

Making your next interview count...



Successful Interviews start with extensive planning and preparation. This guide will give you the tips and strategies for putting your best effort forward every time.

CTE Transitions Your Future Begins at Southwestern College



CONGRATULATIONS ON GETTING THAT INTERVIEW!

Feeling a little overwhelmed? This Booklet is designed to help you with every step of the interviewing process. This booklet has been prepared and produced through funds provided by CTE Transitions program to assist all CTE Students with their job preparation and interview skills. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs prepare students for high skill, high demand technical careers in a competitive global economy.

ABOUT CTE TRANSITIONS:

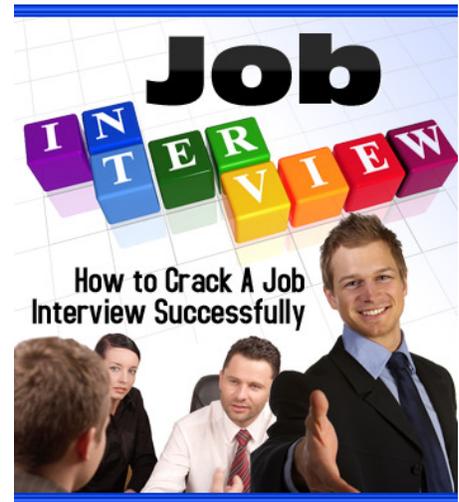
CTE Transitions, formerly Tech Prep, is a federal initiative developed to address the demand for a highly skilled workforce. CTE Transitions is funded through the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement ACT of 2006 (Perkins IV, using the option of a "10% Reserve" set-aside from Title I, Part C Funding). CTE Transitions requires designated community colleges to fund activities related to CTE Transitions objectives with the goal of helping Career Technical Education students' transition from secondary to postsecondary education and on to the world of work.

STEPS TO CAREER SUCCESS

Step 1: Search for Job



Step 2: Prepare for Interview



Step 3: Interview



Step 4: Success



TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

1. STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- Preselected list of questions
- Can be impersonal
- Questions given sometimes before an interview

2. UNSTRUCTURED/NON-DIRECTED INTERVIEW

- Questions are open ended
- Applicant is given a choice on how to respond
- Applicant has control
- Used to learn more about applicant's personality

3. PANEL INTERVIEW

- Each person asks a question from their area of expertise
- Primarily used for professional positions

4. GROUP INTERVIEW

- Interview is with other applicants
- Group is given a task to accomplish
- Interactions/behavior is observed
- Rarely given (military, airline attendants, graduate school)

5. SCREENING INTERVIEW

- Designed to eliminate applicants
- Will ask about qualifications and verify experience
- Ratings usually include: enthusiasm, initiative, maturity, appearance, potential, experience, and education.

6. SECONDARY INTERVIEW

- To confirm initial impressions
- Often with a supervisor or president/vice-president

REGARDLESS OF WHAT TYPE OF INTERVIEW YOU HAVE, THERE ARE SEVERAL KEY PHASES TO THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

THE PHASES OF INTERVIEWING

PREPARATION - BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1. THE COMPANY – RESEARCH
2. SELF – MENTAL
3. SELF - PHYSICAL

PERFORMANCE - THE INTERVIEW

4. PRESENTATION - FIRST IMPRESSION
5. THE INTERVIEW - EMPLOYER ASKING QUESTIONS
6. YOUR TURN - YOU ASK QUESTIONS TO THE EMPLOYER
7. CLOSING - LAST IMPRESSION

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

8. PERSONAL RECORD
9. THANK YOU LETTER

PREPARATION

THE COMPANY – RESEARCH - THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- The name of the person who does the hiring.
- The salary range for the position.
- What are aspects that you like about the company/organization?
- What products do they make?
- What services do they provide? Who do they serve?
- What is the growth potential (advancement) within the company/organization?
- What is the future like for the company/organization?
- What makes the company different from other companies/organizations?
- Who are the competitors to the company/organization?

WHERE TO FIND THE INFORMATION:

- Newspapers - Read the help-wanted section and look for separate business section. Look for articles focusing on your area of interest.
- Trade Journals - Almost every trade/profession has at least one regularly published journal. Use the Encyclopedia of Associations to help familiarize you with people, products, current trends, and specific vocabulary of a field.
- Use Library databases such as EBSCOhost to find periodical articles focusing on your career.
- Go to the California Career Café website at: www.cacareercafe.com to find the latest on interviewing tips and strategies along with listings of Professional Associations that you can join.

