

RECRUITING GUIDE

BIG FOUR ACCOUNTING

TG Interview Consultants
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General Recruiting Strategy:

Where to start: there is usually a separate recruiter for audit, tax, and advisory. This could be different depending on the region's size, but generally this is the set up. One of the first things you need to do is figure out who this person is.

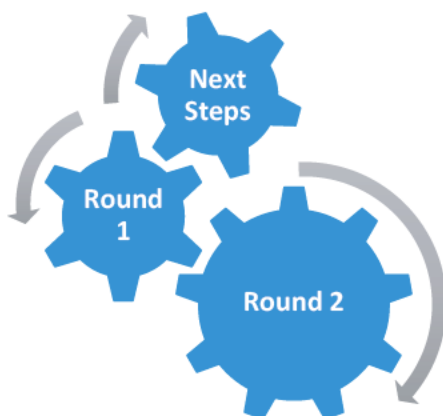


- **Audit vs. Tax vs. Advisory vs. Whatever:** If you aren't sure what service line you want (audit, tax, or advisory) that's ok, but do NOT tell the recruiter this. They HATE this. This indecisiveness is a sure way to get a few points knocked off of you. This is because they are looking to hire passionate people who will stay with the firm for a long time. If you aren't even sure you want to do audit, then there is a higher chance you will want to leave audit later.
 - In reality if you aren't sure right now, that's ok, but once you start applying for a leadership conference or internship, you need to make a decision
 - A recruiter would rather give a spot to someone who is 100% confident in their choice than someone who is wavering
- **Where you go to school:** each recruiter has a list of target schools that they focus on recruiting from and all other schools are a lesser priority.
 - Target Schools:
 - Pros: A firm spends more resources here - you will meet more professionals and have more opportunities to make an impact
 - Cons: More competition and harder to stand out among your peers
 - Non-Target Schools:
 - Pros: Firms like school diversity, they don't want to hire 15 people from one local school, so if you're a strong candidate then you definitely have a shot

- Cons: You will have to work harder to get face time with the firm. If there is no office close to you, then likely the firm is not trekking out to your school, so you need to be creative and find events they are putting on.
- A recruiter is going to focus there
- **When to apply:**
 - In a recruiter's ideal world, each leadership conference attendee would be amazing and go on to get an internship and then full-time offer. This makes their life easier and the firm has more thoroughly vetted a person if they've been through all these steps.
 - Due to numerous reasons (candidate changes their mind about service line, candidate decides they want to work in a different city, candidate is not a good fit, etc..) this does not line up perfectly. It does mean that getting into the "pipeline" sooner is better
 - Apply for a leadership program two summers before you expect to graduate (between sophomore and junior year if no masters, and between junior and senior if masters)
 - Apply for an internship the following summer (the summer before your last year of school)
 - Recruiting seasons are generally the fall and spring - do not miss these dates. This is the only time to apply, no exceptions

The Interview

Where to Start: As someone who has interviewed many big four candidates from leadership conferences to experienced hires, I can assure you that your interviewer will take into account that this is likely one of your first interviews. 99% of the time they will be nice and just want to get you know you.



- There are a lot of general interview tips out there and if you're reading this guide, you have probably also already read those ones too
- The goal of this guide is to point out specific things that apply to big four accounting and give you an inside look into how things work
- We will go through what to expect in each round and ways you can prepare

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What Happens During the Interview

First Round

- 20 - 30 min interview probably on campus, usually with a manager level employee
- They will ask you mostly all behavioral questions
- Obvious things for you to do: “be confident”, “smile”, and “ask questions”

Second Round

- Dinner the night before the interview (sometimes) - this will be with all the candidates interviewing and firm employees at all levels. Do not skip this, stay the whole time, be friendly and engaged, ask questions
- Two 30 min interviews at the office - be prepared for normal interview questions. Generally, the interview will be with partners or senior managers. There are usually interview “rotations” where some of the people are interviewing and others are doing a time killing activity. The activity is not critical, but stay engaged and polite
- Office Tour - stay alert and use this time to see if you can picture yourself working in this office
- Post Interview Lunch (sometimes) - do not skip this, you are likely tired at this point but keep going strong

