



THE OFFICIAL **WSO** GUIDES

Behavioral Questions

Preparation for Finance Interviews

2009 Edition



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BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS (GENERAL INTERVIEW TIPS)

Most candidates approaching finance interviews stress over the technical questions. However, answering a behavioral question in a “less than desirable way” or fumbling around without a legitimate answer can do even more damage than missing a technical question. Analysts will spend 80+ hours per week with their co-workers, so proving you are someone they will enjoy being around is more important than proving you know how to work your way through a discounted cash flow model. That *does not* mean we suggest you should not thoroughly prepare for the technical aspect of the interview as well.

Once you get the job, your firm will put you through a rigorous training session. Your company will assume you have little prior financial knowledge so they are not looking for the next finance wizard or CFO -- they are looking for someone they will be comfortable working with for the next two years and will be able to handle the demands of the job. First impressions are crucial so as you walk through the door and give your interviewer a firm handshake, make sure to have a friendly smile and relax if you are nervous. You won't die, we promise. Try to turn any nervousness into positive energy that can be interpreted as enthusiasm for the position. The person across the table could be sitting there for 8 straight hours interviewing 16 kids in a row. They will get bored if there is no passion in your voice and no conviction in your speech. This is *not* the time to blend into the crowd.

An interviewer has 30 minutes to determine whether or not you are fit to work at their bank for the next three months or two years. Technical skills are a bonus, but you could answer every technical question perfectly, and that will still not guarantee you the job. In the same way, you could have the best personality in the world, and connect with your interviewer on every level, but if you don't know what DCF stands for, you will not get the job. You need a combination of solid technical skills and appropriate answers to the behavioral questions to land the job, especially in this tough economy. Within the answers to your behavioral questions, there are a few main points that you need to be sure to get across. According to the head of HR at a prominent investment bank, the three main traits you need to emphasize are the following:

1. **You have a willingness and desire to learn** - The banker sitting across the table from you knows more than you. Even if they are a first year analyst with only three months on the job, most likely they have learned more in those three months than you did in your four years at a top-tier undergraduate business school. They are far more interested in hiring a non-business major who *WANTS* to learn everything possible than hiring someone who went to Wharton and thinks they already know everything. No matter how smart you are, you need to look at this job as a learning experience. Keep that in mind and try to let them know that you “get it.”
2. **You possess a great attitude and personality** - Investment bankers spend countless hours together. If you aren't going to maintain a positive attitude in the workplace, and be an enjoyable person to be around, they are not going to want to hire and work with you. ...and last but not least,
3. **You are an absolute workhorse** - 80, 90, 100+ hours per week. Back-to-back all nighters. These are things you have heard about and they are not myths. In 30 minutes you must prove to your interviewer that you are willing to work as long as it takes to get a task done, perform it perfectly in high pressure situations, and do it all with a smile. Let them know you've done your homework and you understand the physical and mental demands a job like this requires.

With those key points in mind, below is a list of the most common behavioral questions you may come across in a finance interview. Unlike the technical guide, **there are no definitive answers to any of these questions**. The answer to each and every question will be unique to you and should not sound rehearsed -- it should sound natural. Make sure you don't **tell** your interviewers about your qualities. Anyone can **say** they are

a hard worker and that they are willing to do mindless tasks like reformatting pitchbooks until 3am for a week straight. You must ***show*** your interviewer that you can perform similar jobs by using detailed examples from your past. Maybe you are the editor of the newspaper at school? A new story broke two days before printing and you led your team through back-to-back all nighters to produce a perfect paper with no mistakes. Every story you tell should ***show*** your interviewer that you have the skills needed to be a banker/trader.

Your examples do not have to be related to business or finance in any way. Many interviewers actually prefer candidates that are more open about other parts of their lives. That being said, be sure to push the conversation where you want it to go and adapt the stories you are most comfortable telling to fit the questions being asked. Emphasize your leadership positions and emphasize your varsity sports if you play any. Show that you are well-rounded and are not just a superstar student. If you got an interview, chances are they already know your GPA. The interview is the time to prove that you have the intangibles needed to succeed once on the job.

Every story you tell can should be focused and told efficiently. To do this you can use the “S.T.A.R.” technique. First describe the **SITUATION**. Then describe the **TASK**. Next describe the **ACTION**. And finally, describe the **RESULTS** you achieved. You do not need a different story for each question, just a number of stories that you can mold to fit any question. You should not memorize these stories, but they should be practiced beforehand so you are sure to not miss any crucial points. This will also increase your comfort and confidence, allowing you to be more at ease and present yourself in a positive light during the interview.

One of the best developments in an interview -- that some of the more talented interviewees can achieve -- is a subtle shift in tone from a formal question and answer session into more of a conversation you would have with a friend. It may not even have anything to do with finance! Maybe you end up talking in depth about the job you had last summer, or a sport that you play. Whatever it is, if the interviewer seems to turn into your “friend”, that’s a very positive sign.

Remember when studying these questions, you *cannot* prepare for everything that interviewers may ask. They will always be coming up with new questions and new twists on older concepts. You need to have a number of stories in your mind, and be able to mold them to fit a wide variety of questions rather than just memorizing answers. Be sure to keep your answers short and sweet, between 30 seconds and two minutes. Allow the interviewer to ask follow up questions if they want to know more, rather than rambling on and on and boring them to death. Be self-confident in what you have achieved through your life, but also show some modesty when it comes to discussing your accomplishments. ***Do not brag.*** Tell them what you have been able to do, and allow them to pass their own judgment. If you are asked a question you have not prepared for, take some time to think and formulate your thoughts rather than rambling. Better yet, try and think of a story you have rehearsed that you can use to properly answer the question.

In summary, some key points to keep in mind during your interviews:

1. Show, don't tell
2. Be yourself, don't come across as fake
3. Be confident but not cocky
4. Prove that you want this job more than anything
5. Body language is very important, exude confidence
6. SMILE! It will subconsciously improve your communication and make you seem like you have a positive attitude
7. The three main points to prove
 - a. Your willingness to learn
 - b. You have a good personality / attitude
 - c. You are a workhorse

The format of this guide is as follows. The question being addressed is in **bold**. Important points to remember during your answer are listed below each question in bullet form. Variations on the Behavioral Questions (which require near identical answers) will be listed in italics below the potential responses to give you a sense of the form the questions might take come game day. Underneath most questions we have also included a sample answer in a blue box to give you a sense of what we believe would be a strong answer.

THE ONE QUESTION YOU WILL GET... GUARANTEED

Walk me through your resume and/or Tell me about yourself.

- You will be asked this question in almost every single interview you ever encounter.
- Your answer to this question should be a three to five minute story about yourself, hitting what you believe to be the most important parts of your resume.
- Make sure you emphasize the points on the resume that you are proud of and those which are most relevant to banking. Talk about your involvement in the investment club at school and skip the fact that you worked as a waiter at Pizza Hut after your freshman year. You do not need to hit every bullet point on your resume, just the important most ones.
- Make it a story about your life, the things you have accomplished, and how that led you to banking.
- You should move through your story in a logical fashion. However, you should ***NOT*** be reading a copy of your resume. By this point you should know your resume practically word for word, and should be ready to speak in depth about *anything* you have listed on it. There are few things that will turn an interviewer off more than them asking you to elaborate about something on your resume, and you being unable to do so. Do not let it happen or you might hear “next” before your seat gets warm.
- You should be able to connect *every* bullet point on your resume with a way in which it has prepared you for a career in finance.
- Highlight points that show your aptitude to learn quickly, or your genuine interest in finance -- As well as a few that show you are well rounded and not just a book-worm.
- You must make sure you include where you go to school, your major, what you did last summer, and any extracurricular activities in which you hold a leadership position. Other than that, what you include is up to you --Just make sure you don't go off on any long tangents or stories, and try to keep as much of it relevant to banking without sounding forced. Your interviewer may jump in during this time and ask you to speak more about a specific topic. That's fine. Just answer their question and then proceed on with the rest of your pitch.
- This is also a time where the interviewer is looking to see if you can speak clearly and concisely for about five minutes, which will be an important skill down the road in banking. Make sure you are able to do this without stumbling.
- Be positive and confident about everything on your resume. Do not apologize for anything. If you didn't get an internship and worked at a fast-food restaurant to pay your tuition, talk about what you learned from that experience.
- Make every point sound interesting --you never know what you and your interviewer may have in common. If it is important enough to have on your resume and mention, it is important enough to get at least a little excited about.
- Prepare your story. Practice it by telling it to yourself, your mirror, your parents, your dog, or anyone else who will listen. It should sound fluent and natural, not scripted. Make bullet points and practice using them rather than writing it out word for word... but PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!
- Finally, keep it under 5 minutes. If they want to hear more, they will ask. Don't run the risk of boring them.

INDUSTRY

Why investment banking/sales and trading?

