Recruiting, Networking & The Behavioral Interview

Wall Street Prep
About Wall Street Prep

Wall Street Prep was established in 2004 by investment bankers to train the financial services industry.

Today, Wall Street Prep conducts training at more than 150 investment banks, private equity firms, asset managers, and Fortune 500 companies, and works with over 125+ universities and colleges to bridge the gap between academia and the real world by teaching the practical skills needed to succeed on the job.

Our client list has since grown to include the world’s top investment banks, such as Goldman Sachs, Evercore, Lazard, Morgan Stanley, and Perella Weinberg. We are also pleased to announce that our training material is now used at several of the leading global investment firms, including KKR, Blackstone, Bain Capital, and Carlyle.

For general information on our products and services or technical support, please visit our website at wallstreetprep.com, or contact our office at (617) 314-7685.

Design and layout by Karlene Leblond
If you are interested in learning how to land your dream job in finance, this course is for you.

Any GPA, any school
It doesn't matter what GPA you have or the school you go to. Interview skills are used universally. That being said, you may have to compensate in certain areas. For example, if you go to a non-target you may need to network more, or if you have a lower GPA you may need to place greater emphasis on your experiences in your resume.

No prior experience needed
This guide covers everything you need to master the art of networking and interviewing — from writing email subject lines to confidently walking into an interview knowing you are equipped to walk out with the job.

Everyone is welcome
This course is applicable to anyone looking to recruit, whether you are a sophomore in college, an MBA student, or a professional in another field looking to break into the industry.

Even if you pivot careers, this course will provide you with knowledge transferable to any career path you choose.

Familiarize yourself with the recruiting timeline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard Timeline</th>
<th>Diversity Timeline</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The standard timeline for non-diverse candidates will typically kick off early Spring of your Sophomore year for the Junior/Senior year internships. Recruiting or re-recruiting Junior year could take place throughout the year but usually most roles will open and close by Junior/Senior summer in August and September as they are contingent on the amount of interns that receive and sign return offers.</td>
<td>Take the standard timeline and subtract 2-4 months (late December through March of your Sophomore year). Note, every bank defines diversity slightly different, so make sure you fit within their criteria before applying.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that recruitment timelines differ between companies. Most IB's, PE's, VC's will recruit on this timeline although it is important to make a list of your top choices to track their timelines as each may slightly differ.
This industry is no walk in the park

Breaking into sell-side (IB) and buy-side roles (PE, VC) requires more than submitting an application.

It is important to note that this industry is not easy to break into and you must be able to identify weaknesses as a candidate and compensate for such.

Once you are in, moving around is far easier

Break into the industry now because:

- It is harder to break in later in life
- You can always leave, but you can’t always come into the industry from other roles
- You will learn a ton, get paid well, and meet some great people along the way

If you are unsure, go for it

Worst case scenario is that you get a bit run down, you learn a handful of transferable skills, and maybe you get paid a little bit along the way. Regardless, this industry will open doors others can’t do it for a small amount of time is better than nothing.

What we won’t cover

The largest bucket that this course specifically does not cover is the “technical” portion of interviews. This is roughly half of your interview process so understanding these is crucial.

Wall Street Prep offers technical courses broken up by industry. Wherever you are looking to apply, we can teach you what you need to know.

We also suggest turning to your campuses or business school’s career center for additional advice. Campus clubs, organizations, and mentor programs will all help you with daily questions that may come up.

This process will sneak up on you, so it is important to start early so when applications start to open you will be ready to submit!
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Section 1: Pre-Interview Prep

Resume Building
Let’s cover everything you need to know about resume building so you can start sending your applications out today.

Drafting a Resume Checklist

- Margins should be less than 0.5” on both sides. Optimally between 0.5” and 0.75”.
- Order experiences chronologically with the most recent at the top.
- Write in past tense for all experiences except your current role.
- Ensure consistency in font size, typography, the space between bullets, the use of bold/italicize, paragraph alignment, etc.
- Do not use high school experiences from Sophomore year onwards.
- Remove your GPA if it is less than 3.5.
- Do not use “I”.
- Do not use “the”.
- Do not use periods.
- Quantify your impact and be sure the way numbers are spelled out is consistent.
- Use a different action verb per bullet.
- Optimize space. Do not use a whole line for a few words.
- Keep your resume to one page.
- Save as a PDF. Use naming convention first.last.resume.pdf or first_last_resume.pdf.
Section 1: Header & Education

1. Name (suggest using a font size of 24pt+)
2. Contact information (phone number and email)
3. LinkedIn or personal website (if appropriate)
4. Address
5. School(s)
6. Degree
7. Expected graduation date
8. Major(s)
9. Minors(s)
10. GPA (if greater than 3.5)

Section 2: Experience

The breakdown of the main body of the resume consisting of your experiences can be broken up a few different ways. Although for a finance resume (Investment Banking, Private Equity, Venture Capital, and Real Estate) you really want to aim to stick within the standard templates agreed upon by the top schools with the highest placement rates in the financial industry.

