

The Art of Interviewing

Before, DURING, After

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THE ART OF INTERVIEWING

The purpose of the interview is to give the employer an opportunity to see whether you have the right “product” to sell them and to give you a chance to see whether the employer has the right “product” to sell you. This selling is part of the interview process, consisting of explanations as well as questions and answers about job requirements, expectations, and qualifications. The key to a successful interview is a combination of reasonable humility, enthusiasm, and confidence.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Review your application or resume
- Review the Job Bulletin and Class Specification
- Review the skills, knowledge, and abilities for the classification or position
- Talk to incumbents in the classification or position
- Make a list of your job-related skills, knowledge, and abilities as they apply to the classification
- Write out your opening statement
- Write out a closing statement
- Make a list of your most difficult and challenging situations
- Practice in front of a mirror or video camera
- Decide on what image you plan to present—Dress for Success
- Ask who the interviewers will be (cert or transfer interviews)

WHAT TO DO DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Dress appropriately for the position
- Arrive early—Plan for the unexpected
- Submit an updated copy of your resume to the receptionist—if major changes
- Review the posted interviewers (civil service only)
- Give a firm handshake
- Address each interviewer in the interview
- Maintain appropriate eye contact
- Avoid distracting gestures and excessive movement

OPENING STATEMENT (2ND impression)

The purpose of the opening statement is:

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How to prepare a good opening statement

1. Study the job bulletin and class specification.
2. Prepare a list of your skills, knowledge, and abilities (SKA's) that are compatible with the job duties and qualifications of the position as indicated in the exam bulletin.
3. Be sure to list any skills acquired outside of your work with the City of Los Angeles.
4. Include your relevant education, work experiences, outside experiences, and the SKA's you possess. If you have a lot of outside experience to share, move some of it to the closing statement.
5. Statement should be well organized and have a logical flow (i.e. chronological, skill based, etc.)
6. Develop an ending sentence to your statement that lets the board know that you are finished talking.

CONTENT OF INTERVIEW (3rd impression)

Be prepared for technical, open-ended, situational, and behavioral interviewing questions. Know about current job-related issues and hot topics in your related fields. Expect follow-up questions related to your resume and things raised in the interview.

Write an example of your most difficult or challenging assignment or incident that demonstrates . . .

- Experience making decisions or exercising independent judgment
- Experience with the disciplinary process/supervision
- Experience preparing written communications/reports
- Experience making oral presentations/teaching/public speaking
- Experience making changes, adapting to change
- Experience doing research (internet, library, resources)
- Experience analyzing and interpreting data (spreadsheets, reports)
- Experience solving problems and making recommendations
- Experience building team work or working on a team
- Experience prioritizing work/multitasking
- Experience with project management/tracking assignments
- Experience with computer programs/software

PRACTICE SUPERVISORY QUESTIONS

1. Tell us about a time when you had to discipline one of your employees for a violation of a Department policy? How did you handle the situation? What was your subordinate's reaction?
2. Suppose you want to implement a new procedure to track costs. Employees in your unit have been overworked for many months and see this change as a burdensome and unnecessary task. How would you overcome their resistance to this change?
3. Suppose two of your employees were not speaking to you because of a decision you made on a recent controversial office issue. There are critical assignments that need to be completed, and this problem is jeopardizing your ability to accomplish this work. What would you do?
4. What would you do if an employee comes to you about a co-worker that is continually making jokes of a sexual nature in the office? How would handle the concern? What questions should you ask before beginning your investigation?
5. Describe how you would handle a situation in which you observe one of your employees speaking rudely to a customer at a public counter.
6. Share with us a time when your ability to skillfully negotiate resulted in a successful outcome.
7. Suppose one of your employees complained about a colleague who was not completing their share of the work. What would you do? What if talking to the employee did not work what else would you do to ensure the work is shared equally?
8. Give examples of how you could improve the morale in your section and ensure the employees were motivated to work together as a team.
9. Describe a situation where you found yourself dealing with someone who did not like you or did not like what information you were conveying. How did you handle the situation to ensure understanding took place?
10. Suppose we had an earthquake, as a supervisor, what is your responsibility in this type of an emergency when it occurs during normal working hours?
11. As a supervisor, how would you ensure your employees were kept informed about the City's Affirmative Action plan and Equal Employment Opportunities? Of your responsibilities, which one do you consider the most important?

GENERAL SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Sometimes it is easy to get in “over your head.” Describe a situation where you had to request help or assistance on a project or assignment and how it turned out.
2. Give us an example of a time when you were invited to join a team to collaborate on a project. What was your role in this project? What would you have done if someone disagreed with your ideas?
3. Recall a time from your work experience when your supervisor was unavailable and a problem arose. What was the nature of the problem? How did you handle the situation?
4. Recall a time when you were assigned what you considered a complex project. Specifically, what steps did you take to prepare for and finish the project? What one step would you have done differently if given the chance?
5. Tell of some situations in which you have had to adjust quickly to changes over which you had no control. What was the impact of the change on you?
6. Suppose you are asked to prepare a communication to inform all Department employees. What are some of the things you need to consider in deciding how best to communicate the message to ensure understanding.
7. What techniques do you use to ensure you stay abreast of the latest technology or issues in your field of expertise?
8. What has been your experience in giving presentations to small or large groups? What did you find useful in preparing for the presentation?
9. Tell of the most difficult customer service experience that you have ever had to handle an angry or irate customer. Be specific and tell what you did and what the outcome was.
10. Describe a time when you had many projects or assignments due at the same time. What steps did you take to get them all done? How did you prioritize your work? What system do you use to track your assignments?
11. Give us an example of an assignment you completed using the Internet to assist in research. Describe how you approached and accomplished this assignment.
12. Suppose that you are leading a team without the benefit of having supervisory authority. What are some of the challenges? What are some of the things you would do to better lead without authority?

CLOSING REMARKS (final impression)

At the end of the interview, you will be asked if there is anything you would like to add to better evaluate you as a candidate does. It is appropriate for you to spend one to two minutes making a closing statement. This is an opportunity for you to briefly summarize what you believe makes you the best candidate for the job. Final words belong to you—so make it good.

How to prepare a closing statement

1. Open with a statement to summarize your interview.
2. Briefly, summarize you skills, knowledge, and abilities that you have discussed in your interview.
3. Bring up any missed points.
4. Present three personal strengths, that are job-related, that makes you special and unique.
5. Develop a lasting ending sentence to your statement that lets the board know that you are finished talking and leaves a positive lasting impression.

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Remember
- Review
- Write
- Retrain

INTERVIEWING REPORT AND EVALUATION

Position: _____ Interview Date: _____

Type of Interview: _____

Employer/Interviewer: _____

INTERVIEW EVALUATION:

Overall Evaluation of Process: _____

Questions asked: _____

Tough or unusual questions asked that I should practice or need to research:

Feedback from interview (if available): _____

What could I have done better to prepare? _____