- A stint as an analyst will likely be the most grueling two years of your life. There is a high probability that you will have little to no social life and there may be times where you want to stab yourself in the temple after pulling back-to-back all nighters to finish a pitchbook that ends up never being used. You need to prove that you have what it takes to get through the two years.
- If you have gotten through the tough screening process and received an interview, your resume probably already shows that you have the intellectual capacity to do the job. This means that your focus should be on demonstrating your stellar attitude, unrelenting drive, and willingness to sacrifice to get through the difficult times.
- Below are some sample responses to this very common question.
 - Say you have always been interested in finance, have enjoyed your finance classes and want a job where you can gain practical financial experience, even at a low level. Somewhat of a boring option, but also relatively safe.
 - Emphasize that you are interested in learning. You will learn more in two years on this job than you could ever imagine. Tell them you know your time as a banker, whether it turns into a career or not, will prepare you for anything you want to do in your life and you will never have a job that is more pressure filled, more time consuming, or more demanding. This option has a bit more cheese on it but if delivered genuinely it can be effective.
 - Tell them you are excited for a job where you are able to take on significant responsibility at a low level, rather than getting coffee and donuts for the first two years while trying to work your way up. Banking provides you with an experience where you are evaluated based on performance, so if you work hard and perform well, you will be rewarded for it.
 - Say you work best in high pressure, fast paced situations. This is an especially important trait that the interviewer will look for in a potential trader.
 - It is one of the few jobs that almost everyone who has experienced it says it is an invaluable learning experience and one they wouldn't trade for anything. Talk about the analysts you know and how positive each and every one of them is about the value of their experience.
 - Even though the hours are ridiculous, the vast majority of bankers value and enjoy what they are doing. Say you would rather work 80 hours per week at a job you enjoy than work 40 hours per week at a job you hate where you are staring at the clock waiting for it to hit 5pm every day.
 - Finally, you want a job where you can put all the skill sets you have acquired throughout your life to good use right away. Be ready to list those skills. See the "what are your strengths" question below for more details.

- DO NOT say you are in it for the money. They know you are doing it at least partly for the money, but that shouldn't be your answer. High risk, little reward.

After talking to a number of people in the industry, there are two aspects of banking I find particularly attractive. First, I am going into this as a learning experience. I know that due to the number of hours I will be working, I will essentially be gaining five years of work experience in only two years. I will learn so much, so fast, that this job will prepare me for anything I may decide to do for the rest of my life. Additionally, I feel I thrive in an environment where I am rewarded based on my performance, rather than for just showing up. I look forward to having the chance to take on a lot of responsibility at a low level and prove my worth through my work. I know this job can be extremely difficult both physically and mentally but I am ready for the challenge.

- *VARIATION: What are you looking forward to most about this job?*

What do investment bankers do?

- Investment bankers are responsible for raising capital through debt or equity offerings. They are also responsible for providing advice to companies on mergers and acquisitions as well as financial restructurings. The majority of these services involve valuation work and pitching your bank's expertise to the companies looking for help. At the senior levels, investment bankers are more focused on the clients and building relationships that can generate deal flow. At the junior and middle levels, the bankers are usually more focused on *executing* the given service at the highest level of quality possible to ensure repeat business.

What do you think you will be doing on a day to day basis as an analyst?

- The interviewer wants to make sure you know what you are signing up for. While you will be making a healthy annual salary with potential for a nice bonus (recession denial?), on an hourly basis, you will probably be making less than an SAT tutor.
- On a day-to-day basis, an analyst is really responsible for financial modeling in Excel, comparable company analysis, precedent transaction analysis, preparing pitchbooks and other PowerPoint presentations for clients and all the other grunt work needed to get a deal done.
- Lots of industry research and gathering of financial information.
- You will usually be the first one into and the last one out of the office.
- Hopefully you will get staffed on some live deals. If you are good *and* lucky, you will be given more responsibility which can be a blessing and a curse. As you will learn quickly on the job, all of the work you do as an analyst needs to be *perfect*. But wait, we are all human and make mistakes occasionally, right?..Right but that doesn't make it ok! Here is an actual quote from an Associate at a bulge bracket bank back in 2003: "Your analysis needs to be 100% perfect, 100% of the time."

Well, I have done a lot of research to find out what I will really be doing on this job, talking to a lot of alumni contacts who are analysts at different banks. On a day to day basis, my understanding is that I will be responsible for a lot of financial modeling in Excel, comparable company analysis, precedent transaction analysis, preparing pitchbooks and other PowerPoint presentations for clients, as well as any other general grunt work that is needed to get a deal done. With all of that work, I know I will usually be the first one in and the last one out of the office.

Why [insert bank's name here]?

- This question is checking to see if you have done research on the firm. An answer like "because Goldman is the number one investment bank in the world" is not an acceptable answer.
- Make sure they know that *this* is the firm for you. Even if it is not your first choice, tell them that it is if they ask. You want them to believe that if they give you an offer you are going to accept. Banks don't like being turned down.
- Show that you have looked into the culture of the firm and know something about them and their values.
- It is best to have a few details about each firm you are interviewing with that you find attractive. The best way to get one of these details is to talk to someone who actually works at the firm. Reach out to any alumni contacts you may have and ask them what they feel separates the firm culturally, and use

that in your interview. You can also ask your first few interviewers why they enjoy working at the bank, and use those answers in your later interviews. If you have a first round phone interview, take notes and reuse their answers in later interviews. You could even start a topic on WallStreetOasis.com and ask for some insider help!

- If you are interviewing at a boutique, talk about how you feel that you will get greater deal exposure and responsibility working in a smaller setting with smaller deal teams. If you are interviewing at a bulge bracket, talk about how you are interested in working on big-name deals that you read about in the paper and that you are excited about the flexibility to be able to work in a specific group that you find particularly interesting.
- You can also search the forums of WallStreetOasis.com to find specifics about individual firms, and in particular which divisions or product groups are particularly strong at the specific company. You should also browse the company website and take note of their core values and mission.
- Check out the WallStreetOasis.com Firm Notes Guide for some details about the top firms and their culture.
- Finally, never put down another firm. What if you were bashing Jefferies and your interviewer happened to work there a year ago? Besides, staying positive shows a better attitude.

In talking to a number of people at your bank, I feel as though the culture is what really separates it from its competitors. While this firm provides top notch banking services, and competes with all the major firms, those I have spoken with maintain it still has a boutique feel. This allows for smaller deal teams which will give me more responsibility and hopefully more exposure to live deals. Additionally, when working as many hours as you do in banking, I think one of the most important things is that you get along with those your colleagues. Everyone I spoke with within this bank says they respect those they work with and are friends with them both in and out of the office.

What do you know about our firm?

- Another question which allows you to demonstrate that you have done your homework and know that this is the firm you want to work for.
- Talk a bit about the firm's history, whether it is public or private, what areas the firm specializes in (M&A, restructuring, etc), international offices, and if possible mention some deals they have been working on. Most of this information can be easily found on the firm's website or in the WallStreetOasis.com Firm Notes guide.

I have actually done a lot of research on Lazard. Lazard was founded in 1848 and was a private company until the IPO in 2005. Interestingly, while you are a smaller firm with fewer than 3,000 employees, you still maintain a strong global presence. Lazard has two main divisions, Asset Management and Financial Advisory, where you are one of the most respected players in the M&A world. From what I have heard from my alumni contacts, you maintain a boutique style feel, with small, lean deal teams (allowing for some great experience for analysts) but still manage to compete for the largest M&A clients.

Who have you spoken with at our bank?

- This is another good time to prove you have done your research about the bank.
- Name any alumni or contacts you have spoken with and maybe quickly mention the positive things they had to say about working there and why that appeals to you.
- The interviewer may go to those you name and ask them what they think, so make sure your contacts think highly of you.
- If you don't have any contacts at the bank, speak about any other research you have done on their firm to learn about why *their bank* is the bank for you.
- If you haven't spoken with anyone at the bank, you should have a reason for why you haven't. Maybe no alumni work at the bank and you have no other contacts there, or they didn't respond to your e-mails.
- *VARIATION: What contacts do you have at this bank?*

Luckily, I actually know a number of people here. My fraternity brother Michael Riley and a kid from my finance class, Scott Stevens, both graduated last year and are analysts in your natural resources group. I spoke to them a number of times before applying and before my interviews to try and get a feel for the firm at the analyst level. I also found the name of Andrea Krigman in our alumni directory. She is an MD in the consumer retail group and was nice enough to meet me for lunch a few weeks ago to talk about her experience here.

Why not firm X rather than our firm?

- Hopefully, you know something general about firm X so you can draw a coherent comparison. If not, simply reiterate what you find so appealing about the firm you are interviewing with, and again tell them this is the place you want to be.

The thing that separates your firm from firm X in my mind is the size. While there is nothing wrong with working at a firm of that size, that isn't the type of environment I feel I fit best. I prefer a smaller working environment. Your firm has smaller, close-knit deal teams where everyone knows one another and work effectively together. This will hopefully allow me to gain a lot of experience working closely with my superiors on deals, rather than being one of 15 analysts staffed on a deal where my MD doesn't even know my name.

What groups are you interested in?

- Another question used to see if you have done your homework about the firm. Have a few groups chosen that you think you may be interested in (these groups vary from firm to firm so make sure you do some research) and have good reasons as to why you are interested in them.
- However, in the end make sure they know you are open to working in any group, and the most important thing is that you want to be working at *this* bank.

There are two groups within your firm that really pique my interest. First, I think working in the natural resources group would be very interesting in that the deals I work on will affect the everyday lives of so many people. In addition, I have a good friend who is an analyst in that group and says the culture and people there are great; he really enjoys the work he does, and is getting a lot of exposure to live deals. The other group I am interested in is consumer retail since I think working on deals with companies I know and can read about would be extremely rewarding. However, let me assure you I would love to work in any group, I just really want to work *here* at this firm.

Can you handle the grunt work?