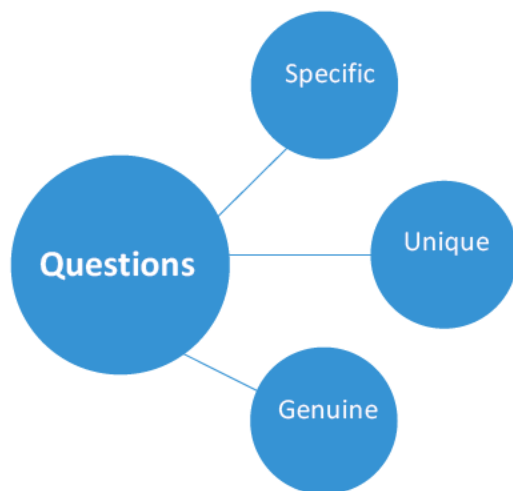
Next Steps

- Send a thank you note: Seriously, it still shocks me how many people do not. SO easy to do and automatically makes me think you are interested and a responsible person. An email is fine, don't worry about trying to send a handwritten one.
 - Expect to hear back within about a week depending on how soon/late you were in the rounds
 - Whether you get the position or not, still keep in touch the recruiter/employees. You never know what will happen in the future
- There's a new trend where if you go to school far from where the office is they will do a skype interview instead of in person. If at all possible, we recommend going in person. If you can't then it's not a big deal, but going in person will help give you more insight about the firm and make a stronger impression.

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Key Tips

Speaking with Specifics: Have specific reasons why you are interested in the firm. Each firm has hundreds of articles online about all the stuff they are doing. Read a few of these articles. Be able to talk about why they are different from the other firms and why that makes you want to work there. Do your research and show it off. “I really like your program called ‘ABC’ that is focused on ‘DEF’, because I have an interest in ‘GHI’” is SO much better than “I really like that you have innovative programs because I want to be at a fast paced company”.



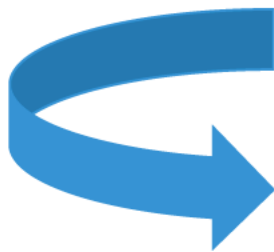
- Ask questions - another place to show you did your research.
- Make your questions specific. I have been asked “what is your favorite/least favorite part about your job” and “why did you choose this firm” a million times. It bores me. This time is very valuable, do not waste your time asking questions you can find the answer to on google or from a recruiter.
- Remember, you are interviewing the firms as well to see if you are interested in the job! Here are some questions I wish I was asked

Sample Questions

- “I recently read an article in WSJ that BIG FOUR FIRM launched a new initiative to do INSERT INITIATIVE HERE. Can you tell me more about how that has affected your experience and how you see this evolving?”
- “In my Audit 101 class we learned that companies are starting to adopt ABC new regulation. Are any of your clients going through this adoption and what is it like working with clients when they implement new accounting regulations?”.

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- “How is BIG FOUR FIRM approaching the uncertainty regarding tax reform implementation? What types of resources are available to help both employees and clients stay up to date with the changes?”
- “There is so much change and technological innovation happening right now from CURRENT EVENT 1 to CURRENT EVENT 2. What related potential problems in the industry keep you up at night?”
- “How has auditing methodology changed over the course of your career and where do you see it going? With the push towards automation, where do you see auditors being able to provide the most value?”
- “I have always found that TRAIT 1 and TRAIT 2 are extremely important in a team environment. What qualities are the most beneficial for team members to bring to a team at BIG FOUR FIRM?”
- “How did you develop your expertise in INDUSTRY? Did you seek out this industry or did you become interested in it after being placed on certain clients?”
- “What has been the most difficult time of your career so far? What type of things do you wish you would have known prior to this time and how did it make you a better employee?”
- “While I’ve heard that busy seasons can be grueling, I’ve also heard that they are the time when you learn the most. Do you agree with this and what have been some of your most important busy season takeaways?”



The above questions show the interviewer that you:

- Pay attention to the news and in class
- Are already envisioning what it will be like to have clients and work at the firm.

Both of which are importing things that your interviewers are looking for

Summary



Want personal feedback and help or more details about what happens during the leadership conferences and internships?

See below for a list of topics we provide consulting on:

- **One on One Interview Prep:** Mock interview and debriefing session for position of choice
- **Leadership Conferences:** What these are and what you need to know about them. Differences between local and national conferences and what that means for you
- **Internship:** How to succeed, what to expect and key mistakes to avoid
- **Mistakes:** Mistakes happen, learn how to fix them

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*All consultations are one on one. Available via phone, skype, and facetime

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