



# INTERVIEW TIPS

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

1. **RESEARCH** the company, organization, or agency with whom you will be interviewing.
  - Learn about the history, mission, organizational structure, philosophy, and position descriptions within the organization.
  - Why? To make sure it is a place you will be happy working and to be well prepared for the interview.
  - Where? Career Resource Center, Cooper Library, the Internet
2. **PREPARE** for Interview Questions.
  - Study possible interview questions and think about how you will answer them. Be comfortable with your responses; try not to sound rehearsed.
3. **THINK** about your qualifications. Be sure you can verbalize them to a potential employer.
4. **PRACTICE** your communication skills.
5. **PLAN** for travel, if necessary.
  - If you are traveling to a *local* interview, make sure you know how to get there. Drive to the building the day before your interview, if possible.
  - If you are traveling *out of town* for an interview, make sure you clarify with the employer *before your trip* who will be responsible for travel costs.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW:

1. **ARRIVE** 15 minutes early.
2. **BRING** extra copies of your resume, a pen, and some paper.
3. **MAKE** sure you know how to properly pronounce the interviewer's name.
4. **DRESS** professionally and conservatively.
  - Even if you know that you will dress more casually for the actual job, an interview is still a professional business meeting, and a dark suit for men and women is most appropriate. If you want to add a little color, do so with a tie or a scarf.
  - Keep accessories to a minimum. For men: stick with your watch and a class or wedding ring. For women: stick with simple and classic jewelry (no dangling earrings or bracelets).
  - Go without cologne or perfume. (You never know if your interviewer might have allergies).
5. **MAKE** a positive first impression.
  - Offer a firm handshake.
  - Greet the employer by name.
  - Be relaxed and enthusiastic.
  - Do not smoke or chew gum.
  - Maintain eye contact about 70% of the time.
6. **BE FAMILIAR** with the typical structure of an interview.
  - Rapport establishment = small talk
  - Opener = First serious question from the interviewer. "Tell me about yourself."
  - Exploration of facts = questions about your experience, education, and goals.
  - Conclusion = summary of the interview and your opportunity to ask questions.

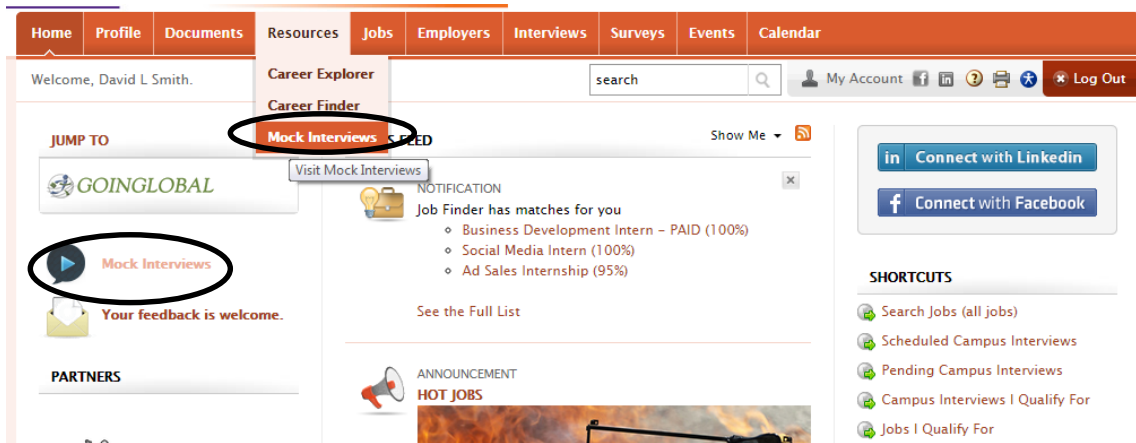
## AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