- YES! Show them that college itself involved a lot of grunt work.
- Show them you have performed tasks in the past that were bland and boring and you did it with drive, determination, enthusiasm, and positive attitude. It is probably also a good idea if the task had a successful resolution.
- Show them you know there will be a ton of grunt work, but you are excited to gain so much knowledge from doing it. Show them that you are comfortable doing the work and actually look forward to being able to do it. There is a very steep learning curve in banking and you are ready to face it head on.
- *VARIATION 1: Are you ready to really be a slave to this job for two years?*
- *VARIATION 2: How do you handle the grunt work?*
- *VARIATION 3: Describe a situation when you have motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task you didn't want to do.*

I know this job involves a ton of grunt work, but it is something I am prepared for. I feel that crunching numbers and formatting presentations at all hours of the night is a small price to pay for the incredible learning opportunity this job will provide. I feel I am as prepared as anyone for this work since I had to do a lot of “grunt work” in college. While my team and I were writing our business plan, we needed to conduct some market research on college students. To get what we needed, my team and I went door to door across our entire campus and collected nearly 3,500 surveys over the course of a week. While it was extremely repetitive and boring to actually collect the data, the results we got from that data were invaluable and that made it worth every second. I feel that a positive attitude and the proper perspective – realizing that the grunt work has to get done – can make even the most boring work somewhat enjoyable.

What do you think is the most important characteristic for this job?

- Choose one of the following (or something similar) and have your reason as to why.
 - Positive attitude
 - Drive and determination
 - Willingness to learn
 - Workhorse
 - Time management
 - Communication Skills
 - Teamwork Skills
- Banking is not rocket science! You will be doing menial tasks that take a long time, are rather boring, and will turn you myopic at 23. Show that you will have a positive attitude when you walk through the door every morning and will get the job done with a smile on your face, no matter how long it takes.
- *VARIATION: What makes a successful analyst?*

There are a lot of traits that are important to becoming a successful analyst. However, in my mind there is one trait that really stands out and that is having a positive attitude. From what I have heard from analysts I have talked to, the most difficult aspect of banking is the day to day grind and long hours. I think if an analyst keeps their head up and maintains a positive attitude while getting his or her work done, that will make them far more successful. In my opinion the majority of the candidates you are interviewing for this position are smart enough and analytical enough to do a *good* job, but what makes a *great* analyst is someone that can also keep a positive attitude even when the job becomes very demanding. A person with this mentality is also easier to work within team situations which are very common in banking.

If you were running this firm, in what direction would you take it?

- Think about how the firm has been performing recently, and what types of moves they have been making.
- *VARIATION: If you were CEO of our bank, what would you do differently?*

One thing that I believe most banks across Wall Street can improve upon is their focus on alternative energy. With President Obama planning on injecting billions of dollars into research and exploration of alternative energy sources, I feel this could potentially become the next bubble. If I were at the helm, I think I would create a group that specializes in alternative energy and try to become the industry leader.

Can ethical requirements in a firm be too high?

- Time to break out the tightrope. A firm must have high ethical requirements in order to prevent the business from being run in a less than desirable way. At the same time, if a firm's rules and regulations are too strict it could inhibit creativity to develop new products and think of new ways to make money.

This is a very tough debate. With what has gone on in the past year on Wall Street, clearly there was a lack of regulation over (and understanding of) the toxic securities on the balance sheet over the past decade. While higher ethical standards may have lessened the severity of the crisis confronting financial firms -- as well as potentially prevented the Madoff scandal-- I believe much of the financial crisis is primarily a result of having easy credit for too long. While heavy regulations may slow growth and limit profitability, we have also witnessed how loose regulations can drive a once thriving firm into the ground -- practically overnight in Lehman's case. In a time this, when the general public and even corporate clients are looking upon Wall Street with suspicious eyes, I believe high ethical standards are not just good for business, but a necessity to survive.

ABOUT YOU

What are some of your strengths?

- You can list anything here; just make sure they back up the qualities needed to be a successful banker listed in the introduction and provide vivid examples.
- Don't say something like "I am a finance guru." The person across the table from you knows more than you do, no matter how brilliant you think you are – besides, you are just inviting them to try and bust you with the most difficult technical questions in their arsenal.
- If you can, bring up a strength that isn't obvious from your resume that could catch their attention or not bore them. For example, if you have been a performer all your life and are very comfortable speaking in front of strangers and/or large groups that would be a good strength to share.
- You can say that you are highly motivated, very detail oriented, you are a great multi-tasker, have good teamwork and communication skills, a high level of endurance, etc.
- When you mention a strength, each should be followed by, "for example, there was a time when..." and back up your claim with a story as evidence. Give examples of experiences that prove you have the analytical skills needed as well as the qualitative intangibles -- the ability to learn on the fly, communicate, pay close attention to details, and work until your fingers bleed with a smile on your face.
- You need *all of these* skills to be successful.

As you can probably tell from my resume, I have strong quantitative skills and have performed well in school. However, I think one of my biggest strengths is something vital for banking but not something that can be quantified on the resume. That is my ability to learn very quickly. At my job last summer, I was brought into the office by my boss, given an old version of an Excel model, a list of variables he wanted to be able to tweak, and told to go rebuild the model from scratch. At the time I had no previous modeling experience, no training, and no idea what I was doing. I knew my boss didn't have time to hand-hold me through the process so I had to teach myself. I bought a book and used internet resources to learn how to rebuild the model to my boss's specifications, in a very short amount of time. My boss was amazed at the quality of the model and it is now being used for his analysis and in presentations to prospective clients.

Why should we hire you over any of the other candidates we are interviewing, what makes you different or special?

- This is similar to the “what are your strengths” question.
- For this you should have a concise, 30-second pitch prepared. Concentrate on the three main bullets from the intro and give three traits you have that manifest those qualities. Examples include that you are extremely driven, you never give up, you really want to learn a lot, you are looking for a job that is really going to challenge you, etc.
- Make sure it is only 20-30 seconds and say it with confidence but make sure to leave the arrogance behind.

Something that differentiates me from other candidates you may be interviewing is my dedication to getting this job. Coming from a non-target, your firm does not actively recruit on our campus. In order for me to get here today I cold called and wrote letters to all the alumni I could find here trying to get someone to speak with me. Finally I got in touch with Jim Stevens, had an informal lunch to talk about the industry, at the end of which he offered to try and get me an interview. I wasn't able to simply drop my resume, I had to work really hard to get here today and that is an accomplishment I am proud of. You can be sure that if I am hired there will be no sense of entitlement and I will work hard from day one.

Why do you think you will make a good investment banking analyst?

You should highlight 3-4 of the points below.

- Hard working
- Positive attitude
- Quantitative and analytical skills
- Team player
- Good communication skills
- Willingness and desire to learn
- Workhorse
- Time management

To be a successful analyst you really have to be extremely well rounded. There is no number one quality that determines whether or not you will be a good analyst. But, if I had to choose a combination of three characteristics I feel are extremely important, I would say maintaining a positive attitude, being extremely hard working, and the ability to be a strong team player.

What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment?

- This is a question you can go any direction with. If you want it to be related to education, maybe talk about how you worked really hard on a given project that you didn't understand at first, struggled through it and got an A. If you want to relate it to personal life, talk about something you did that you are proud of in your family life. Or you can even relate it to something you accomplished in sports.
- If possible, we recommend you use this question to demonstrate that you have balance in your life (rather than using this question as a story about classroom excellence). Say that while your GPA isn't perfect (assuming it isn't a 4.0) that you are very proud of the level that it is at considering everything else that you do while at school (and then list the other things that you do).
- Whatever event you chose, make sure you can spin it in such a way so that it demonstrates a quality that will be advantageous to you in banking. Remember: willingness to learn, positive attitude, drive and determination.
- *VARIATION 1: What is the greatest thing you have done in your life?*
- *VARIATION 2: What are your three greatest accomplishments?*

Personally, I consider my greatest accomplishment to be the balance I have been able to achieve between keeping my grades up while being captain of the hockey team. While some candidates may have a perfect 4.0 GPA, I have managed to keep my grades up while also leading our varsity hockey team through fall and spring workouts in addition to the entire season which is a *huge* time commitment in the winter. The time management skills I have gained through the years managing hockey and school are invaluable, and I wouldn't trade the friendships of those on the team for anything.

What is the number one thing I should know about you that I cannot learn from your resume?

- Talk about a skill you have that is either unique to you (something that makes you memorable) or something that cannot be quantified on a resume.
- Whatever you choose, remember that it should exemplify the skills that are needed to be a successful banker.
- Think about things like your communication skills, your teamwork skills, etc...not your math skills, which can be seen in your GPA or SAT scores.
- Once you decide on the quality you want to present, you should illustrate this trait with a story from your life.
- *VARIATION: What separates you from the last guy I interviewed who has a 4.0 from (Insert Target School Here)?*

Ever since my freshman year of high school I have loved to perform. I was in the musical and the play each year of high school, and have had a lead role in school play each year in college. This has allowed me to develop a high level of comfort speaking in public situations, and to people I don't know or have just met. I think this will be an extremely valuable skill in banking speaking with both clients, to people on the phone and even when simply presenting my work to my boss in a clear and effective manner.

Coming out of this interview, what are three things about you that I should take away?

- Choose three traits that you have that A) would make you a good banker and B) make you unique and memorable compared to other candidates.
- Similar to the question above, but without the story, or with a *very* brief story to back up each point.

The three biggest things that I would like you to take out of this interview are that #1) I am extremely hard working and will bust my tail every day on the job, #2) I have great communication skills and positive attitude and #3) you are my number one choice and I would be thrilled to come work for your firm.

What serves as your biggest motivation?