With use of the resume checklist in hand and templates provided, start working on the specific bullet points per your experiences on your resume.

Using ‘ACR’

If you are having trouble brainstorming bullet points, try turning to the ACR format: Action, Context, Result.

The ACR format can even be broken down by each bullet (one for the action, one for the context, and one for the result) if you have the space on your resume.

Contacted 30+ customers per day, (ACTION) pitching value of new software product aimed to improve client productivity, (CONTEXT) ultimately selling $6,500 of subscription services a month. (RESULT)
Section 3: Additional Skills or Interests

This is an opportunity to share more about yourself beyond your professional experiences or internships. More importantly, it is an opportunity to connect with the interviewer!

If you are struggling to come up with ideas, consider the following:

**Volunteer work**
If you have volunteered for causes related to the field or industry, it could demonstrate your commitment and passion beyond your professional responsibilities.

**Awards or Certifications/Licenses**
List any relevant certifications or licenses you have obtained or any recent academic awards you have been given.

**Public speaking**
If you have any public speaking workshops, presentations, or pitches (such as a stock pitch) you can link it in your resume to highlight your communication and sales skills.

**Technical skills**
Software, programming languages, tools (engineering, data science and analytics, cybersecurity, web development, productivity, and design tools), or technology (Excel) used in the industry.

**Publications**
Any publications are absolutely worth putting in the additional section or even in the body of your resume.

**Languages**
You may list languages as proficient, conversational, intermediate, or fluent. This may also include coding languages.

**Link to website**
If you have a hobby that you have built a website around (whether that is photography, art, blogging, writing articles, podcasting...etc.) you may link it as well. Double check that your links work before submitting your application.

**Organizations**
You may put any additional organizations that were not valuable enough to dedicate an entire “experience” with multiple bullet points.

**Activities you enjoy**
Examples include: art (drawing, painting, photography, etc.); cooking or culinary skills; film and cinema; musical instruments; outdoor activities (hiking, camping); podcasting; reading; sports/chess; traveling; writing or blogging.

**Fun facts about yourself**
For example if you: lived in 6 different countries before turning 10; spent 4 months in Costa Rica learning [XYZ]; played 18 holes of golf with Rickie Fowler by accident; youngest of 8 siblings; volunteer to coach little league baseball team.

**When in doubt, leave it out**
You are allowed to be a bit playful in this section but err on the side of safety. When in doubt, absolutely leave it out. A comedic line is not worth losing a potential job.

You may choose to call your last section “Additional” or “Skills & Interests”. This section can encompass additional facts about yourself that you may want to include, along with skills and interests. It is a more flexible ending option that allows you to add any of the suggested items above.
1. Select the Add description or attachments text block. Add a note and/or your phone number. For example, "Feel free to hop on the Zoom call or call my cell at 301-234-6543".

Adding your resume as a PDF in the attachments section is optional.

2. Click Save. When you receive the following option to send the invitation to the guests, click Send.

If They Do Not Answer Your Call

In the event the person you are scheduled to meet with is either not answering their calls or you have not received a call from them, wait roughly 5-10 minutes before sending over a brief email and wait.
Section 1: Pre-Interview Prep

Networking
The Importance of Networking

**Gets Your Foot in the Door**
At the end of the day, it is required to ensure we increase our chances of landing the dream job. Applications alone are worth far less and will result in less interviews if not bundled with networking. Your competition is doing it, so should you!

**Helps Gain “Insider Information”**
Gain instrumental “insider information” about the company, teams, deals, experiences, and stories. This gives you greater credibility when stepping into the interview round.

**It is Interview Practice!**
Networking lowers the pressure of interviewing because networking is effectively mini interviews. Practice makes perfect, especially when your speaking with experts in your field of interest. There is potential that you will interview with the same people you networked with!

**Can Change Your Life in the Long-term**
Networking is an opportunity and excuse to speak with individuals that can change your life now or later. Focus on the long term vision and the overwhelming feeling to squeeze in as much networking in a short amount of time will fade.

