

Interview Basics

Torrance Adult School
2016-2017

Preparation

How to dress

Expressing confidence

Interview questions

Closing the interview

Follow-up

Preparation is key

— **Being prepared and organized will allow for a calmer experience.**

Have all necessary information available such as license/ID, SS, references, certificates, records, extra resumes and samples of work if necessary.

Be prepared to answer questions about why you want to work for this company, your interests, work experience, and ultimate goals.

Be prepared to fill out an application. Bring a mock application for reference. Proof, be neat and use proper spelling and grammar.

Go to the interview alone. Arrive 10 minutes early.

Practice interviewing with others prior to your interview.

How to dress

Look good. Feel good.

Dress appropriately for the kind of job you are applying to. But most of all, be neat and clean.

MEN

Suits or slacks with a button down shirt (tie optional for some jobs). Polo shirt and khakis may be appropriate for more casual or construction related positions. Clothes must be neat and pressed. Pull back long hair, facial hair should be neatly groomed.

WOMEN

Business attire (for more corporate environments); slacks, nice blouse, button down top and blazer are acceptable for most interviews. No mini-skirts, tank tops, or sandals. Wear closed-toed shoes and minimize accessories. Hair and nails should be neatly groomed.

Expressing confidence

— **Staying focused and relaxed will boost your confidence. Be yourself.**

Firm handshake - it says a lot about your confidence

Maintain eye contact throughout the interview

Be aware of nervous habits such as fidgeting, stroking hair or overly using hands or expressive body language. Hands crossed in your lap can help! Practice at home or with friends!

Sit upright and remain poised. Listen, think, and respond to questions directly. Do not over talk the interviewer or go off topic.

Use discretion when speaking about former employees and supervisors. Confidence is also about maintaining professionalism and tact.

Interview questions

Preparation, appearance and confidence will make for answering questions a lot easier.

Why do you want to work for this company/ What do you know about us?

- Do your research. What inspires you about this job/company? Be enthusiastic and include your interests and how you can be an asset

Answering questions related to work experience:

- Brief and direct answers on how your skills match or transfer to the job
- Discuss accomplishments and proven results

Answering questions related to ultimate goals:

- Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Mention mobility/advancement, learning experiences and possible further education. Know the company's titles and positions and where you could fit in

Interview Questions

Tell me about yourself.

- Answer why you have applied and how you are qualified for this job. Avoid personal details about your life.

What are your strengths?

- Choose strengths that relate to the position - team player, facilitator, motivator

What are your weaknesses?

- A weakness is a strength in disguise.

Why should we hire you?

- Discuss your knowledge about the company and how your skills and personality fit in. This is your chance to sell yourself and your accomplishments.

Interview Questions

Why did you leave/are planning to leave your current or last job?

- New opportunity for career growth/advancement
- Relocation
- Too long of a commute
- Better work/life balance
- Company reorganization - want to work for a better company
- Career change
- Job security - changes in stability of current position
- Company or department closure / laid off

Explaining gaps in employment: Explain that a transition process takes time and so does job searching for the right position. Try to include any volunteer or related experience during your time off. For long gaps, multiple jobs, or if you were fired explain how the job was not the right fit and that you were able to take some time off to reevaluate your goals.

Interview Questions

Employers like to assess how employees handle conflict and resolution in the workplace. They may ask questions like... *Tell me about a time you had a conflict with co-workers on a certain project. How did you come to a solution that worked for everyone?*

Always maintain respect when answering about previous colleagues. Don't put others down, but discuss differences you had that were related to the job and how you resolved them.

Use the **CAR** method in answering tough questions:

C - Challenges

A - Action

R - Results

Interview Questions

Know the job description well. VERY well.

Employers may ask specific questions on how you would handle certain duties or situations on the job. It's also a test of your character and how well you follow procedures, protocol, and knowing when to involve additional supervisors or staff.

What are the steps you would take to calm a child down during class?

What would you do if you suspected employees were taking supplies from the supply room?

How would you handle an angry customer who says they were unfairly charged and/or mistreated?

Closing the interview

— **Don't forget to ask the important questions.**

Do you have any questions? - “Yes!” Show you have interest!

What is the team structure” - What is the key to success at this job? - What are the opportunities for growth? - How many people are in this department? - Who will I be reporting to? - How long has this position been open?

Do not bring up salary. If asked, give a range or that you will consider all offers.

Know what else is required of you and ask about the follow-up process.

Thank the interviewer regardless of the outcome.

Get a business card or contact info of all interviewers for a Thank You note.

Follow-up

Your last impression.

- Traditionally, a hand-written *Thank You* note is mailed to all interviewers. This is still a thoughtful gesture and is sure to get into the interviewer's hands. Mail it immediately after the interview.
- Email is becoming a more common format, however, you run the risk of your message going to junk/spam, or having it overlooked in a full inbox.
- Whatever the means, your note should thank the interviewer(s) for their time, and what you enjoyed from the process. Include your contact info.
- Know the follow-up process. Make sure there is nothing missing on your end. Call or email to reach out if you haven't heard back.

Questions...

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