



Davis Research Project

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A Message From Su Yeong Kim, Chief Researcher

We are very pleased to have you continue with the Davis Research Project. In this issue, we highlight information on preparing for a job interview and understanding the use of credit cards.

Please note that the project is now housed at The University of Texas at Austin. We look forward to your continued support and participation in the project. We can be reached by e-mail at projectfamily@gmail.com, by phone at (415) 271-0390, 1-(866) 7-FAMILY (toll-free), and on the internet at <http://webspace.utexas.edu/syk343/>. When you move or when your contact information changes, please update your contact information.

Preparing for a Job Interview

An interview is a chance for you to convince prospective employers that you are the best candidate for the job. In order to make the best first impression, it is important to be prepared and to know what to expect. Taking a few easy steps to prepare will help reduce your stress and increase your confidence during the interview.

Before your job interview

Research the company and the interviewer. While conducting your research, it is critical that you take notes and memorize important facts about the company. Your interviewer will expect you to know background information about the organization during the job interview. Furthermore, the information you gather will allow you to formulate well informed and appropriate questions to ask during

your interview, and will help you make a decision if you receive a job offer. The following are a few suggestions on how you can find this information:

- The company's website
- Online articles, forums, and etc.
- If applicable, talk to friends or relatives who work at the company

Practice answering interview questions. If you are in college, you can set up a mock interview with a representative from the career services center on campus. Otherwise, you can set up a mock interview with a friend or conduct the interview with yourself with a list of frequently-asked interview questions and a mirror. It is also important to prepare a list of questions to ask during the interview. These questions

should reflect your knowledge of the company and interest in the job and your research of the organization. The following is a website that has lists of sample interview questions organized by job type.

- www.job-interview.net/Bank/JobInterviewQuestions.htm

Prepare your clothes for the interview. Find out the standard attire for the organization and choose your interview clothes accordingly. If in doubt, always dress more professionally rather than more casually. It is important to be sure that your interview clothes are clean and pressed a few days before the interview. Also, prepare an umbrella in case of rain.

Prepare papers for your interview. Make high-quality copies of your resume on a nice grade of paper



Maintaining a professional image means dressing for success.

Ask questions that convey your interest to the employer, such as asking what a typical day would entail, or what specific projects you would be working on.



Do not take any chances that you might be even one minute late to the interview.

and store them in a folder where they will stay clean and unwrinkled. You may be interviewed by someone who has not yet seen your resume, or who does not have your resume on hand. Also, organize your portfolio, professional reference lists, and any other papers you think your prospective employer would like to see during the interview.

During your job interview

Arrive 10-15 minutes early. Do not take any chances. If necessary, arrive 30 minutes early and wait in your car.

Maintain a professional image. Once you arrive, introduce yourself to the receptionist and turn off your cell phone. After your interviewer has introduced himself or herself to you, greet him or her with a firm handshake. It is also important that you remember:

- Do not address the interviewer by his or her first name unless you are invited to do so.
- Do not make negative comments about previous employers or professors (or other people in general).
- Treat all people you encounter with professionalism and kindness.
- Be aware of your non-verbal behaviors. Maintain eye contact with your interviewer, but be sure it looks natural. Sit up straight with your hands resting casually on your lap, and smile as often as it is appropriate. A smiling face is very inviting and makes you appear relaxed.
- Listen very carefully to each question you are asked and give thoughtful and honest answers. Pause to gather your thoughts before answering and ask for clarification if you do not understand a

question. It is also important to make your answers concise.

- Ask questions that convey your interest to the employer, such as asking what a typical day would entail, or what specific projects you would be working on. By asking these questions, you are showing the employer how you will satisfy the company's needs. However, it is inappropriate to ask about salary or benefits until you have received a job offer.

After the interview

Prepare and send a thank-you letter to the interviewer immediately after the interview. If several people interviewed you, send each of them a thank-you letter. If you do not remember the name of each person, ask the receptionist for assistance. Make your letter brief and reiterate your interest in the position and confidence in your qualifications. If you have previously established e-mail contact with the interviewer, it is appropriate to send the thank-you letter through email. Either way, it is important that the interviewer receives the letter promptly, so that the employer thinks of you positively when they choose among different applicants for the job.

A job interview may seem like a stressful experience, but it is comforting to remember that the interviewers do not want you to fail; instead, they want you to show them why you will succeed with their company. Furthermore, jobs are not always filled by the person who can satisfy every requirement; many employees are chosen mainly because of their enthusiasm and confidence in learning new skills.

