UC San Diego
CAREER CONNECTION

Job Interviewing Skills
Workshop Handouts

Sponsored By:

Equal Opportunity/Staff Affirmative Action & Employment and Community Outreach Services
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PREPARING FOR THE JOB INTERVIEW:

RESEARCH! RESEARCH! RESEARCH!

(But… what do you research?)

☐ The Organization – Structure and Purpose

Structure
- What does the department do?
- What are the divisions in the department?
- How many employees?
- Are there any locations/satellites?
- Seek an Organizational Chart.

Purpose
- What is the mission/vision of the organization?
- Who is the customer?
- Who is the competition?
- What are the priorities?
- New products? New projects?

☐ The Position

The Position
- Major Responsibilities?
- Other duties “as assigned?”
- Technical skills required?
- Who are you expected to serve?
- How will performance be measured?
- Who is on the team?
- Who would you collaborate, report to, or interact with?

☐ The Organization’s Culture and Reputation

Culture and Reputation
- What is the reputation of the organization?
- What types of employees does the organization hire?
- How does the organization treat its employees?
- What are the communication channels?
PREPARING FOR THE JOB INTERVIEW: PRESENTATION IS EVERYTHING!

Dress, Body Language, Attitude, and the Materials You Should Have Ready

☐ **Dress: Keep it Classic and Simple**

Here are some tips…

**Men**

- Conservative suit – dark blue, black, or gray.
- White collared shirt.
- Conservative tie – plain or subtle stripes.
- Dress socks that match the suit.
- Shined business shoes.
- No accessories except a watch.
- No facial hair… if you must, be sure it’s trimmed.

**Women**

- Conservative color skirt with a blazer or suit.
- White or light color blouse.
- DON’T wear a lot of make-up.
- DON’T wear a lot of accessories.
- Shoes should be conservative.

☐ **Body Language**

Good handshake, eye contact, smile, “open” body language.

☐ **Attitude: Keep that Positive Attitude!**

Attitude is first of all a matter of how you come across to people, in your personality. It is the first thing that every employer notices about you. Employers will notice, immediately whether you would be a pleasant person to be around or not. Employers tend to hire someone with lesser skills who has the right attitude, rather than a more-skilled person with a bad attitude. They have had experience with bad attitudes in the past, to know that if they were foolish enough to hire you, and you turn out to have a bad attitude, they will soon ache to get rid of you. That is why employers are sensitive to your attitude, from the first moment they lay eyes on you. (Bolles, What Color is Your Parachute?)

☐ **Materials You Should Have Ready**

Be sure to bring…

- Extra resumes
- List of references
- Work samples
THE JOB INTERVIEW: ADDITIONAL TIPS

Dos and Don’ts

Do…

- Show up 15 minutes early
- Be dressed appropriately
- Be prepared to use skills based techniques
- Know the interviewers’ full name and title
- Know what you are interviewing for
- Have extra copies of your resume
- Ask two or three pertinent questions about the job and/or company
- Thank the interviewer for their time and the opportunity to discuss the position

Do NOT…

- Show up unprepared
- Show up with the wrong attire
- Ask questions about compensation or benefits in any interview until the offer has been extended to you
- Wear too much jewelry or accessories
- Wear too much cologne or perfume
- Bad mouth your current employer
QUESTIONS TO ASK A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER

☐ What would you say are the main priorities in this position?
☐ How will my job performance be evaluated?
☐ Who would I report to?
☐ Who would be my key associates?
☐ In what main areas do you see an opportunity for improvement?
☐ What would be the extent of my authority in carrying out responsibilities?
☐ What objectives would I be expected to meet in the next ________?
☐ What would you consider to be the career path for someone in this position?
☐ What capabilities do you feel are most important in the person you will hire?
☐ How did the position come to open?
☐ How many people will be interviewing for this position?
☐ When do you anticipate a hiring decision to be made?

QUESTIONS TO AVOID ASKING A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER

☐ What will my salary be?
☐ How much vacation do I get? When am I eligible for vacation?
☐ Can you tell me about your company’s/organization’s benefits?
☐ How long before I get promoted?
☐ Did the last person in this position quit or were they fired?
### “PROJECT THAT POSITIVE ATTITUDE”

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<tr>
<th>Did You…</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate a positive attitude?</td>
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<td>Display high energy and flexibility?</td>
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<td>Display an interest in learning new things?</td>
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<td>Show enthusiasm and motivation to indicate that you’re willing to do the job?</td>
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### “SHOW OFF YOUR SKILLS”

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<th>Did You…</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use examples to support your answers? (SSR Formula: Set-up, Solution, Results)</td>
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<td>Use storytelling and measurements of achievements to back up your claims and convince the interviewer(s) that you have the skills to do the job?</td>
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<td>Make a strong connection between the job’s requirement and your skills?</td>
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<td>Show clear your understanding of the work involved in the job?</td>
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<td>Demonstrate knowledge of the organization?</td>
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<td>Use non-verbal language to support verbal answers?</td>
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<td>Get additional information you needed through asking questions?</td>
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<td>Ask appropriate and relevant questions?</td>
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<td>Answer their question, “Why should I hire you”?</td>
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MOST COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

☐ Describe a situation or time where you had to communicate unpleasant news or feelings to a supervisor. What happened?