- We all know that investment bankers are at least partly in it in it for the money, but don't say that to the interviewer. They already know you are in it for the money; they want to hear what else motivates you.
- Outperforming expectations, hitting deadlines, respect from your peers, efficiency, etc are all acceptable answers.
- Have a story prepared that *shows* that you are motivated by whatever it is you choose rather than just telling them what motivates you.
- *VARIATION: What is it that keeps you going when times get tough?*

For me, my personal biggest motivation is gaining respect from my peers and boss. In my job last summer, I was the sole intern responsible for building a model for a client. My boss Mike gave me the specifications and told me he needed it in a week. I really wanted to make a positive impression so I worked almost around the clock, including time at home, to get it built almost perfectly in only three days. This allowed me time to sit down and go through it with Mike before it was actually needed, and still get it completely finished well before the deadline. Mike respected me for getting it done early, and that type of earned respect was exactly what motivated me and will continue to motivate me.

Why do you feel you can put up with the stress, pressure and long hours that are involved with banking?

- Tell a story of a time in your life where you had to manage a lot of different tasks and work long hours.
- The story can be from school, from work, from home or a combination of all of them. Maybe during finals week you had to write three papers, while studying for two exams, finalizing the school newspaper and still going to soccer practice every day.
- Make sure you explain that you know it is not as intense as what you will face in banking, but you feel you are as well prepared as anyone, and you are 100% dedicated to working as long and as hard as needed.

I feel I am as ready as anyone coming out of college to handle the long hours. While in school, when you add up all the time I spent doing all my different activities, the hours are almost as bad. Every day I would be up by 7:30 for classes from 8:15 until 1. After class was over I would grab a quick lunch and then was off to golf practice which didn't get me back until 5. Then usually I would grab dinner, and either work in my room or the library until my work was done, which usually wasn't until pretty late at night or into the morning. While I know it clearly isn't the same stress and time commitment as banking, I feel that my experiences in the past have prepared me as well as anyone.

Describe your ideal working environment.

- Emphasize that you think the most important thing about your work environment, especially in an industry like banking where you spend so many hours together, are the people that you are working with.
- Talk about the fact that you want to be in an environment with people who are all as dedicated, driven and hard working as you, where everyone can rely on one another to get tasks done efficiently.
- Say you excel in an environment that has great communication and great teamwork, and one which will allow you to grow professionally and intellectually, where you are evaluated and rewarded based on your performance.
- *VARIATION: What do you think is most important to success in the workplace on this job?*

In my mind, at least for a job like banking, the most important piece of the working environment is the people you are working with. When working side by side with someone for upwards of 80 hours per week, every week for two years, if you do not enjoy the company of at least some of your colleagues, the environment would be difficult. My ideal environment is one in which everyone functions well as a team, works hard, and can rely on one another to get their work done correctly and on time, and the team is then evaluated and rewarded based on their performance.

What was the most important thing you got out of your job last summer?

- Talk about something new that you learned in your job that really cannot be learned in a classroom. Maybe you learned how to build a basic model (be careful with this and do not exaggerate what you have done unless you are comfortable recreating it on the spot), or maybe you gained a lot of experience in making presentations to your boss so you got more comfortable with public speaking.
- Whatever it may be, make sure it is a skill that you can transfer to the banking world.
- *VARIATION 1: How did your job last summer prepare you for a career in banking?*
- *VARIATION 2: What skills did you gain at your job last summer?*

In my job last summer I learned a lot of things but the most important thing I learned was how to effectively make presentations to my superiors. At the end of each week, as part of my formal internship program, my team and I were required to make a presentation to our boss. We had to put together a PowerPoint and make a 10 minute summary of what we accomplished during the week. The first few presentations we didn't know how to use PowerPoint very well and honestly, I was pretty nervous standing in front of our boss and all the other interns. But by the end of the ten weeks, I had built a pretty solid foundation in PowerPoint, and was *completely* at ease speaking in front of the group.

What would your last boss say about you?

- Hopefully your last boss would say that you are highly motivated, hard working, have good analytical and quantitative skills and are a good team player.
- If you have a story about a time where your boss praised you for a job you completed especially well, tell that.
- Try and talk about a quality your boss observed that isn't clearly represented on your resume, maybe that you are very at ease holding a conversation with clients you just met, or that you are a great leader on team projects.

My last boss from last summer would probably say that I am extremely hard working and dedicated to the job. A lot of times he would actually tell me to go home when it was getting late and I was still at my desk doing my work. He would tell me that it was just a summer internship, but I really wanted to get the most out of my time there so I often found myself staying late to get done what needed to get done, even without my boss asking me to. At the end of the summer, that was the biggest compliment he had to give me; that I was so dedicated to the job.

How would your best friends describe you?

- Hopefully your friends would describe you as someone who works very hard, but still likes to have a good time once the work is finished. Remember, they want someone who is not only smart, but enjoyable to be around. Prove you are well-rounded.

I would hope that first and foremost my friends would say that in general I am a good person and someone who is enjoyable to be around. I think that my friends would describe me as someone who has a good sense of humor, loves to have a good time, and is a pleasure to spend time with, but also prioritizes his work. I try to always get my work done early and efficiently in order to allow me to have a good time with my friends, without compromising the quality of my work.

Why did you choose the school you go to?

- This question is obviously very personal. Try and connect the culture of your school to the culture of the bank. If you go to a very small school and are interviewing at a boutique, talk about how you feel that the best way to learn/work is in a smaller environment where you know all those around you.
- You can give pretty much any response to this question as long as you have sound reasoning behind it and a story to back it up.

Coming out of high school there were two schools clearly my top two choices, the school I am at and school X. While I knew both schools would provide me with an excellent education, I felt as though I had to choose the school I felt fit me best culturally. I graduated from a high school class of just 80 students, did well there, and in my opinion a smaller environment is the best way to learn. I really enjoy getting to know all of my teachers and my peers. At my school, my largest class was only 60 students so my professors actually knew my name and face rather than just my student ID number and my grades. This is part of the reason I am drawn to your firm. All the analysts I have spoken to talk about its boutique feel and smaller deal teams, claiming that the MD on your deal will always know you personally. In my opinion, having the opportunity to learn from experienced bankers is vital to the career development of young analysts.

What else do you do at school other than study?

- Name some of the extracurricular activities you take part in at school. Hopefully you hold a leadership role in one or two of them. These activities can be anything from a student organization to a varsity athletic team.
- Talk about how doing many different extracurricular activities has helped you with your time management skills. Now you are able to accomplish everything you need to get done much more efficiently than if you didn't take part in a number of different activities.
- Speak about activities that put you under pressure. They want to know you do things that prepare you for the stress you will encounter on the job.
- Also, talk about spending time with your friends. You want to show your human side.
- Emphasize that your schoolwork comes first, but you try and get it finished early to allow for some fun.
- *VARIATION: What do you do at school to have fun and relax?*

At school my biggest time commitment other than academics has been my participation in student government. Since freshman year I have worked my way through the ranks and I am now the president of my school's student government association. Taking on greater and greater responsibility through the years has allowed me to really learn how to become the leader of a team, as well as improve my time management skills tremendously. I learned the best ways to complete all of my work, while still effectively leading the SGA, and still have some time for a social life. I really cherish that I am getting to spend time with my friends during my last years in school since I know my chances to see them once I start working will be few and far between.

What has been your favorite class in college and what was your grade?

- Your favorite course should have something to do with business/finance/economics and hopefully you have a good grade in that class. If you say your favorite class was African Tribal Dance, why are you looking to go into finance?

During my junior year I started taking my real finance classes at school. While I took three "finance" courses over the two semesters, and I enjoyed and learned a lot from them all, my Security Valuation class was the one I found most interesting and most useful. This class was essentially my introduction into investment banking. Through the class, we learned brief overviews of a number of different valuation techniques on stocks, bonds and companies. We learned how to build a DCF on a basic level, as well as perform comparable company analysis and precedent company analysis in a case study where we tried to determine the appropriate sale price of an acquisition. One of the best parts of this class was that my professor had actually spent eight years as an investment banker before coming to teach at my school so he had the first hand experience and know-how to really show me the types of things bankers are required to do. I got an A in the class and the relationship I built with him has allowed me to turn to him throughout the application process to help answer a lot of my questions.

What has been your least favorite class in college and what was your grade?

- With this question your best bet is to pick a class that you didn't enjoy, but still got an A.
- You can say something like "I really wasn't passionate about the material, but I pushed myself to work that much harder and received an A in the class."
- This shows that you are willing to work really hard even at something you do not enjoy in order to produce results. You *will* have to do this as an analyst.

There has been one class in my college years I truly *hated*. Freshman year there are obviously some required courses you are not able to choose. The general literature courses at my school were a bit strange in that the professor you ended up having was at liberty to choose their curriculum rather than having something set by the school. My professor was "an expert" in the field of literature about vampires, which meant we spent the entire semester reading and writing vampire novels and short stories. I had absolutely zero interest in vampires. Additionally, I found this professor to be one of the most uninteresting I had ever had. Nonetheless, I knew this was a class I had to take, and slacking off really wouldn't help anyone in the situation. So, I told myself I had to work even harder, pushed myself, and actually managed to get an A- in a class that I had no interest in taking.

Tell me about your college experience?

- Another way to show that you are well rounded and work hard, but also have a good time. You should be positive about your college experience and confident in what you have accomplished.
- Talk about the time you were taking six classes, playing on the golf team, working a part time job and still managing to enjoy the little bit of time you had to hang out with your friends.