1. MAKE NOTES from your conversation with the interviewer.
2. SEND a thank you letter within 24 hours.

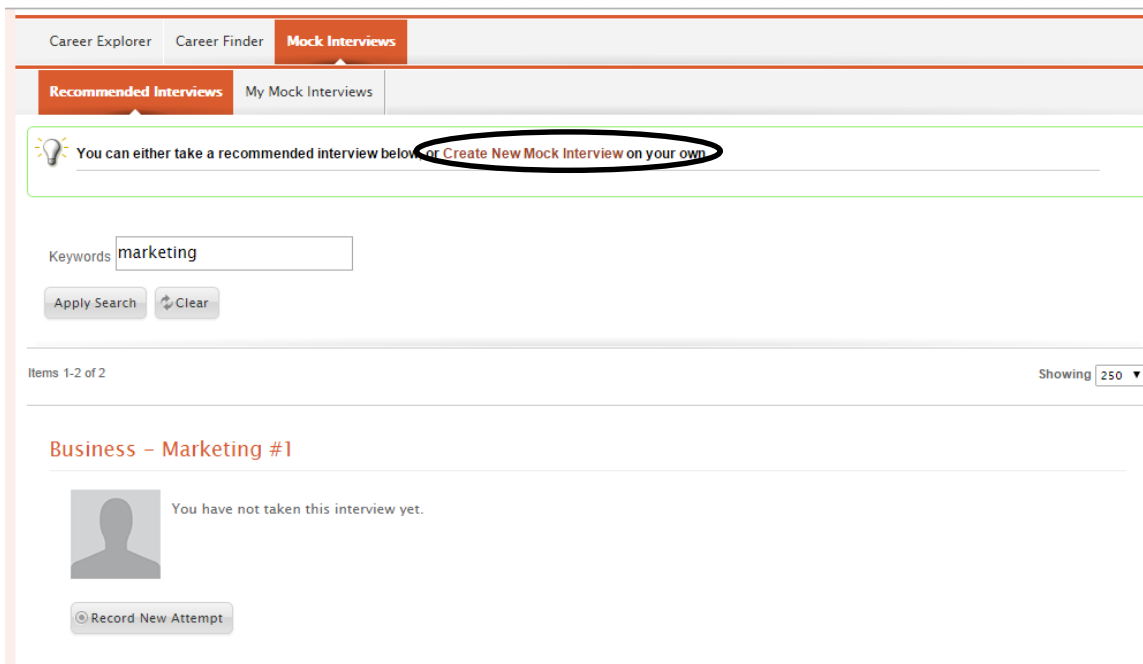
## ACCESSING CLEMSONJOBLINK MOCK INTERVIEW:

**Step 1:** Go to career.clemson.edu and login in to ClemsonJobLink – using your Clemson username and password

**Step 2:** Click “Mock Interviews” on the main page or under the “Resources” tab click “Mock Interviews”



**Step 3:** Locate a suitable pre-established mock interview, or design your own



**Step 4:** Record yourself answering the questions

## THE STAR METHOD:

The STAR Method is a systematic structure to follow when answering behavioral-based questions during an interview. For example, when an interviewer asks you to share a time when you set a goal and accomplished it, you can use the STAR Method as an outline for discussing this experience. It is important that you “tell the story” of your experience by including the situation, task, action and result.

<b>S</b>	<b>Situation</b>	Detail the background. Provide a context. Where? When?
<b>T</b>	<b>Task</b>	Describe the challenge and expectation. What needed to be done? Why?
<b>A</b>	<b>Action</b>	Elaborate your specific action. What did you do? How? What tools did you use?
<b>R</b>	<b>Results</b>	Explain the results: accomplishments, recognition, savings, etc. Quantify
‘STAR’ Technique to Answer Behavioral Interview Questions		

## Sample STAR Response:

Question: Tell me about a time that you had to prioritize tasks to ensure that work was completed in a timely manner.