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**Networking Channels**

**Students and Alumni**
You can easily find students and alumni through LinkedIn searches.

*Read the Using LinkedIn section for instructions on how exactly to do this.*

Connect based on a mutual school. This similarity could create an increased response rate. Create an even deeper connections through mentioning clubs, organizations, or greek life within a school. This may result in a higher response rate than the school connection alone.

**Friends and Family**
Do not be shy to turn to friends and family that may be in the industry of your interest. This could even extend to friends of your parents.

This might be the only group you can ask your candid and unfiltered questions to - the questions you actually want to know the answers to, like “What is the job like 10 years down the line?” “Is it worth it?” “Would you take a different route if you were me knowing what you know now?” and/or “Was the compensation worth the lack of work life balance?”
Who to Network With

We believe in networking with purpose and a plan. Each time you “level up” to a more senior employee, you want to approach the call with greater credibility and ability to display your devotion to the company. Therefore, we suggest starting with:

**Incoming or Past Interns**

Incoming interns will typically be just a year older than you and have most recently gone through the process and give you their guidance on securing the role. Interns will usually be seniors that have just gone through a summer internship and can be useful in explaining more about the role itself. More importantly, they can connect you with current analysts and associates as they have formed relationships through summer programs.

**Campus Recruiting and HR Teams**

The influence of campus recruiting and HR teams are highly undervalued. They are the ones in charge of finding talent and hand picking your resume out of the pile to put you through to an interview round. It is fairly easy to connect with campus recruiting and HR teams.

**Associates**

Once you have had a conversation or two, it is likely worth speaking with an associate as they may have the power to make the ultimate decision on hiring and will be influential as a referral.

**VP’s (Or Directors, MD’s, Group Heads)**

If you can get on a call with anyone in or above the VP level, it is an incredible opportunity to display the work you have put in to get to know people at the firm. Don’t shy away from reaching out to senior members. You want to prep hard for these calls, this could make or break your application!

**Students and Alumni**

These types of events often “expose” who is really involved with recruiting from your particular campus. These are often going to be the most influential people you can network with. If done correctly, you can walk straight into an interview round after just one or two calls with the right people.

**Friends and Family**

We have a dedicated section on how to effectively network using LinkedIn. The main idea is that you can filter based on a variety of elements that may allow you to better connect with an individual based on factors greater than mutual school or hometown.

Networking with these two groups is likely readily available to you could be enough to stand out in an interview round. If you only have the opportunity or time to reach out to a few people, aim to network with those that you will likely get a response from.

**Analysts**

Analysts often play a role in the interviewing and recruiting process, especially those from your respective school. Analysts too can be pivotal in connecting you with additional analysts, associates, VPs, or members of the campus recruiting and HR teams. The key here is to aim for the easier conversations first that often yield tips and tricks when talking to higher ups.
Outreach Channels

The Generic Method

The generic method should be used predominantly for mass emails in which you are aiming to reach out in high volumes with no preference for a specific company or person.

Pros
- Reaches a high volume
- Quick to execute
- Efficient to use
- Can be effective

Cons
- Lower response rate
- Not targeted by priority
- Takes time to accumulate all contact info

Templates

Hi [recipient name],
I hope you are doing well!

My name is [your name] and I am currently a [year] at [school/university]. I recently applied for the [internship] position and I am eager to learn more about your experience at [firm] as an [position].

I would really appreciate a few minutes of your time if you had any availability in the next few weeks. Happy to work around your schedule. Attaching my resume for your reference.

Best,

Hi [recipient name],
I hope you are doing well!

I came across your LinkedIn as I was searching for fellow [school/university student nicknames] working at [company]! My name is [your name] and I am currently a [year] at [school/university]. I recently applied for the [internship name] position and I am eager to learn more about your experience at [firm] and how [school/university] helped prepare you for the role.

I would really appreciate a few minutes of your time if you had any availability in the next few weeks. Happy to work around your schedule.

Best,
Hi [recipient name],
I hope you are doing well!
My name is [your name] and I am currently a [year] at [school/university]. I noticed you were in [club] as a/an [position] - I am currently a [position] in [club] as well! I recently applied for the [internship] position and I am eager to learn more about your experience at [firm] and how [club] helped prepare you for the role.
I would really appreciate a few minutes of your time if you had any availability in the next few weeks. Happy to work around your schedule.
Best,

The Value-Add Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stands out substantially</td>
<td>Takes time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides clear value</td>
<td>Takes research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exponentially higher response rates</td>
<td>No guarantees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best used on high priority relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Templates

Hi [recipient name],
I hope you are doing well!
I recently came across your podcast with [name], [position, ex: CEO of Amazon], and found his approach to scaling and optimizing an early stage team fascinating!
My name is [your name] and I am currently a [year] at [school/university]. I recently applied for the [internship] position at [company] - I would love to pick your brain to learn more about the topics discussed in the podcast and how [company] views scaling early stage teams.
I would really appreciate a few minutes of your time if you had any availability in the next few weeks. Happy to work around your schedule. Attaching my resume for your reference.
Best,
1. Select the Add description or attachments text block. Add a note and/or your phone number. For example, "Feel free to hop on the Zoom call or call my cell at 301-234-6543". Adding your resume as a PDF in the attachments section is optional.