☐ What has been your experience with dealing with poor performance of subordinates? Give an example.

☐ In your current position, what types of decisions do you make without consulting your supervisor? With consulting your supervisor?

☐ Review what your interviewing experience was like in your first job. What type of interviewing techniques did you use?

☐ Describe a time where you made a mistake that illustrates your need for improvement…maybe something you aren’t necessarily proud of. How did you learn or grow from this situation?

☐ Give me an example of when you came up with a clever or innovative way of motivating someone.

☐ What part of your job responsibilities do you enjoy most? What do you enjoy least?

☐ What have been the major obstacles you’ve had to overcome in your job? How did you deal with them?

☐ What types of things make you angry? How did you react to those situations?

☐ How would you describe an effective manager? How similar or different to this description are you?

☐ Tell me about a specific goal you set in the past and how you accomplished it.

☐ Have you ever had to make a sticky decision when no policy existed to cover it? Tell me what you did.

☐ When you had to do a job or task that was particularly uninteresting, how did you deal with it?

☐ Tell me about a time when an upper-level decision or policy change held up your work. How did you deal with it?
☐ Describe a situation in your last job where you could structure your own work schedule. What did you do?

☐ How do you generally plan and organize your work?

☐ Describe how you had to “roll with the punches” in the past and when dealing with a difficult person, either subordinate or boss.

**SUPERVISION**

☐ What do you look for in a prospective employee?

☐ Tell me about training programs you provided your employees.

☐ What is your attitude about carrying out management policy that you or your people don’t believe in?

☐ How have you solved employee conflicts within your organization?

☐ What are your most important attributes as a supervisor?

☐ How did you approach discipline and morale in your organization?

**BOOKKEEPING**

☐ Please list the types of records for which you have been responsible

☐ What is your experience with making journal entries and posting to the General Ledger?

☐ Please describe the books you have kept, such as ledgers and journals.

☐ Describe your experience with computerized accounting systems.

☐ What experience have you had with audits?

☐ What specific responsibilities have you had with bookkeeping for contacts and grants?
SECRETARIAL

☐ Please describe your idea of the perfect boss.

☐ Do you compose your own letters for your supervisor’s signature?

☐ Would you briefly describe your idea of a balanced workday?

☐ What is your experience in arranging your boss’s calendar and setting up appointments?

☐ What has been your responsibility for screening calls?

☐ What types of automated filing systems have you used?

☐ Describe your experience in preparing reports for your supervisor.

☐ How do you feel about working for more than one individual?

☐ What is your experience with placing conference calls, long distance, or overseas calls?

☐ What experience do you have with electronic mail?

WORD PROCESSING

☐ Which word processing applications are you most familiar with using?

☐ Tell me about your work with large volume text production.

☐ How would you grade your own proficiency in English grammar and punctuation?

☐ How would you have established priorities for processing work?

☐ What is your experience with electronic filing?

☐ Tell me about some mass mailings that you were responsible for.
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES, WORK HABITS, ATTITUDES

☐ How do you feel about forgetting your experience and learning a new method from scratch?

☐ In which areas of your work are you generally complimented?

☐ In which areas of your work are you generally criticized?

☐ When you work under close supervision, how do you react?

☐ What did you enjoy most about your most recent job? What did you enjoy the least?

☐ What are some things you wish to avoid in your next job?

☐ What relationship should exist between a supervisor and subordinate?

☐ What would your supervisor say is your weakest area?

☐ What prompted your decision to apply for this position?

☐ In your most recent job, what did you spend most of your time doing?

☐ Do you work best from a plan or in response to deadlines? Why?

☐ How organized are you about your work?

☐ How do you determine priorities for your day?

☐ How do you stay current in your field?

☐ Tell me how you have worked out some of the problems you have faced in dealing with coworkers.

☐ When given an unfamiliar job responsibility, what do you do?

☐ Please describe your record for punctuality and dependability.

☐ What accomplishments from your background prepare you for this position?

☐ What have you learned from some of the jobs you have held?

☐ What did you learn from your most recent employer that was valuable?

☐ In your most recent job, were there obstacles you had to overcome to get results?