- **Situation (S):** Advertising revenue was falling off for my college newspaper, *The Tiger*, and many of the long-term advertisers were not renewing contracts.
- **Task (T):** My goal was to assemble a marketing team to generate new ideas, create an action plan and discuss incentives that would result in at least a 15% increase in advertisers from the year before.
- **Action (A):** As a result of the marketing team’s suggestions, I designed a new promotional packet to go with the rate sheet and compared the benefits of *The Tiger* circulation with other ad media in the area. I also set-up a special training session for the account executives with a College of Business and Behavioral Sciences professor who discussed competitive selling strategies.
- **Result (R):** We signed contracts with 15 former advertisers for daily ads and five for special supplements. We increased our new advertisers by 20 percent over the same period last year.

Adapted from [www.depauw.edu/files/resources/star-method.com](http://www.depauw.edu/files/resources/star-method.com)

## GENERAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

### 1. “Tell me about yourself.”

**Employer Motivation:** To see how well you can communicate and structure your thoughts.

**Strategy:** Prepare for this question in advance. Pretend that the employer said “Tell me about yourself and why you are interested in this job?” You might answer this question by mentioning your relevant background, experience and skills and then explaining why you believe the job would be the next logical step for you.

### 2. “What are your greatest work and non-work accomplishments?”

**Employer Motivation:** To know what you care about and what motivates you.

**Strategy:** Choose something you are passionate about. Do not say “Getting into Clemson” as this is an accomplishment common to everyone attending this University, so you may want to think of other undertakings.

### 3. “Describe three things that have been most important to you in a job.”

**Employer Motivation:** To find out about your work-related values.

**Strategy:** Be truthful about what matters to you professionally rather than personally.

### 4. “How did you prepare for this interview?”

**Employer Motivation:** To see if you have made an effort to research the company, this shows your interest and initiative.

**Strategy:** Talk about any research you have done through the company website, news articles, employees of the company, students who have interned with them already.

I would like to work for your company because...” “I have been reading that your company is really growing fast, planning two new branches this year. I want to work for your company to assist in your continued growth and to utilize my education and/or experiences to positively impact your company.”

### 5. “What is your biggest strength and your biggest weakness?”

**Employer Motivation:** To find out if your strengths would be used in the position and to find out if you are aware of the areas where you need improvement.

**Strategy:** You can give examples of your strengths if you wish (e.g. “I’m an excellent writer.

Most of my teachers have commented on my ability to organize my thoughts and communicate. If an employer is asking about your weakness(es), focus on how you are improving that weakness. Essentially the outcome will be positive, not negative.

### 6. “Tell me about a time when you worked as part of a team.”

**Employer Motivation:** To assess your teamwork, interpersonal and leadership skills.

**Strategy:** Pick a specific example that has a “happy ending” and about which you are proud.

## COMMON INTERVIEW MISTAKES:

- Lack of interest/enthusiasm; passive/indifferent
- Failure to make eye contact
- Weak, limp handshake
- Failure to express appreciation for interviewer’s time
- Asks no questions about position or company/organization
- Poor or casual appearance
- Vague, indefinite response to questions
- Inability to express self clearly; poor voice diction and grammar

## **COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

1. What goals have you set for yourself? How are you planning to achieve them?
2. Who or what has had the greatest influence on the development of your career interests?
3. What factors did you consider in choosing your major?
4. Why are you interested in our organization?
5. Tell me about yourself.
6. What two or three things are most important to you in a position?
7. What kind of work do you do?
8. What are your expectations of your future employer?
9. What is your GPA? How do you feel about it? Does it reflect your ability?
10. How do you solve conflicts?
11. What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
12. What work experience has been the most valuable to you and why?
13. What was the most useful criticism you ever received, and who was it from?
14. What has been your greatest challenge?
15. What are your team-player qualities? Give examples.
16. What leadership positions have you held? Describe your leadership style.
17. What interests or concerns you about the position or the company?
18. In a particular leadership role you had, what was the greatest challenge?
19. What idea have you developed and implemented that was particularly creative or innovative?
20. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
21. How have your educational and work experiences prepared you for this position?
22. How do you think you have changed personally since you started college?
23. Why did you choose the extracurricular activities you did? What did you gain? What did you contribute?
24. Knowing what you know now about your college experience, would you make the same decisions?
25. What can you contribute to this company/organization/agency?
26. What characteristics are most important in a good manager/supervisor? How have you shown one of these characteristics?
27. What challenges are you looking for in a position?
28. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction?
29. What is the most important lesson you have learned in or out of school?