My college experience has been a bit of a difficult one financially. I come from pretty humble beginnings and have been paying for school almost entirely on my own and with student loans. Since freshman year I learned that living in Boston, the best way to make good money as a student is to wait tables. I started at a lower end restaurant to gain experience and now work at one of the highest rated restaurants in the city. While it is extremely difficult to balance my classes, my extracurricular activities and my work, and still some time to spend with my friends, the experience I have gained has definitely been worthwhile. I now know exactly how to get my schoolwork done most efficiently, have paid off almost all of my student loans by working at the restaurant five times a week, and still manage to have a great time with my friends.

Do you regret choosing the school you chose?

- Never bash your own school.
- If you are at a top tier school, talk about how great the education has been and how it has provided you with great opportunities such as the current interview.
- If you are not coming from a top tier school, speak about how you got a great education, but coming from a non-target made you work that much harder to get to where you are today interviewing at X bank.

- Whatever your story is, make sure you are confident about your school and speak about how it better prepared you for banking in one way or another.

Absolutely not. My university has been amazing in every aspect and I have loved my time here for so many different reasons. First and most importantly, the education has been great. Coming into college, I chose University X partially due to its reputation in the business world and it has not disappointed me. My professors have been top notch and seem to actually care that I understand the material, rather than just lecturing endlessly, and the courses I have taken have been great base preparation for my career in finance. Secondly, the social life here has been great. I have developed a great group of friends that I know I will be close with throughout my life. Having friends like that is something very important to me in my life. Finally, coming out of a top-tier school like University X has made the job search process easier, even in these tough economic times. In this job market a lot of my friends at other schools have been having a tough time getting interviews because banks do not come to their campus. Our career center works endlessly to ensure they get as many banks as possible on our campus to interview the great students we have here. While I am confident I would have been able to get many interviews through networking as I have at some other banks, the career center has been extremely helpful throughout the application and hiring process.

What is the biggest risk you have taken in your life?

- Think of the biggest risk you took in your life and describe the thought process you went through when deciding whether or not to take the risk. Tell them about how you weighed the positives and negatives of each potential scenario. Then explain whether the risk paid off or not, and what you learned from the experience.
- They are looking to see whether you have a sound thought process in making important decisions, you will have to make them every day.
- Did you ever travel abroad alone at a young age? Have you ever started a small business? Have you ever made a risky trade in the stock market? Just some questions to help generate ideas.

What is the biggest obstacle or challenge you have faced and overcome in your life?

- Again, this is personal. Come up with a challenge you faced and overcame in the past after facing the challenge head on.
- If you can come up with a situation that relates to a job you had in the past or school that is great. Possibly a situation where you were instructed to do something you didn't fully understand, did research on your own and figured out how to do it correctly. This exemplifies your desire/willingness to learn, as well as your drive and determination.

For me, the biggest obstacle I have had to overcome is paying for college. I have managed to do this a bunch of different ways. While I have taken out student loans, I have also managed to pay off a lot of my tuition on time as well as pay off some of my student debt early. One job I have held throughout all my years at college has been waiting tables at local restaurants a few nights per week. I now work at a very popular restaurant which pays me pretty well on a consistent basis. However, what I really enjoy doing to make money on the side is graphic design. While in high school I was very into art and photography and managed to develop my graphic design skills. When I began my business education, I didn't really have the time or space in my schedule for those types of classes. However, I have managed to earn some extra money developing logos, letterhead, business cards and presentations for student start-ups as well as some local businesses. All of this extra work has helped me to pay for a good portion of my tuition.

What is the toughest decision you have ever had to make?

- Give your interviewer an example of a time that you had to make a very difficult decision under pressure.
- Explain the thought process you used to make that decision.
- You will frequently face situations like this in banking and they want to hear about your ability to rationalize and think through a decision.
- Have you been forced to move away from your family and friends to pursue your education or career goals? Have you ever been at the final table of a major poker tournament heads-up and you have an open-ended straight and flush draw (but 5 high) and your opponent puts you all-in making your decision worth thousands of dollars? Again, just some questions to help you generate some examples.

What do you like to do in your free time?

- Be honest, be yourself, and tell them what you like to do for fun. Don't be the guy who says you like to sit around and watch CNBC all day, unless you actually do. Remember, they want to know if you are someone they can stand being around during those all nighters, and someone they could potentially end up being friends with outside the office. Prove to them that you are a fun person.
- *VARIATION: What do you do on the weekends for fun?*

In the little bit of free time I have at school between my academics and extracurricular time commitments, I really just like to do things that allow me to relax with my closest friends. I am a huge sports fan, so a lot of times I will either just watch games in our suite or maybe go out to a restaurant or bar to watch with my buddies. Occasionally, we will even go to a game live if we can manage to get tickets. I also like to stay pretty healthy so I also spend a lot of my free time in the gym if I can.

What would you do for a living if you did not have to worry about money?

- What is your favorite thing to do? If you love football, maybe you want to coach high school football. If you enjoy music, maybe you would be a musician. If you genuinely love finance, say that you would do banking anyways simply because you want to learn.

In high school I was a tri-sport athlete, playing football, hockey and lacrosse. Coming into college I was recruited for football and planned on playing at my school. But, during my freshman year I repeatedly dislocated my shoulder, leading to a torn labrum which knocked me out of football for the rest of my life. Not even surgery would help. I really miss football and the camaraderie that comes with the team. If I could do anything for a living, without having to worry about money, I would love to coach high school football. I think teaching kids all the lessons that I learned in my career as a football player would be fun and rewarding.

How do you manage stress in your life?

- Talk about your time management skills. How you stay very organized and try not to put things off and allow them to pile up. These skills are vital in banking.

Between taking five classes a semester and participating in a few different extracurricular activities, I have a lot of different tasks and assignments to keep track of. I manage stress by staying organized. I keep track of what is due and when in my planner on my phone and keep a folder or binder for each task. This organization allows me to manage my time wisely. I make sure that I space out projects that are due near one another and try not to allow tasks to pile up, which allows me to minimize stress.

What is your favorite website?

- Duh, WallStreetOasis.com...jokes aside, this is fairly self explanatory. Be aware of your surroundings, and think about the type of person your interviewer is.
- If the office you are in is littered with sports memorabilia and you are a sports fanatic, by all means say ESPN.com if you are able to back it up and actually converse about sports.
- If you want to take a more conservative approach, and keep your answers finance related, you could pick a site like WallStreetJournal.com saying you like to keep up with the financial news, but that answer is not memorable.
- Another option is to pick a site which you find particularly interesting. Pandora.com? Maybe a site with a unique business model that you feel is going to become very successful, and explain to your interviewer why you feel this way.
- Whatever answer you give, be ready to back it up with a reason why it is your favorite site.

Actually, my favorite site is a start-up that one of my best friends is working on. It is a site called Zaang.com which is an online community where students log in and post any questions they may have. Questions can be school specific, where only those from your school can answer, or can be a nationwide question. Then any student who answers a question will be awarded points by other users based on the quality of their answer. Once a month, the ad revenue generated by the site is distributed to the users based on how many points they have. So essentially, students can earn money by submitting helpful answers to other students' questions.

What role do you like to take in a team situation?

- It is important you express that you are comfortable taking a leadership role *or* working underneath someone. This is important because you will need to do both.
- Talk about projects you have done in the past where you have taken both roles and been successful in either position.
- Talk about the skills that you have in team situations (communication, collaboration, etc.) and how those skills allow you to be the leader, or just another member of the group.

- *VARIATION: Would you rather take the lead in a team, or follow a leader?*

Honestly, I am completely at ease in either situation, and I have found it is very important to gauge the needs and desires of my teammates before making a decision as to my position in a group. Last year in one of my classes I was placed in a group where nobody really wanted to step up and lead the team. I knew I could handle it, so I stepped up and led the team. I felt that in that particular group nobody was confident about the subject matter so they shied away. I decided I could help out by taking initiative and stepping up to coordinate the group assignments. There was another group situation, however, where one student was insistent on being the leader of the group. In this situation I decided to defer to his leadership and support him in his efforts. He was able to communicate openly with us, which allowed each member of the team to deliver each task on time with high quality. Overall, I am comfortable taking either role and feel that each situation presents a unique set of personalities. I feel that an important skill is to be able to read these personalities and identify which role you can fill for the benefit of the group as a whole.

Do you feel more comfortable working in a group or individually?

- Again, the answer to this question is that you feel comfortable working in either situation, since you will have to do both in banking.
- There will be times when you are required to work as part of a team to produce the end project, but many of the steps along the way may be individual tasks you are responsible for.
- Come up with two short stories. One about a time you were successful on a team and another where you were successful individually. Make sure you give strong evidence that you can thrive in both situations.

I know that in banking you need to have the ability to do both extremely effectively and I feel I have that skill. At my school, the much of the work is done in teams. My freshman year one of our classes actually had us start our own business in teams of 30. I took a role as one of the “VP’s” so I was working beneath our CEO but still had a group of people working for me. I was in charge of organizing the members in my group and making sure we completed the jobs our CEO requested. I managed to successfully delegate the tasks to my team members but at the same time had to do a lot of planning and organizing on my own before meeting with my group.

How did you go about preparing for interviews?

- This needs to demonstrate how badly you want this job and how dedicated you are.
- Talk about how you made flash cards to review technical questions, how you practiced walking through your resume in front of your dog and how you researched the bank itself on their website, WSJ.com and through alumni contacts. Tell them that you think talking to alumni and bankers that are currently at the firm gave you a good idea of what will be required of you as an analyst.
- Make sure your enthusiasm for banking and their firm comes across!