2. Click Save. When you receive the following option to send the invitation to the guests, click Send.

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Section 2

Interview Prep
What is the goal?
Connect with your interviewer!

Focus on connecting with your interviewer. Just like you did with your networking calls, break the Q&A feel. Allow yourself to walk into the interview room excited to have a conversation and learn from someone else.

Fake it ‘til you make it. It may be uncomfortable to walk into an interview with a big smile and standing up straight, but you have to try to break the mundane interviews of the day and bring some real energy. How do you do that?

Rules of the Interview

Dress code: Err on the side of safety
You never want to be underdressed, but it never hurts to be overdressed. If you are unsure, dress in formal business attire.

Bring your resume, and bring a bunch!
If your interview is in person, bring multiple copies of your resume and hand them to your interviewers at the beginning of your interview, especially on Superdays. We would suggest bringing 15 or more.

Body Language

I know it may seem obvious, but please read the following points carefully:

Smile a lot! Smiles are contagious and while your interviewer is tirelessly asking the same question to a handful of college students back to back, your bright energy will have an impact on their mood.

Stand (or sit) straight. Many people slouch during interviews and do not display the confidence and comfortability that simply straightening your back accomplishes.

Maintain eye contact. Stop looking away and confidently hold eye contact while delivering your prepared answers, despite their facial expressions. Often they will seem bored and unimpressed as a way to test how you respond.

Use open gestures. Do not cross your arms. Instead, sit comfortably with your hands by your lap or use them to express your answers.

Nod in response. When your interviewer is speaking, ensure to maintain the eye contact and nod or use quick, non interruptive words like “yes”, “understood”, “okay” so they know you are listening.
Everything Is Fair Game On Your Resume

Yes, everything. Do not underestimate the amount of questions one can come up with based on the information in your resume. We briefly touched on this in the resume section when discussing buzzwords and being able to defend statements on your resume.

Examples

- Why is your GPA [X]? (This person could ask why it is good or bad)
- Why did you transfer?
- Why did you only do that internship for two months?
- Why did you study abroad there?
- You mentioned [X] in this experience, talk more about it.
- You only have experience in [X], why do you think you can work in [Y]?
- Why don’t you have more experience?

Questions could also be stemmed from your 'Additional/Skills & Interests' section.

Examples

- You mention you play tennis, what did you think of the game last night?
- What do you like to cook and how did you learn?
- In what way are you proficient in Microsoft Excel?
- You like playing golf? What is your handicap?
- Tell us more about your research on [X].
- How did you learn to use [X] computer program? Tell me more about it.

Sticky Situations and How to Avoid Them

Go through every single word, number, and date on your resume. Ask yourself questions you can come up with based on each portion you review. This is not a suggestion, it is a requirement. You have to read every character on your resume and ask yourself if there are any questions that can be asked based on it.

Have a friend do the same! Allowing a fresh eye to quiz you based on your resume helps you ensure you are covering all of your bases.
Introduction: About Yourself

Your introduction is the first impression. This is the make or break elevator pitch, **so make it good.** Do not give your interviewer a boring walk through and listing all the points on your resume, this is a pitch of your story.

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**Crafting Your Pitch**

- Opening line
- Hook
- Transition
- Experiences
- Ending tying back to “why you”

**This is the same as...**

- Walk me through your resume.
- Let's hear a bit about your background and how you ended up here?
- Can you start by sharing a bit about yourself?
- Could you please introduce yourself?

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**Part 1: Opening Line**

**Rules of Thumb**

- Keep to ~90 seconds long (+ or - 20 seconds).
- Tailor your answer to the company you are speaking with.
- Keep it professional.
- Speak with great passion. The first impression is your moment to display your excitement, passion, and energy.
- Practice, practice, practice. Practice in the mirror, shower, with friends, or alone. The more you practice and have this answer down to a tee, the more you can focus on **delivery** and connecting with your interviewer.