## **Behavioral-Based Interview Questions:**

1. Tell me about a situation when you had to persuade another person to your point of view.
2. How important is it to you to be perceived as a team member and why?
3. Describe a situation where you had a conflict with another individual, and how you dealt with it.
4. Tell me about a project you initiated.
5. What types of situations put you under pressure, and how do you deal with the pressure?
6. Describe the project/situation that best demonstrated your analytical skills.
7. Tell me how you dealt with those who expressed the sentiment of, "Why change when we have always done it this way?"
8. Tell me about a team project of which you are particularly proud of and your contribution.
9. Describe a time when you worked as a team to complete a task/project.
10. How have you motivated yourself to complete an assignment or task that you did not want to do?
11. Tell me about the riskiest decision that you have made.
12. Describe a situation where class assignments, work or personal activities conflicted. How did you prioritize? How did you manage your time? What was the outcome?
13. Can you tell me about a complex problem that you solved? Describe the process you utilized.
14. Tell me about a situation when you had to learn something new in a short time. How did you proceed?
15. How have you most constructively dealt with a disappointment and turned it into a learning experience?
16. Have you generated any new ideas or suggestions while at school or at work?
17. Tell me about a time when you worked with a person who did things very differently from you. How did you get the job done?
18. Give an example of when your persistence had the biggest payoff.

19. Describe a situation in which you effectively developed a solution to a problem by combining different perspectives or approaches.
20. Think about a difficult boss, professor, or other person. What made him or her difficult? How did you successfully interact with this person?
21. Tell me about a challenge that you successfully met.
22. Describe your three greatest accomplishments to date.
23. Describe when you or a group that you were part of was in danger of missing a deadline. What did you do?
24. Take me through a project where you demonstrated leadership skills.
25. Tell me about a difficult decision you have made.
26. Can you tell me about an occasion where you needed to work with a group to get a job done?
27. Tell me about a complex project or assignment that you have been assigned. What approach did you take to complete it?
28. What were the biggest problems you have encountered in college? How have you handled them? What did you learn from them?

#### **QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES/STUDENTS TO ASK:**

1. What is your method of training new employees?
2. What type of orientation would I receive?
3. How closely will I be supervised?
4. What is a typical day like for this position?
5. What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
6. How often are performance reviews done?
7. How soon will I be given responsibility?
8. How much travel is normally expected?
9. What are some of the major short and long-range goals that the company/organization has?
10. What outside influences affect the company's/organization's growth?
11. In what areas does the company/organization excel, or in what area does it have limitations?
12. What are some of the common denominators among the organization's successes?
13. Based on what you have seen of me so far, where do you think I could contribute most? Effectively?
14. Is there anything you perceive as a weakness in my background?
15. What are some of the characteristics that the company/organization considers to be unique?
16. What would add or subtract from the incumbent's performance to increase their effectiveness?
17. Can you give me some idea of the projects that I may be working on?
18. Could you describe any opportunities for advancement within the organization/company?
19. What is the typical time frame for these advancements?
20. Has the company had to lay off employees in the past couple of years?
21. How would you describe the company culture?
22. How has the company/organization changed over the past 5 or 10 years?