I did a lot to prepare for interviews to make sure that I was as ready as I could possibly be. I made sure that I reviewed a lot of the technical questions that I could be asked and purchased a guide from WallStreetOasis.com that really helped me out in that respect. I also did a number of mock interviews at my career center to try and get comfortable in an interview environment and telling my story. But, the most important action I took in prepping for interviews was talking to actual bankers. I reached out to nearly thirty alumni contacts asking if they would meet or speak with me and luckily I actually had informal meetings either face to face or on the phone with over half of them. This really gave me a great idea about what really goes into the job, as well as helping me decide which firms I was most interested in working for.

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Give me an example of a time you worked as part of a team.

- This can be a group project, a project at your past job, an experience in sports, etc.
- Make sure you are able to clearly talk about your role within the team (leader, follower) and how the team situation worked out. This should be a positive example where the team worked successfully together to produce a positive result.

Last year in one of my classes, our final project was a group paper with four other students. I tend to find group papers extremely difficult to organize. It's tough to write a paper that sounds fluid if different people write different sections since everyone will have their own unique writing style. The way we managed to overcome this problem was to break the paper up into five sections, but create a very detailed outline of each section as a group before we broke apart to write on our own. This assured that there was good communication of our ideas within the team, allowing us to produce a coherent paper. We then came back together as a group and revised it together. The result was a paper that had a consistent style and logical flow.

Give me an example of a time you took a leadership role in a team situation.

- Give a situation in which you worked within a team and decided to take the lead.
- Explain why you took the lead, how the project worked out, and what you learned from the situation.
- Be sure to show a situation which demonstrates your ability to take on responsibility, communicate clearly, make decisions, and effectively delegate tasks to your team.
- *VARIATION 1: What leadership positions have you held?*
- *VARIATION 2: Describe your leadership style.*

This year I was lucky enough to be voted the captain of my varsity golf team at school. I had been very close with my previous captains but I really didn't have any idea how much work was involved in the job. My coach is a bit "old school" and still claims that he has never once used a computer. This means that I am in charge of all communication between our coach and all my teammates. I coordinate driving to practice, getting the van to go to tournaments, picking up the food for tournaments, and tournament registration. In all honesty, I am more of a coach than he is! But this experience really has taught me a lot about being a leader. To be effective, you really need to have great communication skills and make sure that everyone is aware of what is going on. It has also been a great experience for me helping to lead the younger kids on the team through their golf life, but also through their school life. Finally, I have also learned to delegate some of my tasks to the junior who will probably be captain next year, in order to break him into the role bit better than the captain before me did.

Give me an example of a time you had to deal with a conflict in a team situation.

- This is a tough one. You want to pick a situation where you had a significant conflict and preferably you were the one who diffused the problem.
- Explain to the interviewer what happened, what you decided was the best course of action, and the results of your actions. You should also consider explaining what you learned from the situation.
- This does not have to be a business situation, in fact many interviewers like when a candidate draws on an experience from outside school or business. Maybe you had a conflict with a coach on a sports team or a member of a group at school was slacking off during a group project. Whatever the situation, make sure you discuss how you stepped back and evaluated the conflict before taking any action. You also want to get across that you are not afraid of confrontation and you are able to approach conflicts with maturity.

As president of the Student Government Association, I have to deal with conflicts on a daily basis. Last year, there was a strong conflict within the SGA over what we should do as our spring fundraiser. One half of the SGA was set on having an auction, while the other half had decided that the best fundraiser would be a casino night. We were at a complete standstill and nobody was really willing to budge. So I brought together the entire SGA for a meeting to discuss some viable options. Since neither side was really willing to give in, I managed to come up with a way we could do both. We decided that we would have a casino night, where people would get a number of chips based on their donation, and then you could play those chips and use your winnings to purchase items in the auction which was held after the casino night was finished. So rather than giving out prizes, people were able to bid on what they wanted. Both sides were happy with the compromise and the night ended up being a great success, raising over \$10,000 for student activities.

Describe a situation when you or your group was at risk of missing a deadline, what did you do?

- First, you should have a good reason for cutting it close to missing the deadline... not “we forgot about the project until Sunday night and it was due at noon on Monday.”
- Talk about a time you were at risk of missing a deadline, worked endlessly to meet it, and still finished it with successful results.

In my management class last semester there was one time where I ended up cutting my project too close to the deadline. I had been working on my final presentation for a number of weeks and had produced a lot of data and graphs. As I was going through the presentation one last time the night before the project was due, and realized that all of the graphs I had pulled into my PowerPoint were from a slightly earlier Excel file, so it wasn't the absolute final data I had collected, and the numbers were slightly off. In all, I was almost certain I could have presented those graphs, and nobody ever would have noticed, but I would have known and after all the work I had put into the project, I really didn't want to run the risk. So I stayed up literally all night, and changed the data in all 47 of the graphs in my presentation to fit my actual findings. I went to my presentation running on nothing but Red Bull and coffee, and it went great. My professor loved my presentation, commended the accuracy of my data, and gave me an A on the project.

Tell me about a time where you were in a group where someone wasn't contributing as they should have been. What did you do?

- Think of a situation where this has happened to you in the past either in school or at the workplace and how you diffused the situation.
- You don't want to say you went to your boss or professor to complain. Show that you brought the team together, had a group conversation with the person that wasn't pulling their weight, expressed your concerns maturely, and managed to move on and successfully complete the project.

This is a situation that I have unfortunately experienced a lot in the past. The one example that comes to mind is from my job last summer. There was one kid within our group that never seemed to take on the same level of responsibility as the rest of the group, but would still take full credit on something our team did well. We didn't feel right simply throwing him under the bus, and figured our boss probably didn't want to hear about it. After this started to become a pattern, myself and the other members of our group sat him down and expressed our concerns with him in a sort of intervention style setting. We were firm, but not overly critical since we wanted to try and resolve the situation peacefully because we would still be working together throughout the summer. He actually was extremely apologetic and didn't realize that he wasn't pulling his weight. After we spoke to him he stepped up to the challenge and we worked *great* as a team for the rest of the summer.

Tell me about a time where you had to deal with a very upset teammate or co-worker?

- In this example you need to show that you have the ability to be a good leader.
- This means you should show that you have the ability to be empathetic, but at the same time evaluate the legitimacy of why your teammate/co-worker is upset.
- Hopefully you sat the person down, listened to their complaints, and discussed with them the best way to reconcile the situation.
- The story should end positively with you taking the initiative, resolving the situation, and moving forward with your team/group in an effective manner.

How do you manage to successfully deal with a difficult boss, co-worker or teammate?

- In dealing with a difficult person that you *must* work with, communication and perception is key. You must command their respect but at the same time be willing to make sacrifices in order to make sure you are able to effectively interact.
- You need to ensure you have what you *require* to work effectively, but at the same time, give enough that the person in question feels they are getting something as well.
- There needs to be an open discussion and a compromise between yourself and the person in question in order to allow effective teamwork to evolve.
- *VARIATION 1: Tell me about a time where you were in a group with someone who liked to work very differently than you. How did you manage to work together effectively?*
- *VARIATION 2: Tell me about a time you had to conform to a policy you didn't agree with.*

Tell me about a time where you motivated others.

- This is another question about leadership.
- Tell a story about a time you acted as a leader (see the “what makes a good leader” question for those qualities), and effectively motivated your previously unmotivated team/group to step up their game and produce results.
- School and work situations are probably the most common here, but if you are the captain of a varsity sport at your school, by all means use the story of the time you huddled them up and gave a “win one for the Gipper speech.”

In one of my finance classes last year, we had a final project and a final exam. However, the teacher made us a deal that if we did well enough on the final project the final exam would be optional. My group and I had finished the project and we were pretty confident that we would do well enough to place out of the exam. But I wasn't 100% convinced. The rest of my team members were pretty satisfied with the project and were about ready to call it a night. I really wanted to be sure I wasn't going to have to take the final; I had an A in the class and didn't want to risk bringing down my grade. I needed a way to motivate my team to put in just a few more hours and decided the best way to do that was through their stomachs. I called up dominos, ordered some pizzas and gave a little speech to get them to spend a few more hours with me working on getting the project perfect. It worked, and we placed out of the final.

Give me an example of a project that has required you to think quantitatively and analytically.

- Pick a project you can speak confidently about, was successful and shows you have quantitative skills and also the ability to effectively analyze a situation or problem and come up with a solution.
- The project doesn't necessarily have to be business or education related, just make sure it emphasizes your personal strengths, and the strengths you need in banking.
- *VARIATION: Can you tell me about a complex project you worked on? Describe the process you used to complete it.*

In my corporate financial management class, our final project was to analyze a company's financial information, look at their balance sheet, compare them to their competitors and make recommendations as to what adjustments the company should make to their balance sheet to increase shareholder value. To do this we did a valuation of the company using a basic DCF and wanted to look at ways we could lower their WACC in order to increase their valuation. Since the company was nearly 100% equity financed, we recommended they issue bonds and repurchase stock with that new cash, as well as keep some as a buffer in case of an economic downturn.

Give me an example of a project you enjoyed working on.

- Another time to highlight your quantitative, analytical, communication and teamwork skills through a story of a successful project. Again, it doesn't necessarily have to be finance related.

Looking back on my college experience so far, I think the project I most enjoyed was working with my team on our business plan my junior year. I found that writing a business plan takes an incredible amount of work. We did hours upon hours of market research about our product and how popular it could potentially be on campuses across the country. We actually took road trips to colleges as far as 6 hours away to do focus groups and collect data. Then we had to work together to compile all the data we collected and make sales projections based on that info. It took a lot of teamwork and communication to get the plan written, but I loved the people on my team and loved the project as a whole. The final product was something I was extremely proud to present to my professor since I knew how hard we worked on it as a team.