REFERENCES FOUND AT SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE LIBRARY:

- Encyclopedia of Associations (Reference HS 17 G334) – Lists names of 15,000 associations with names of officers, telephone numbers, and brief descriptions of orientation and activities.
- Thomas's Register of American Manufacturers (Reference T 12 T612) or Online at www.ThomasNet.com – Directory of industrial product information covering distributors, manufacturers and service companies.
- Hoover's Handbook of American Businesses (Reference HD 2731.H665) – In depth Information regarding over 750 Companies
- Directory of Corporate Affiliations (Reference HG 4057 A22) – Directory of Information regarding corporate affiliations and corporate ownership. (ie Who-owns-who)
- Occupational Outlook Handbook (Reference HF 5381 A1 036) or Online <http://www.bls.gov/oco>
- Top 300 Careers: Complete Guidebook to Major Jobs in Every Field. (Reference HF 5382.5 U5 A716)

PERSONAL PREPARATION

YOURSELF - MENTAL

- Review your resume. Review the most frequently asked questions.
- Practice answers to the most frequently asked interview questions. (Do not memorize)
- Prepare yourself for the tough questions.
- Review illegal questions.
- Review questions to ask the interviewer.
- Have the right attitude.

YOURSELF - PHYSICAL

- Bring to the interview: pens, resume, license, social security number, letters of recommendation, list of references, examples of your work.
- Dress: Be clean and neat. Dress a little bit better than you would for the job. Don't forget to look in a full length mirror (standing and sitting). Be conservative.
- Posture: Stand up straight and walk tall. Remember to make eye contact.
- On time: Know where you are going and allow for delays. Be at least 15 minutes early to your interview.

THE DAY OF THE INTERVIEW

- **BE ON TIME!** Arrive 15 minutes early. It helps to drive to the interview location the day before the interview, to determine how much time it will take. Remember to allow for traffic.
- **BE INDEPENDENT.** Go alone. Bringing family members can eliminate you from the competition.
- **BE COURTEOUS.** Your impression begins the minute you enter the office. Don't be rude to the support staff--they are often asked to share their impression with the interview team.
- **BE POSITIVE.** Don't complain about the weather, traffic, or parking etc.. This might create a bad impression.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- **BE ALERT.** Pay attention to the interviewer. Try not to let your mind wander or concentrate too hard on your responses that you don't hear the interviewer
- **BE SERIOUS.** If deciding whether or not to be witty, play it safe and let the jokes come from the interviewer.
- **BE PLEASANT, FRIENDLY, and BUSINESSLIKE.**
- **EYE CONTACT.** It is important to keep eye contact when being introduced and during the interview.
- **SHAKING HANDS.** Feel free to initiate a handshake. Be firm –if you tend to have sweaty hands, quickly wipe them before the handshake.
- **BODY LANGUAGE.** Be aware your nonverbal messages. Don't cross your arms or keep your hands in your pocket. Remember to sit up straight and find a comfortable position for your hands.
- **WATCH THE INTERVIEWER.** The interviewer gives nonverbal messages too. Watch to see if the interviewer seems to lose concentration. This may mean you are not answering the question directly enough, or that the interview may be over.
- **BE AWARE OF YOUR VOICE.** Being anxious in an interview may raise the pitch of your voice. Be conscious of how loud you are speaking. Tension can also raise the rate of your speaking. Be aware of how fast you are speaking-you may want to speak more deliberately.
- **LISTEN TO THE QUESTION.** Understand what is being asked. If you are unsure, ask for clarification.
- **THINK THROUGH THE QUESTION. TAKE TIME TO ANSWER.** It is OK to take a few seconds to think about your response. You may repeat the question before responding.
- **WHEN YOU ANSWER THE QUESTIONS, BE DIRECT AND POSITIVE.** Answer with the facts - be honest, but not blunt. Excessive or negative information will detract from your presentation.
- **FOCUS ON SUCCESS AS IT RELATES TO THE POSITION.** Focus on how your experiences/skills/achievements qualify you for the position.

COMMON INTERVIEWING TOPICS

1. SHOW YOU HAVE WHAT THE EMPLOYER IS LOOKING FOR

2. CONFIDENCE IN YOUR ABILITY TO GET THE JOB DONE

- Describe your education and training that relates to the job.
- Describe your work experience as it relates to the job.
- Describe your positive areas and your skills.

3. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE BUSINESS AND THE JOB

- Be enthusiastic about working for this company.
- Ask good questions-this shows that you are interested in working for the company.

4. DEPENDABILITY

- Be on time for the interview.
- Talk about your good attendance record at school or at other jobs.
- Call back on the day you agree on.

5. ABILITY TO GET ALONG WITH OTHERS

- Support with past experiences that you get along with other people.
- Be friendly and as relaxed as possible during the interview.

6. ABILITY TO FIT THE IMAGE OF THE COMPANY

- Dress appropriately for the interview.
- Don't make negative comments about the company's services or products.

7. THAT YOU ARE A PERSON WITH FEW PROBLEMS

- Don't talk about personal problems.
- If you have any problems which might affect (or have affected) your performance, describe how you plan to make up for them.

FREQUENTLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

HINT:

*Write out your answers to have a reference for future review.
Practice your answers with a friend.*

1. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your short/long range goals? How do you plan to achieve them?
- Why are you changing jobs?
- What did you like/dislike about your last employer?
- Describe/give example of working as a team player.
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Are you more comfortable working by yourself or with others?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years?