# COMPETENCIES & INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Example behavioral interview questions to practicing using the STAR method

	Competency	Definition	Examples of Behavioral Interview Questions
<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Communication</b>	Engaging in dialogue that leads to productive outcomes and points of connection by effectively articulating one's self to individuals within and outside of one's industry or area of expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you did not communicate well. How did you correct the situation?</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you effectively communicated something difficult to a supervisor.</li> <li>___ - Describe the most effective written document, report, or presentation you completed. What made it effective and why are you particularly proud of it?</li> <li>___ - Describe a situation when you were able to guide your interactions with a person or group by effectively "reading" the situation.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you had to "sell" an idea to your peers or co-workers. How did you do it, and did they "buy" it?</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you kept other individuals informed about projects or things that impacted their job or role.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you communicated technical or field-related information to individuals outside of your area of expertise.</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you disagreed with your supervisor.</li> </ul>
	<b>Collaboration</b>	Developing authentic and mutually beneficial relationships by valuing everyone and taking responsibility for one's role within a team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when building a successful relationship was difficult. What strategies did you employ and what was the result?</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you demonstrated valuing someone who had a different opinion than you.</li> <li>___ - Give an example of how you built and maintained a professional relationship.</li> <li>___ - Describe how you have contributed to your organization's, department's, or employer's goals.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you worked on a team. What was your role and how did you ensure you met your commitments to the team?</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you took personal accountability for a conflict and initiated contact with the individual(s) involved to explain your actions.</li> </ul>
	<b>Leadership</b>	Being able to recognize, respect, develop, and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds and being an active member in a group that achieves a shared vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - Describe a time when you helped a group capitalize on everyone's strengths.</li> <li>___ - Give a specific example of how you helped create an environment where differences are valued, encouraged, and supported.</li> <li>___ - Describe when you initiated a connection with someone from another culture.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you delegated work to others. How did you decide what to delegate to different individuals?</li> <li>___ - Tell me about the most successful group or team experience. What made it successful, and how have you worked to replicate that experience?</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you built or helped build motivation or enthusiasm around a goal.</li> <li>___ - Give an example of a time when the result of listening to a team member resulted in solving a problem or achieving a goal.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you worked with a group on establishing a plan to reach a goal.</li> </ul>

<b>Innovation</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>	Taking the initiative to further enhance one's skill set and being creative with ways of thinking or approaches that allow for action, reflection, failure, and resilience in an ever-changing world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - What things have you done to become better qualified for your career?</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you needed to learn a new skill. How did you go about developing this skill?</li> <li>___ - Describe a major change that occurred in a role you held. How did you adapt to this change?</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a situation in which you had to adjust to changes over which you had no control. How did you handle it, and in looking back, would you do anything differently?</li> <li>___ - What do you do when priorities change quickly? Give an example of when this happened.</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you failed and had to demonstrate resilience.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you adjusted your style or approach when it was not meeting the objectives.</li> <li>___ - Give an example when you took initiative or went above and beyond. What was the outcome?</li> </ul>
	<b>Analytical Skills</b>	Seizing the opportunity for organizational improvement that prompts critical thinking and problem solving by obtaining, processing, and synthesizing information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - Describe a time when you made a suggestion to improve the work in an organization/company/etc...</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you were particularly effective at prioritizing tasks and completing a project on schedule.</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you had to analyze information and make a recommendation. What kind of thought process did you go through and what was your reasoning behind your recommendation?</li> <li>___ - Describe a situation where you had a number of alternatives to consider. How did you go about choosing one?</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you came up with a creative or innovative solution/idea/project/report to a problem.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you or a team you were on was caught off guard by an unforeseen problem or obstacle.</li> </ul>
	<b>Technology</b>	Employing current and emerging software and tools to solve general and industry-specific challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - Describe a challenge you had in solving a technical problem. How did you solve it, and how did you know what software or tools you needed?</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you sought out the opportunity to learn a new piece of software or tool. How did you become proficient using it?</li> <li>___ - Give an example of a time where you introduced someone else to a new technological approach to solving a problem.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about how technology played a role in a previous experience. How did you feel about using the technology? What other technologies would have been helpful?</li> <li>___ - Provide an example of when you had to change how you approached your work to adapt to using new technology. What were the challenges and opportunities the new technology brought to your work?</li> <li>___ - Describe a situation where you had to troubleshoot a technology problem.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you approached your supervisor to recommend implementing new software or tools. What did you see as the pro's and con's?</li> </ul>