Give an example of a time where you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.

- This should be a situation from your life where you challenged yourself to achieve something that you hadn't previously accomplished.
- This can be from your personal life, school, sports, etc. It doesn't matter but do not feel as though you have to force it towards finance.
- This should *not* be something that was easy to complete. It should be something impressive and challenging and a situation you can use to exemplify you have the skills needed to achieve in banking. Remember; always try to relate the stories back to the interview to show you are the best candidate for the job.

After my freshman year, I was one of the people at the bottom of the roster on the golf team and I didn't like it. I am an extremely competitive person and hated not being on the traveling team that goes to tournaments. That summer, I set a goal for myself to get my handicap from about a 9 to below a 3, and make the top five on the team allowing me to travel. I spent practically every daylight hour I wasn't working at the range or on the course practicing. I actually was at the course for 12 hours straight one day. All my hard work paid off, I got my handicap down to a 2.3, was number three on the team in the fall, and traveled to every tournament.

Give me an example of a time where you have had to multitask.

- Tell a story of a time in your life where you had to manage a lot of different tasks and work long hours.
- It can be from school, from work, from home or a combination of all of them.

I have to do a lot of multitasking at school with all of the different activities I participate in. But the one time that sticks out in my mind would be finals week this past semester. I had final exams in three of my classes, and papers due in the other two. I also was working on finishing the winter edition of the school newspaper where I am the lead photographer. Finally, I also had to attend basketball practice and games every day. I was only able to get everything done by doing a few things at once. I would work on editing photos on my laptop on the way to away games and actually studied and edited my papers while I was running on the treadmill during workouts. I made sure that when I had time to just do my work I made the most of it by locking myself on the quiet floor of the library, allowing me to get my work done in the most efficient way possible.

Give me an example of a time where you successfully persuaded others to do something or see your point of view.

- A lot of this job down the road will be making pitches to companies and convincing them that your firm is the best firm to handle their job. You need to show you can be persuasive.
- Come up with a situation where you successfully convinced someone a group to do what you wanted them to do. You should present this in the form of a conflict, an action and resolution just like your other stories.

Give an example of a time you have gone above and beyond what was expected of you.

- Any situation where you were assigned a task and then decided to do more than what was asked of you will work here. If you have a time where your efforts were formally commended by a boss or professor, that is all the better.
- Talk about a time where you completed a task to the requirements, but decided it could be even better so you worked on it through the night to ensure it was as high quality as possible given the deadline.

Honestly, I am a bit of a perfectionist when it comes to presentations. A few months back I had a project that the group finished but some of the formatting was a little bit off and I wanted to redo some of the graphics. So after we broke up as a group, I worked until 3am redoing all of the graphics on the presentation and making sure all the formatting was perfect. My team was stunned when they had seen the work I had done the next morning, and really appreciated it.

Give an example of a time when you've been required to pay close attention to details.

- This should be a time where you have been under a stressful deadline, still managed to pay close attention to the details of your project and produced a flawless result.
- In banking, it will be expected that the pitchbook you finished at 3am is flawless when it is presented to a potential client the following day. You will likely have no acceptable excuse for a mistake that is made so you need to prove to your interviewer you have the ability to produce perfect work.

Last summer at my internship I was responsible for building some models for my boss. These models were used by him to generate projections for his fund which he would present to upper level management and potential clients. When building these models, a tiny error in either a formula or a variable could have a drastic impact on the financial projections. Everything I produced needed to be completely error-free or it could really make my boss and me look bad. I think this was a good example of a time when paying close attention to details was critical. By the end of the summer I had built several error-free models successfully and gained the trust of my boss.

What is the biggest mistake you have even made in your professional life?

- This is similar to the “what is your greatest failure” question in that you want to come up with a circumstance that is clearly a mistake; but, doesn’t make you look too bad. Then, make sure you emphasize what you *learned* from this mistake and how you didn’t make the same mistake the next time you were involved in a similar situation.
- If you’ve had a summer internship, you can talk about a mistake you made the first week on the job with pulling data from a certain source (ie Bloomberg terminal). You can say that you quickly learned to triple and quadruple check your work before handing it in.
- *VARIATION: Give me an example of a bad decision you have made and what you learned from the mistake.*

Tell me about your previous work experiences and walk me through a sample project from your work.

- You should be able to speak clearly about the responsibilities you had at your last job. These responsibilities and projects should exhibit the qualities and skills needed to be a successful banker. Talk about your long hours and how you were required to think analytically and produce perfect results even under time constraints. Show the interviewer that you were willing to go above and beyond what your boss was asking of you.
- Do not exaggerate. Don’t say you built an LBO model if you aren’t prepared to build one from scratch on the spot. Spin what you *did* do to sound as positive/impressive as possible, but don’t mislead them. You do not want them to call your bluff or give them an open invitation to test you on the most complex technical questions.

Last year after my sophomore year I was actually able to network my way into an internship with a boutique investment bank. The nice thing about having an internship at such a small firm was that even as only a rising junior, they treated me as an analyst and expected me to perform at the same level as their other analysts, at least with the more simple tasks. I got a lot of experience doing things that a full time analyst would have to do, like building PowerPoint presentations and editing pitchbooks. I was even lucky enough to work with another analyst and associate building a DCF from scratch. While I only did it once it was a great experience and gave me some insight into what I will hopefully doing on the job this summer and in the future.

You are supposed to be meeting a close friend for dinner but something comes up and you have to stay late. What would you do, and can you tell me about a similar experience you have had in your life?

- This is a question about attitude. You need to show that you will be dedicated to the job.
- MAKE IT CLEAR that you understand this is a normal occurrence on Wall Street. These are sacrifices you know you will have to make.
- If you have experienced a situation like this in the past, use it as an example. Show how you have acted in the past as evidence of how you will act in the future.

First, I would look at the project and see how far along in the process it was. If the project hadn't even been started, and had to be finished for the next morning, I would get started on it right away. However, if it was already in process and was *sure* it would only take another hour or two to complete, I would ask my boss if I could go to dinner and come back to the office immediately after to finish it no matter how long it would take. But, I know that these occurrences happen a lot on Wall Street and I will have to make a lot of sacrifices in my personal life for work. I am aware of that fact, and I am completely prepared to make those sorts of changes.

Give me an example of a time where you had to make a split second decision.

- In any finance related job, there may be times where you need to make a quick decision without much information.
- Prove to your interviewer that you have this ability by talking about a time where you had to make a very quick decision and mention how you made that decision. Hopefully you quickly analyzed all the information you *did* have, and made the decision which made the most sense based on that information.
- Some potential answers could be about trading in your personal account in the very volatile market of 2008.

Tell me about a time where you anticipated potential problems and took measures to prevent them.

- In banking, anticipating problems can save billions of dollars -- as we have seen over the past year.
- You need to give an example where you showed the ability to see a storm brewing and somehow made adjustments which helped to mitigate or avoid the damage.

There was one time when I was working in a group last semester and I could see that one of the team members, Tim, was not particularly strong in one skill that was necessary for the project. As the leader of the team, I felt I needed to do something to make sure this didn't become a problem down the road. I carefully approached Tim and worked with him to get the resources he needed to be able to complete the project. He studied up on what he didn't understand, and ended up producing great work.

Tell me about a time where you learned something new in a short amount of time.

- The learning curve in banking and trading is so steep it is more like a wall than a curve.
- You will be thrown in, feet to the fire, and expected to perform from day one (even more so at smaller banks that have a less formal training program).
- You need to prove you can pick up new topics extremely quickly and put your new skills to good use.
- You would be best served by making this something finance related. Try a situation where your professor assigned a quantitative project without really explaining how to do it. You took it upon yourself to do research in the library and on the internet and taught yourself the necessary skills, allowing you to successfully complete the project.

In one of my finance courses last year, my professor wasn't great at explaining new concepts in class. She assigned us a project where we were supposed to put together a portfolio of securities and calculate a number of different statistics about the portfolio by running an optimizer program. But, she gave us no guidance on how to actually use the program. I managed to complete the project by doing research on my own on the internet and learning how to use the program.

Tell me about a time you dealt with a major disappointment and turned it into a learning experience.

- This needs to be a time in your past where you achieved something, only to have it taken away from you unexpectedly.
- Pick a time where you were disappointed but then worked very hard to make up for the disappointment and learned something worthwhile in the process.

The biggest disappointment I have experienced occurred last winter. Before studying abroad, I was able to network with a few banks to get early interviews for summer internships. I managed to arrange early interviews with four different banks and one was Bank X and alerted the other banks I had interviews with that I accepted an offer since they were unable to extend me one at that time. Due to the economic situation my internship offer was revoked too late to re-interview at other banks. However, I managed to make the most of a bad opportunity, took a job outside of finance and networked endlessly to try and get another finance related internship. Finally, I was able to secure an internship working at an investment management company which ended up being one of the best experiences of my life. Though initially disappointed, I learned if you have a passion for something, you should persevere through the tough times and make sure you accomplish what you originally set out to do.

TRICKY

What is your biggest weakness?

- This is a bit of a trick question. With practice it is an easy one to answer “correctly”, but many candidates still manage to butcher this one.
- First off, don’t say that you don’t have any weakness. It will make you sound arrogant and is obviously false. Secondly, don’t say something stupid like “kryptonite.” It is likely that your interviewer will not be amused. Thirdly, don’t be too obvious and say something along the lines of “I work too hard.” You need to give a REAL weakness here or your interviewer will end up rolling their eyes.
- The key to answering this question is to pick a “flaw” that you can flip turn around and make it into a strength, or at the very least something you have been working to improve. Take something that could be seen as a weakness, and try and turn it into a positive.