**Opening Line Checklist**

- Thank your interviewer for taking the time to speak with you
- Name
- Where you are from
- What school you attend
- What year/grade are you in
- What are you studying
- 2-4 experiences
- Ending - tie back to a brief “why you”

**Template**

My name is [your name] and I am originally from [town/state] - I am currently a [year] at [school/university] where I am studying [field(s)].
Part 2: Hook
Every story should start with a hook to capture the audience. To think of your hook, ask yourself “where did the passion and the fire for the industry or field really start”? “When did you first realize you wanted more of this area?”

It may take some digging, but let’s look at some examples that may spark a memory for you.

**Touchpoints**

*Childhood curiosity leading to an realization in your passion.* Lemonade stands, selling sports card, trading toys, etc.

*Hobbies becoming side hustles.* Spending time helping out in areas that you were passionate about, eventually turning into a small business. For example, “Helping people fix their computers led me charging to do so.”

*Innovating/finding your passion through adversity.* Adversity forces you to find solutions to problems you or your family and friends may have been facing. For example, “I was unable to have affordable access to transportation, therefore I started…”

*Finding market gaps.* “I struggled finding affordable clothes as a highschool student led me to…”

*Inspired by role models, such as mentors professors, teachers, parents, celebrities.* “Ever since watching/reading [X] show, podcast, article, taking [X] class with [professor]. I realized…”

*Desire to make an impact on community.* “I grew up in a community that did not have access to affordable tutors so I started…”

*Out of the blue moment.* “One random day as a 14 year old I was walking through the grocery store aisle and asked my mom why everyone looked so stressed out, she said because it is tiring to search through food stores for what you need, that’s when I realized I needed to…”

*Overcoming personal obstacles.* “Growing up I was always [X] which encouraged me to become more [Y] with the help of [XYZ], that’s when I knew I had to share my experience with more kids…”

*Encounter sparking change.* “I was at the coffee shop and sparked up a conversation with the person in front of me who explained their business was struggling with [X] and I offered to help with [Y], one thing led to the next and…”

*Responding to change.* “After moving hometowns, I did not have many friends and sought out opportunities to meet kids my age in the new neighborhood. That’s when I realized…”

*Admiring local business.* “As a kid I always went to this one coffee shop that did [XYZ] and their way of making their customer feel at home really had an impact on me that made me realize…”

*Good or bad employment experience*  
**Good experience:** “When I was 14 I had the opportunity to shadow the local store owner for a day. We did [XYZ], and from that day forward I knew…”

**Bad experience:** “When I was 14 I had the opportunity to shadow our local vet and I was so afraid of the animals that I quit on day one and immediately signed up to be a barista at the local coffee shop. That was the best experience to ever happen because at the coffee shop I learned [X]. From that point forward I knew…”
**Architecture.** “On my bike ride to school, I would bike by the [X] building and always wondered what was inside. One day I asked a friend, had the opportunity to visit, and never stopped exploring the world of [X] since…”

**Parents or family.** “Growing up in a house where my parents were attempting to open a local coffee business, I learned from a very young age the importance of [XYZ], and it has truthfully always stuck with me…”

**Example**

“When I was 16, I was playing around in Adobe Photoshop in art class with my best friend and we started designing different icons we thought would be really cool looking to design on a T-shirt. One thing led to the next and we were selling shirts and hoodies to our whole friend group, grade, and eventually for the school. That moment really sparked something inside of me and I knew I needed to continue exploring entrepreneurship and business.”

**Part 3: Transitions**

After your hook, you want a smooth transition explaining why you applied and/or why you have pursued your next experience. The idea of the transition is to express a clear story to understand how one experience drove you to the next. One experience may have made you realize you want to expand in another, compliment the skills you have already learned, or dive deeper in a specific area.

**If you are a sophomore or older,** we suggest skipping from the hook to explaining what you have done since arriving on campus.

**Touchpoints**

**You may choose to first talk about an experience before arriving to university…**

“After realizing [X], I knew I wanted to keep learning more about [X]. That is why I joined [X] / worked for [X] which allowed me to continue expanding on [X].”

**…or arriving to University**

“Coming to [school], I knew I wanted to continue seeking out opportunities to learn more about [X] which is why I nearly immediately joined [X] club/organization…”

**Templates**

This experience prompted me to seek further experiences in [new skills you are aiming to get], which ultimately led me to join [next experience] where I was able to truly dive deep into [topic from new experience].

This experience [experience name] allowed me to understand [topic] which drove me to pursue [new experience] as a way to enhance my skills in [topic from new experience].
1. Select the Add description or attachments text block. Add a note and/or your phone number. For example, “Feel free to hop on the Zoom call or call my cell at 301-234-6543.” Adding your resume as a PDF in the attachments section is optional.

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