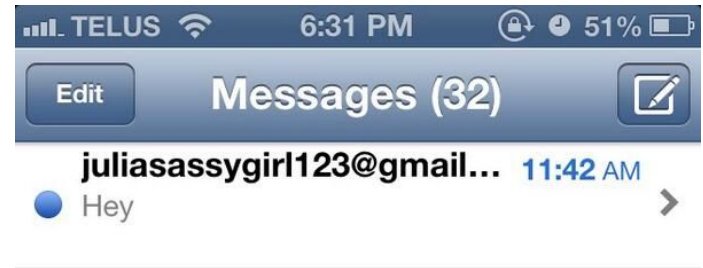
- DO follow up - email or handwritten Thank You note
- DO a post interview assessment - what went well? What can be improved? Pros & Cons of company
- DO keep a list or spreadsheet of companies you applied for, when you followed up, etc.
- DO treat yo'self! It's a stressful process. Good or bad, it is an accomplishment.



# Interview Don'ts

## After the Interview

- DON'T forget to check your email, spam, and junk folders
  - Refer to Resume Prep Session - DON'T use that email address from 9th grade. Keep it professional!
- DON'T fret - there may be many reasons it is taking a while to hear back. Be patient.



# So you got an offer!

- What to expect next
  - An offer letter that explains salary, benefits, start date, and any other terms and conditions.  
May negotiate as needed.
- Paperwork
  - HR will need your personal information
- WFH (work from home)
  - Equipment and technology needed. What is the back-to-the-office policy?
- Join the 101 Sessions at SHIFT to learn the ins and outs of your first job offer!

# Resources

- Interview basics (a very good resource!):
    - <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/job-interview-tips-how-to-make-a-great-impression>
  - Interview practice questions:
    - <https://www.indeed.com/hire/interview-questions/interior-designer>
    - <https://resources.workable.com/interior-designer-interview-questions>
    - <https://interviewpenguin.com/interior-designer-interview-questions/>
  - SHIFT website - [Resources tab](#)
  - Your classmates and other designers
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# Final Thoughts for SHIFT21

- You don't need a perfectly polished, bound, Photoshopped portfolio for SHIFT
  - This is your chance to get WHATEVER you have in front of practicing professionals to discuss. Be prepared to take notes!
- Try to control fears and anxiety
  - Prepare as much as possible to alleviate any worries and unforeseen circumstances.
- Work on strong eye contact
  - Yes, this whole process is uncomfortable for everyone. Work on building your confidence through practice.
- Cadence and breathing
  - Imagine speaking to a friend and telling a story in detail. Pause between sentences, think before you speak, allow your words to articulate meaning. Taking deep breaths while presenting forces you to take your time and calms your nerves.

**Thank you!**