In the past, I have found myself taking on too much of the responsibility in team situations because I haven’t trusted others to produce work I would be comfortable handing in. Over the past few semesters, I have really worked on allowing others to do their fair share, but also encouraging multiple drafts so that we can all review the work before the final submission. I am confident that this will be less of an issue in banking since I will be surrounded by people that have the same drive and high standards I do.

What do you consider to be your greatest failure?

- Again this is a bit of a trick question. The interviewer wants to hear about a failure, but more importantly wants to see what you learned from that failure.
- Tell a story about a time in which you didn’t succeed in what you set out to do, but managed to learn from the situation. Then tell another story about how the next time you had to perform a similar task you made the necessary changes and *did* succeed.
- Don’t limit it to school, but make sure that you spin it into a positive by the end of the story.

Why is your GPA so low?

- This is a stress test question. Whatever you do don’t admit that your GPA is low, or apologize for whatever level it may be at. Also, don’t make excuses unless something EXTREMELY drastic happened that dropped your GPA one semester (parent dying, major surgery, etc.)
- Show that you are well rounded and that you know you will have very little or no time for a social life once you get into banking, so while maybe your GPA isn’t a 4.0, you are happy with your balance and are confident that you have the analytical ability to be a great employee.

Personally I do not consider my GPA to be particularly low. With my commitment to the hockey team as well as the student government association, I think my GPA is actually at a pretty solid level. I am more satisfied with the GPA I have with my set of extracurricular activities than if I had a 4.0 doing nothing except going to class and studying.

At the end of the summer internship, you don't get a full time offer. What could cause this to happen?

- Another trick question thrown at you by your interviewer to see how you handle a little bit of stress.
- First off, make sure you tell them that you plan on working so hard that you don't see it happening. Be confident but not cocky. Show you have done your research. You understand and expect the demanding hours, but you are up to the challenge.
- That being said, you can say that after talking to friends and alumni that are in the industry, the biggest cause of burnout is the long hours. You can also say that you didn't feel 100% comfortable with the people that you were working with, and in this industry fit is crucial since you will be spending most of your waking hours in the office.

Well, I really don't see that happening but if I had to pick, I think the most likely reason would be that I was not comfortable with the group I was in. I know about the hours and am completely prepared for them, so I don't feel as though that will be a problem. However, since I don't know the people in my group, I cannot really predict how I will interact with them. Working 80+ hours per week with a group you don't mesh well with can definitely lead to conflicts.

Where else are you applying?

- While you want to show that you are in demand by a lot of firms, you also need to make sure you come across as focused. If you are lucky enough to get interviews with a number of bulge brackets and a number of boutiques, you may **not** want to mention all the BB's to the boutiques, and vice versa. (Unless that is all you have to show for interviews). While most interviewers are aware that you are probably applying everywhere in this market, you need to show that you have done research about the culture of the firm and want to be at *this* particular firm.
- Definitely mention all banks you are interviewing with that are similar in size and culture (i.e. Mention Morgan to Goldman).
- If you are interviewing at a small boutique and tell them you have a final round at Goldman coming up, they *could* actually be *less* likely to give you an offer. This is because they may believe you will turn them down if you get the offer from Goldman. Firms do not like having their offers turned down.
- The bottom line is that you should name firms that are similar to the one you are currently interviewing with. If you are interviewing for jobs outside of banking, make sure the interviewer knows that banking is **CLEARLY** your first choice, and the others are just fall backs due to the terrible economic situation. You are hedging your bets to make sure you get something. If you don't have interviews lined up with any other firms, say something to the extent of "I am in contact with a number of different firms" and if they push, name some firms you applied to and/or are waiting to hear back from.
- Do not lie. You don't want to run the risk that the interviewer knows someone at the other firm and checks up on your claim..

Where do you see yourself in 5/10 years?

- You can approach this question in a number of ways but it all depends on what you want. If you see yourself going back for your MBA, that's fine. If you would rather stay with the firm, do a third year as an analyst and try and be promoted directly to associate, that's fine as well. Just make sure you have a reason for your choice and can tell it persuasively.

- Another option is saying you are not sure exactly what you want. You can tell your interviewer that you are going into banking as a two year crash course in which you will learn more than you would in any other job. This will prepare you for anything that you want to do in life. At the end of those two years you will assess your situation, and decide what is best for you.
- No interviewer *actually* expects you to know what you will be doing 10 years from now. Anyone who says they know is full of it. It is about showing you have thought about it and have a rational reasoning for your thoughts.
- Show that you are 100% dedicated to (and excited about) the two/three years you hope to spend there as an analyst.

I cannot honestly sit here across from you and say I *know* what I will be doing in five years. I plan on going into these two years as the best two year learning experience of my life. I am thrilled at the opportunity to be an analyst. However, at the end of the two years I will have to look at my life and evaluate my situation. My feeling now is that if I am performing successfully and I really enjoy the group I am working with, I would love to do a third year as an analyst, and then move directly up to associate. If I wasn't 100% happy with what I was doing, I would seriously consider going back to business school.

OTHER

Tell me a (clean) joke.

- Rare to get this one, but have a clean joke in the back of your mind just in case. This is part of the “airport test” meaning they want to see if you are someone they could stand being stuck with in an airport for an extended period of time (or the analyst bullpen until 4am). Funny people are good to be around in stressful times so show them you have a sense of humor.

What is the most interesting thing you have read in the Wall Street Journal lately?

- This question is to see how interested you are in the markets. Do you keep in touch with what is going on in the financial world?
- Try and pick something that isn’t only on the front page. The reasoning behind this is two-fold. First, it shows that you don’t just glance at the front page to grab any old story in prep for your interview. Second, it is less likely that your interviewer will know a lot about the topic and therefore push you for an in depth explanation.
- For a few days before your interview, read the journal and outline a few articles you feel comfortable talking about. What is the main idea, supporting arguments and main conclusion of the article. Also, what is your opinion of the article/topic? It is probably best to stay clear of the highly controversial topics like politics and/or war and focus on more of the financial stories here.

What are the qualities of a successful leader?

- A great leader must embody a combination of qualities.
- They must be trustworthy, enthusiastic, confident, organized, tolerant, calm, focused, committed, and a great communicator.
- A great leader also empowers those around them, allowing group members to make decisions on their own rather than trying to micromanage, and makes sure they express their appreciation for those they are working with.
- Pick a few of those and explain why in *your* mind they are the most important qualities.

Tell me the full names of the people who interviewed you before me.

- Nothing you can do to prep for this other than make mental notes of the full name of every interviewer.
- You will be meeting new people every day in this job; you want to show you would have no trouble remembering a client’s name just after meeting them.
- If you can’t remember, you are better off smiling and just saying so rather than getting flustered and apologizing.

Do you have any questions for me?

- You **HAVE** to have good questions to ask your interviewer.
- You should have at least ten questions in mind that you feel comfortable asking.

- Ten may seem like a lot, but not every question will be suitable for every interviewer. You need to gauge the type of question your interviewer would enjoy answering.
- There are two types of questions that you can ask your interviewers. You can ask them about financial topics or you can ask them about lifestyle topics. Some sample questions of each are below.
- Financial
 - What is your opinion of where the economy is going in the next year?
 - Have you seen a change in dealflow due to the current economic downturn?
 - In your opinion, what desks / product groups have the best reputation and/or the most promising future at your bank?
 - Do you think even more “investment banks” will end up going under in the coming years?
 - What do you see as the future of investment banking?
- Lifestyle
 - What was your career path/how did you get into banking?
 - What group are you in?
 - Have you enjoyed your banking experience?
 - Have you worked at other banks and if so how does your experience at this bank compare to that bank?
 - How does the work/life balance change as you move up from the analyst level? (not highly recommended – you don’t want to run the risk that they think you’re afraid of the hours)
 - What do you think separates this bank from other similar banks?
 - Culture-wise, what do you think is the biggest positive with this bank?
 - What do you think is the biggest negative of this bank?
 - How have you managed to handle the intense banking lifestyle?
 - What advice would you give me going into my years as an analyst?
- Other
 - Is there anything else that you would like to know and I can help clarify about my resume or anything I’ve said?
 - What are the next steps in this process/When should I expect to hear from you? (In case you are running out of questions or want to wrap things up.)
- With any question, especially the financial ones, be ready for them to turn around and ask you the same question. You must be able to hold a conversation and have a rational opinion on the question you asked, so don’t ask a question you are completely clueless about.
- Most interviewers like talking about themselves. Allow them to do so if possible, pay attention, and seem enthusiastic about listening to their story.
- The questions you ask should be things you are truly interested in learning about the firm or about investment banking. You need to sound genuine with your questions, or your interviewer will see right through you.
- Ask about the background of your interviewer first (their school, other firms they worked for, etc) and then follow that up with appropriate questions about the industry.

- Feel free to ask follow up questions after hearing a response. This creates more of a dialogue/conversation with your interviewer rather than a formal Q&A.
- You can write down your questions in your notebook and glance at them before the interview to refresh your memory, but you should not be looking at them while actually in the interview.
- The final word of advice about asking question from a Goldman Sachs VP... **“Don’t do any damage at the end of the interview by asking a stupid question.”** Don’t take risks in the Q&A portion of the interview, it isn’t worth it.