

DREAM BIG

AT COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO

INTERVIEW PREP



BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Congratulations! You made it through the application process and have been offered an interview. Now you need to prepare. But don't worry, this guide will help you prepare quickly. Here, you will have access to strategies on how to best respond to a variety of interview questions and what steps to take afterwards.

INTERVIEW STYLES

Author Alison Doyle points out that "the variety of job interviews often include behavioral interviews, case interviews, group interviews, phone and video interview, second interviews, and event interviews held during a meal." Below are examples of some interview types and what to expect with each.

BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEWS help employers determine how you approach or handle certain situations that may occur on the job, which may include conflict or situations pertaining to customers/clients.



Prepare for Behavioral Interviews by becoming familiar with different types of interview questions that are situational.

PHONE INTERVIEWS do not require face-to-face interactions. They serve as an added layer of the screening process and can range from 15-45 min depending on how in-depth the interviewer goes.



Have a pre-written response to potential interview questions in front of you and include questions that you have brainstormed.

GROUP INTERVIEWS allow employers to meet with larger pools of candidates. This approach shows employers how interviewees handle stressful situations and how they interact with others. These usually involve either one interviewer and several candidates, but can also be one candidate and several interviewers.



Again, mock interviews are an excellent tool. Conducting an informational interview with someone who has either participated or conducted a group interview is a great way to learn the "do's and don'ts".

PANEL INTERVIEWS usually consists of a several employees from a variety of departments and gives a more holistic look at your interview.



Practice, practice, practice! As with Group Interviews, Mock interviews are a great way to prepare.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Preparing for the job interview involves conducting research and exploring where your interview may take place.

HOW TO PREPARE

- Be sure to do your research, noting when and where the interview is taking place, what you should bring, and any questions you might have.
- Learn about your interviewer(s) or panelists. Sometimes the individuals who send you information pertaining to the interview are not the ones interviewing, so feel free to ask if you are able to know the names of your interviewers. Sometimes this information is not readily given out, but if you research the employer or company online, there is a good chance you can learn about who you might be meeting.
- Examine how your values and goals align with the employer or company. Spend time considering what personal traits and behaviors make you the right fit for the job.
- Practice using the STAR Response Method (discussed below). According to Alison Doyle, resident writer for The Balance Careers "using the STAR method of answering interview questions allows you to provide concrete examples or proof that you possess the experience and skills for the job..."

PRACTICE THE STAR SYSTEM

Make a list of past accomplishments in your work history. Describe accomplishments using the STAR System below. Make sure to include details!

Situation: a short description of a circumstance or event you can discuss to support your response.

Task: describing the task or a "To-Do-List" you developed to approach the situation.

Action: sharing the actions or steps you took to accomplish the task or "To-Do-List"

Result: explaining the outcome of your actions and how it might have presented a solution or brought closure to the situation you were faced with.

TOUGHEST INTERVIEW QUESTION

Use the following questions to help you think critically on how best to address the toughest interview question, "Tell us about yourself." The questions are designed to help you think critically about yourself, isolate your personal and professional experiences, and highlight your skills.

- Currently, what recent professional accomplishments or achievements are you most proud of and why?
- From your past, what educational achievements have you accomplished?
- How do you intend to apply the skills and experiences you have gained to your future?
- Why are you interested in this company and how does everything you shared contribute to that interest?



Keep your answers to these on paper or note cards and review before each job interview.

DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Rudbekia Bach, Director of Operations for Star Lane, Inc. Recruiting and Staffing, explains, "dressing appropriately for a job interview lets the hiring manager

know you are taking the opportunity seriously and it can also communicate that you have respect for the interviewer." Below is a list of advice for how to dress for an interview.

CLOTHING

- Wear a well-tailored outfit. This may include dress pants, collared dress shirt, skirt, blouse, etc.
- Dress professionally and comfortably
- Avoid dressing in all the same color.
- Avoid large and outrageous patterns
- Avoid clothes that hinder you from moving freely (make sure you can walk, sit, and stand in your outfit)

HAIR & MAKEUP

- If you wear make-up, wear it naturally
- Hair should be clean and styled
- Avoid dramatic changes leading up to the interview
- Avoid heavy or dark make-up

ACCESSORIES

- Wear comfortable shoes
- Choose a focal point accessory, which could be a unique piece of jewelry, a scarf, or tie
- Avoid distracting and excessive accessories
- Avoid wearing shoes that are difficult to walk in, such as extremely high heels, open-toed shoes, or sandals

HYGIENE

- Keep breath mints with you
- Perfume and cologne is acceptable, just make sure it isn't overpowering
- Wash your hands before the interview
- Avoid eating foods that leave a lasting scent in your mouth or clothes before your interview.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

There is a list of common interview questions on the next page. Use the STAR method to help you prepare responses. Be sure to practice with someone if you have time. Don't forget to prepare questions to ask your interviewer as well!

POTENTIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Tell me about yourself and why we should hire you?
- What is your greatest strength and how would you use it here?
- What would you say your weaknesses are and how do you address them?
- Why do you want to work here?
- How do you handle stress and pressure?
- Tell us about your experiences communicating in teams or working independently?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 (2, 3, 4, or even 10) years?
- What would your co-workers or previous supervisor say about you as a colleague or employee?

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE INTERVIEWER

- Can you tell me more about the day-to-day responsibilities would be for this job?
- What expectations/goals would you like to see the someone accomplish when they first start?
- Do you foresee upward mobility within this company for someone in this position?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Immediately after you finish your interview, make some notes on what questions were asked, how you responded, and what your interviewer might have said during the conversation. It is a good way to document your experiences and the next steps (if you were given any) and reflect on the experience as a whole.

It is also a good idea to send an email to the people who connected you to the interview, the person who scheduled it, and the people who interviewed you, to thank them for their time and follow up with any instructions you were given. This should be done within 24 hours of the interview.

EXAMPLE OF THANK YOU EMAIL

Dear [insert name of interviewer(s)],

Thank you taking the time to meet with me today and for giving me the opportunity to discuss the details of the position. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call me or email me. I look forward to the next steps and to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Phone Number]

[Email Address]

[LinkedIn URL]



If you are offered the job be prepared to discuss topics such as salary, health benefits, hours, etc. (And congratulations!)