



LAS POSITAS COLLEGE

CAREER/TRANSFER/EMPLOYMENT CENTER

INTERVIEWING TIPS

Want to stand out?

- Be prepared
- Be prompt
- Be positive
- Be professional
- Be purposeful

Non-verbal characteristics:

- Firm handshake
- Eye contact
- Positive facial expressions
- Good posture
- Sit attentively
- Show enthusiasm
- Positive attitude

Purpose of an interview

An interview is an exchange of information and an opportunity to assess if the position and the company are a good fit for you. It enables the employer to determine if you have the skills and abilities needed to be an effective member of the company. It is also where you make a first impression with your appearance, first words and answers to the employer's questions.

Types of interviews

A **Directed** interview is highly organized with a list of prepared questions used to screen employees. This interview can be one-on-one, a panel or by phone.

An **Unstructured** interview is open and relaxed. By asking broader questions, the interviewer encourages conversation to learn about your unique personality.

A **Behavioral** interview is based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to examine past behavior. Focus is placed on the applicant's actions and behaviors rather than subjective impressions. Be prepared with actions and outcomes involving coursework, work experience, leadership, and teamwork.



Researching a company

Check their web page to find out:

What they do

What is their mission

What is the size of the company

Who is the parent company

Who are their major clients

Who are their major competitors

Geographical locations

Stock market listings

Key people

Business casual

Over 70% of American firms allow some form of casual attire at least once a week. The term “casual dress” is subject to multiple interpretations depending on the environment.

Choose your casual attire carefully, and use common sense when dressing for work; looking neat should always be a priority.

Business casual is not appropriate for the interview!

Interview preparation

- Research the organization. This will help you understand the mission of the company and where you will fit in.
- Read the job description to match your skills. Review your resume.
- Think about questions the employer might ask, and write out and rehearse some responses.
- Dress professionally!
- Get directions and parking locations so you can arrive early with time to relax before the interview
- Go to the interview office alone, and remember to greet the receptionist in a professional way.
- Bring a copy of your resume, portfolio, references and any other supporting documents.

During the interview

You will need to demonstrate you can do the job, learn quickly, work with little supervision and work well with others.

- Sell yourself as a resource, a solution, and an answer!
- Emphasize how your skills, knowledge, and abilities will meet the employer’s needs.
- Give examples of personal experiences.
- Listen carefully to the interview questions. If necessary, ask that a question be repeated.
- Use a confident, professional speaking style. Show enthusiasm.
- Never talk negatively about a previous employer or colleague.
- Be prepared to ask questions.

Do not assume that the interviewer will make the connection between what you know and what you can do for them. During the interview, *make* the connection for the interviewer.

Ending the interview

Thank the interviewer.

Repeat your interest in the position.

After the Interview

Make notes to improve future interviews.

Send a thank you note to the interviewer.

Salary negotiations

Many entry-level positions have a set salary range and do not have room for negotiation. In a competitive job market, some job seekers are able to negotiate their salary and benefits package.

Always wait for the employer to bring up this subject. Don't negotiate salary until you have an offer of employment.

Know what you are worth! This is where research helps.

Keep an open dialog by using positive communication throughout the negotiation process.

Seek creative alternatives!

Typical interview questions and possible answers

1. *Tell me about yourself*

Don't go back too far in your life history! Focus on your academics and experiences. Ask yourself, what are the top five things I want this person to know about me?

2. *How do you make yourself indispensable to a company?*

Emphasize both technical and interpersonal competence.

3. *What do you consider one of your weaknesses?*

Give an example, but quickly give strategies of how you deal with it.

4. *Tell me about a time you had to accomplish a task with someone who was difficult to get along with.*

Discuss the ability to work as a team player because of your sensitivity to different work styles and strong communication skills.

Other possible questions

- Why do you want to work for this company?
- Why did you choose your major?
- Where do you see yourself in two years?
- What did you like most/least about your last job?
- Why should we hire you?
- Do you have any questions?

Behavioral interview questions

- Instead of asking how you would behave in a particular situation, the interviewer will ask you to describe how you did behave. So be prepared with examples of what you did, what you said, what your role was and the results. It will be important to listen closely to the question be asked.
- The interviewer will ask you to provide details, and will not allow you to generalize about special events.
- The interviewer is looking for behavior determined necessary for success on the job.

Websites:

Craigslist
www.craigslist.com

The Riley Guide
www.dbm.com/jobguide

Jobsmart
www.jobsmart.org

Tri-Valley Jobs
www.pleasantonjobs.com

Wetfeet
www.wetfeet.com

Careerbuilder
www.careerbuilder.com

Tri-Valley Businesses
www.680careers.com

America's Job Bank
www.ajb.dni.us/

Twenty years from now
you will be more
disappointed by the
things you didn't do
than the ones you did
do. So throw off the
bowlines. Sail away
from the safe harbor.
Catch the trade winds in
your sails. Explore.
Dream. Discover.

--Author Unknown



Illegal questions

Some employers have the authority to ask certain types of questions because the answers have direct applicability to the candidate's ability to do the job. Otherwise, if you are asked a question regarding ethnicity, religion, age, family status, or physical limitations find a tactful way to avoid answering it directly, and answer the underlying question instead.

Questions you can ask

1. Why is this position open?
2. How would you describe the responsibilities of this position?
3. How would you describe a typical day for the person in this position?
4. Who would I report to?
5. What are the opportunities for advancement beyond this level?
6. When can I expect to hear from you? How soon do you expect someone to begin?

What is an informational interview?

If you are exploring career options, one of the best ways to gather information is to talk with someone in your area of interest. This may seem scary at first. Begin by setting up an appointment with someone you know or were referred to. Sometimes writing a letter first and following up with a phone call works well. Make it clear that you are not asking for employment but an opportunity for a brief meeting (15-20 minutes) or phone interview at their convenience.

Prepare for the informational interview

Write down your questions
Dress professionally
Bring a copy of your resume or portfolio for their input
Arrive on time and stay on schedule
Ask for referrals to other departments or people
Send a thank you note

Informational interview sample questions

How did you get started in this field?

What has been your career path?

What are the entry-level positions in this field?

What skills and education are needed to enter this field?

What are your major responsibilities? How do you spend a typical day?

What could I do to prepare for this field?

Evaluating a job offer

How closely does the offer match your career goals?

Do you need additional information about the offer in order to make a decision?

Are there issues you may want to negotiate which would bring the offer closer to your goals?



Career/Employment Center
925-424-1423
Building 900

Disclosing your disability

If you answer “yes” to the following questions, then you are protected from discrimination in employment matters under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- Do you have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities (walking, seeing, breathing, hearing, etc.)?
- Do you have a history of such impairment?
- Are you perceived as having impairment?

Disclose or not to disclose?

There is no one right answer on whether to disclose. It will depend on the individual circumstance of each employment interview. The bottom line should be: Will disclosing this information at this time and in this way bring me closer to getting the job offer and getting the appropriate accommodations I need to perform the essential functions of the job?

Approach the interview with a sense of confidence and self-acceptance. Accentuate the positive! Focus on your skills, talents and strengths rather than your limitations.

Be prepared to present a concise summary of what is difficult for you and at least two options of how your needs can be accommodated.

The LPC Workability Specialist can be reached at 925-424-1539 to discuss “strategies” to help you on the job. Make an appointment with our Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPPS) Counselors by calling 925-424-1508.

For more information:

<http://caag.state.ca.us/consumers/general/disabled.htm>

Office of the Attorney General – Legal Rights of Persons with Disabilities

*Knowledge is power; but
enthusiasm pulls the switch.
Irvern Ball*