<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>Self-Awareness</b>	<p>Understanding one's strengths, limitations, emotions, and biases in a variety of situations and articulating how one's interests, skills, and values align with educational and professional goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - What challenges did you face in a previous job or leadership role and how did you handle them?</li> <li>___ - What was the most competitive work situation you have experienced? How did you handle it? What was the result?</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a manager or boss. How did you handle the situation, and in looking back, would you do anything differently?</li> <li>___ - What kinds of decisions are the most difficult for you? Describe one.</li> <li>___ - What is something you have done in the past to contribute towards a positive work environment and how did you know it would be considered as positive?</li> <li>___ - Describe a time when you recognized and overcame your biases.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you were under extreme pressure. How did you handle the situation?</li> <li>___ - Recall a time when you were less than pleased with your performance.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about the most useful criticism you ever received.</li> <li>___ - Do you prefer to work with the "big picture" or the "details" in a situation and why? Give an example of an experience that illustrates your preference.</li> </ul>
	<b>Integrity &amp; Ethics</b>	<p>Making choices and consistently acting in a manner that displays integrity (following internal principles, morals, and values) and ethics (following external laws, rules, and norms) in personal and professional settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - Give a specific example of a time when there was no rule or precedent to help you attack a problem.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you worked in a situation where the rules and guidelines were not explicit. How did you accomplish the task and what things did you take into consideration that helped guide your decision making process?</li> <li>___ - Describe a situation when you were in a moral or ethical dilemma.</li> <li>___ - Give an example of how you have acted with integrity in a work environment.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you had to handle a tough problem which challenged fairness or ethical issues.</li> <li>___ - On occasion we are confronted with peers being dishonest. Tell about such an occurrence and how you handled it.</li> </ul>
	<b>Brand</b>	<p>Demonstrating the continual development of a positive impression or image in every facet of life while seeking feedback from others to ensure congruence between one's intended and perceived reputation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you sought out feedback from others. What did you learn about yourself?</li> <li>___ - Describe a situation where you worked with the same group of people for an extended period of time. How would they describe your strengths and areas for improvement?</li> <li>___ - Give an example where you adjusted your approach to working with a team after receiving feedback from a peer or co-worker.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about how you decided who to ask to serve as your references for this position.</li> <li>___ - Describe what has impressed you about a previous supervisor or colleague and how you have tried to emulate that quality in your work.</li> <li>___ - Tell me about a time when you put specific things in place to ensure your words met your actions.</li> </ul>

Competency & Definition		Brainstorm Additional Interview Questions
<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Communication</b>	Engaging in dialogue that leads to productive outcomes and points of connection by effectively articulating one's self to individuals within and outside of one's industry or area of expertise.
	<b>Collaboration</b>	Developing authentic and mutually beneficial relationships by valuing everyone and taking responsibility for one's role within a team.
	<b>Leadership</b>	Being able to recognize, respect, develop, and capitalize on the unique strengths of individuals from all backgrounds and being an active member in a group that achieves a shared vision.
<b>Innovation</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>	Taking the initiative to further enhance one's skill set and being creative with ways of thinking or approaches that allow for action, reflection, failure, and resilience in an ever-changing world.
	<b>Analytical Skills</b>	Seizing the opportunity for organizational improvement that prompts critical thinking and problem solving by obtaining, processing, and synthesizing information.
	<b>Technology</b>	Employing current and emerging software and tools to solve general and industry-specific challenges.
<b>Professionalism</b>	<b>Self-Awareness</b>	Understanding one's strengths, limitations, emotions, and biases in a variety of situations and articulating how one's interests, skills, and values align with educational and professional goals.
	<b>Integrity &amp; Ethics</b>	Making choices and consistently acting in a manner that displays integrity (following internal principles, morals, and values) and ethics (following external laws, rules, and norms) in personal and professional settings.
	<b>Brand</b>	Demonstrating the continual development of a positive impression or image in every facet of life while seeking feedback from others to ensure congruence between one's intended and perceived reputation.