2. ABILITIES, QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS:

- Describe/give example of how you work under stress, pressure, deadlines.
- Describe/give example of a conflict and what you did to resolve it.
- Describe three accomplishments from your present job.
- How do your qualifications relate to this job?

3. CURRENT WORK EXPERIENCE/PREPARATION:

- What two or three things are most important to you in a job?
- What did you like/dislike about your current/previous job?
- How has your education prepared you for this job?
- Describe your experience as a supervisor.
- What community activities have you been involved in?

4. POSITION RELATED:

- What do you know about our company?
- This position may involve relocating, overtime, travel, rotating shifts.
- Do you have any objections to these demands?
- What questions do you have for me?

ILLEGAL QUESTIONS

There are certain questions that are either inappropriate or illegal and should not be asked by the employer. You don't need to figure out the interviewer's reason behind asking -- but you will need to decide on how you will respond. You can either answer, not answer, or answer but point out that this may be an illegal question. You may want to respond "I would be happy to answer your question if you tell me how it is related to the job."

- When and where were you born?
- Do you wish to be addressed Ms. or Mrs.? What is your maiden name?
- What is your marital status? What is your spouse's occupation?
- Do you mind answering some personal questions?
- What is your native tongue? How did you learn to read/write/speak a foreign language?
- What is your religious affiliation?
- Do you have children? Do you plan to have children? Are you now pregnant?
- What type of military discharge did you receive?
- Are you the principal wage earner in your household?
- Have you ever been treated for a mental or emotional problem?
- Do you have a disability?

COMMON QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING THE INTERVIEW

Usually near the end of the interview, the interviewer will ask if you have any questions. Always ask questions. Why? It supports your interest in the position and allows the Interviewer to get to know you better.

- What characteristics are you looking for in the ideal candidate for this position?
- Is there anything unusually demanding about the job?
- What kind of training could I expect if I was offered this position?
- Who would I be working for?
- Does the company encourage/provide continuing education for employees?
- Are there opportunities for advancement in this position?
- Do you have any plans for growth or expansion?
- What do you like most about working for this company?
- When do you expect to make a hiring decision?
- What is the next step in the interview process?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- AFTER THE INTERVIEW. Thank the employer and remind him/her of your interest in the job. You might say, "I am looking forward to hearing from you."
- EXIT GRACEFULLY. Keep your composure until you have left the building. Don't rush. Leave with as much confidence as you arrived.

FOLLOW-UP WITH A THANK YOU LETTER.

1. PERSONAL RECORD

As soon as possible after the interview, keep notes of the following:

- Name(s) and title(s) of the interviewer(s) (and others that you may have talked to or interacted with).
- Basic responsibilities of the position.
- Why you can do the job.
- What went well in the interview.
- What went poorly, and why.
- When and how you expect to hear from the employer.

2. FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Next, write a follow-up/thank you letter. The letter is a way to acknowledge the interview and thank them for the opportunity, as well as to remind them of your interest in the position. The letter is also an ideal way of including any relevant information you may have forgotten to mention in the interview.

- Address the letter to the interviewer. If there was an interviewing team, either address all or send a letter to each member.
- Mention names of other people you may have met or interacted with.
- Type your letter. If you choose to handwrite the letter - use legible handwriting.
- Mail the letters within 24 hours of the interview.

FOLLOW-UP/THANK YOU LETTER FORMAT

Date

Your Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Interviewer's name
Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. :

First Paragraph

Express appreciation for being selected to interview. Indicate the job for which you were interviewed, where it was held, and the date. You may refer to a particular part of the visit to refresh the interviewer's mind.

Middle Paragraph

Tell the interviewer again your interest in the position. Briefly restate your reasons for wanting the position or for wanting to join the company. If there is anything you forgot to mention in the interview which would further enhance your qualifications, mention it here.

Closing Paragraph

Offer to provide additional information if necessary. Indicate that you are interested in the position and are available for additional information or interviewing at their convenience.

Sincerely,

(Your handwritten signature in black ink)

Your name typed

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP/THANK YOU LETTER

March 17, 2012

Barry Buyer
400 Juniper Road
San Diego, CA 92112

Ms. Linda G. Baxter
Director of Employment
Randsome Corporation
100 East Mountain Road
Santee, Ca 92071

Dear Ms. Baxter:

Thank you for the opportunity to interview for the position of Assistant to the Purchasing Manager. This is an exciting position and I look forward to the prospects of joining Randsome and working with a dynamic manager like Roger Harrison.

As I mentioned during the plant tour with Mr. Harrison, I am familiar with many of the duties and responsibilities of the position. I spent two summers working in the purchasing department of a manufacturing firm, and quickly learned the value of a timely purchase and efficient inventory control of raw materials.

In addition to my experience in this area, the knowledge I gained through the courses in my associate degree program will serve me well in meeting the requirements of the position, I know I can contribute significantly to your company.

I thank you again for the opportunity. I enjoyed our discussion and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Barry Buyer