Credit Cards

Most people are drawn to the power of plastic, but few understand the power that credit cards hold. Although credit cards can be confusing and complex, they are essential to everyday life. For example, when you want to make a large purchase in the future, such as buying a house or a car, you will need to provide a credit report. Therefore, having a credit card to begin building up your credit history is essential. Although using a credit card is a great way to begin preparing for your financial future, you must first become knowledgeable about the different types of charges and how you can prevent financial problems when using your credit card.



Credit v. Debit

First of all, a credit card is different from a debit card. Using a debit card is similar to writing a check because money is deducted from your account immediately after a transaction is made. However, it is still possible to overdraw money from your account by spending more than the amount in your account balance. Credit cards, on the other hand, allow you to make purchases that you will pay for at a later date. For a credit card, the card issuer, which is usually a bank, lends money to the card user, who agrees to pay back the amount borrowed to the issuer. Each month a statement is sent to inform the card user of the total amount that is due. There are usually interest charges that can be waived if the total amount is paid in full. One disadvantage of a credit card is that you are able to spend more money than you actually have. You will want to be aware of this when using your credit card, so you can avoid additional charges and other financial issues.

Types of Credit Card Charges

There are many different types of credit card charges, so it is easy to get them confused. By learning more about these charges, you will gain a better understanding of your credit card usage. Here are a few of the charges that you will encounter most frequently when using a credit card.

- **Finance charge:** An interest charge, which can be as high as 20 percent, on the unpaid portion of your bill each month.
 - **Annual fee:** A yearly membership fee imposed by some credit card companies. They can be anywhere from \$20 to \$100. Some companies do not charge any annual fees.
- **Cash advance fee:** A fee imposed when you withdraw money from your credit card.
- **Late payment fee:** Additional charges that occur as a result of paying your monthly bill past the due date.

Preventing Problems

If you want to learn how to successfully use your credit card, be aware of the following situations and consider following the following advice.

- **Limit yourself to one card.** Having multiple cards makes it more difficult to keep track of spending and payments, which may cause you to overspend.
- **Pay your bills on time.** Know when your bills are due so that you can avoid late fees, a penalty rate annual percentage rate

(APR) and a poor credit rating.

- **Pay your credit card balance in full each month.** In doing so, you will be able to avoid paying interest. If you cannot pay your credit card bill in full each month, you should still pay more than the minimum monthly payment.
- **Never use one credit card to pay for another.** You will owe interest on both cards, so try to find another option to pay for your credit card. You can use savings, borrow from family or friends, or talk to your credit card issuer and ask for help.
- **Differentiate between wants and needs.** Purchasing everything you see will quickly lead to overspending.
- **Do not exceed your credit card limit.** You risk accruing over-the-limit fees or having your low APR replaced by a higher rate.
- **Avoid cash advances.** They are usually very expensive. Do not request them unless it is an emergency. One option is to use your debit card instead.
- **Use student loans, not a credit card, for tuition.** Student loans are far more cost effective to pay for tuition, since the interest payment is often paid by the government until after graduation.
- **Do not skip payments, even if your credit card issuer says you can.** You will be charged full interest during this period and will end up owing more money the following month.

Tips for Using Your Card

The Federal Trade Commission offers these tips to keep in mind when using a credit or debit card:

- **Shop around for the plan that best fits your needs.**
- **Make sure you understand a plan's terms before you accept the card.**

Are you Moving?



Please update your address and phone number with us!

We would like to keep in touch with you for a follow-up project in the future.

Updating your information is easy:

By Phone: (415) 271-0390

By Phone: (866) 7-FAMILY (This is a toll-free number.)

By E-mail:
projectfamily@gmail.com

By Web:
<http://webspaces.utexas.edu/syk343/>

- Hold on to receipts to reconcile charges when your bill arrives.
- Protect your cards and account numbers to prevent unauthorized use.
- On charge or debit slips, draw a line through blank spaces so the amount can't be changed.
- Keep your receipts to check against your monthly statements.
- In a safe place, keep a record of your account numbers, expiration dates, and the phone numbers of each issuer. If you lose your credit cards, you will be able to report the loss quickly.
- Cut up old cards before disposing them. Carry only the cards that you think you will use.
- You can also use a software program, like Microsoft Money, to help you manage bills, account balances, and to create a spending budget.

As you continue learning how to prepare for your future, you will discover that it is easier than you thought to successfully manage your finances. By becoming informed, spending wisely, and paying your bills on time, you are now one step closer to being financially prepared for your future.

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