

Elevate Your **CAREER**
JOB SEARCH with **CONNECTIONS**



INTERVIEW GUIDE


BlueRidge
COMMUNITY AND
TECHNICAL COLLEGE

OFFICE OF
CAREER
SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Preparation

Preparing for an upcoming interview can be intimidating for a job seeker, but it is a very important preparatory task and should be done regardless of how many times you have interviewed before. The key to preparing for an interview is establishing “Your Professional Brand” and figuring out how to sell that brand to the potential employer. You should practice ahead of time so you feel comfortable portraying your strengths as they relate to the job.

Here are some key components that make for a great interview:

- You can capture the attention of the employer
- You have the qualities and skills to be successful at the job
- You present evidence to back up your claims

With proper preparation you can accomplish all of these components to ensure your interview is a success and feels much less of a challenge. Continue reading to learn how you can prepare for your interview before, during and after to ensure Your Professional Brand and strongest skills stand out!

**BEFORE THE
INTERVIEW**
PAGE 3

**DURING THE
INTERVIEW**
PAGE 4

**AFTER THE
INTERVIEW**
PAGE 6



BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Tip 1: Research the Company.

- Mission statement
- Recent achievements in the news
- Growth within the industry

Tip 2: Review and analyze the job description and align personal skills and previous experience with duty descriptions.

- To start: Examine all of your previous experience. Write out the major responsibilities for each job you have held. Note any special accomplishments.
- Identify your important “work-strengths”—the abilities where you excel and are most productive.
- Utilize the job description for which you are going to be interviewing and review the employer’s and position’s needs and determine which of your abilities and which aspects of your experience will be most important to the employer.
- Use the Skills Articulation Worksheet from the Office of Career Services to help identify and align your previous abilities and “work-strengths.”

Tip 3: Rehearse interview answers based on job description duties and your relatable skills.

Prepare for technical interview questions.

- Refer to your class notes and books on the different topics mentioned in job description.
- Research online to ensure you truly know the material.
- Talk to other professionals from the field and practice your technical interview answers with them.

Prepare for behavioral interview questions.

- Prepare at least 2-3 professional or academic examples that portray you and your skills as it relates to Leadership, Teamwork, Problem Solving, etc
- Practice the STAR Technique. Utilize stories and examples from your past professional and academic experiences.

STAR ★ TECHNIQUE

Situation or Task: Set the story or example up by describing a professional or academic situation or task you were given.

Action steps: Describe which action steps YOU took to accomplish the situation or task.

Results: Describe the results of the scenario

Tip 4: Plan your route, pack necessary documents and select professional attire.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Tip 1: Arrive to the interview early.

Tip 2: Sell yourself with detailed interview answers: Provide thorough explanations for technical answers and utilize the STAR technique and examples for responses related to behavioral questions.



Tip 3: Impress the employer with Professional Etiquette.

- **First Impressions:** Walk, talk, and look the part! Maintain eye contact, and be confident but not cocky. Wait for the interviewer to initiate the handshake, and ensure sure your grip is firm but not crushing.
- **Smile:** Smile even if you're nervous, you want to remain approachable and not seem stern.
- **Chatterbox:** Be aware of the fact that it is important to be conversational in your interview, although you should not be having a one-sided conversation.
- **Body Posture:** Do not slouch, cross your legs, or have your arms crossed across your chest during the interview as body language is considered crucial non-verbal information to your interviewer.
- **Be Polite:** Remember your manners, and be kind to every employee you come in contact with. Use the magic words, "please" and "thank you," frequently.
- **Trash Talk:** Do not burn any bridges by bad mouthing past co-workers, supervisors, or organizations in any way. It is a very small world and you never know who knows who.
- **Tell the Truth:** Never lie. Keep your answers truthful and honest, regardless.
- **Chewing:** Do not chew gum, candy, mints, or even the back of your pen during the interview.
- **Jumping the Gun:** Don't be so quick to begin speaking about salary, vacation, and benefits until after you have received an offer or the topic is brought up by the interviewer.
- **Questions:** Ask questions about the company and the role you are interviewing for. This is your time in the meeting to become the interviewer and find out more about the position.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING AN INTERVIEW

How would you describe the company's culture and leadership philosophy?

What specific qualities and skills are you looking for in the job candidate?

What is the typical career trajectory for a person in this position?

What would you say are the three most important skills needed to excel in this position?

Why do you like working here?

What does a typical day or week look like for the person in this position? Is there travel, flextime, etc?

What do you think distinguishes this company from its competitors, both from a public and employee perspective?

Does the company offer continued education and professional training?

What particular achievements would equate to success at this job? What would success look like?

Are you most interested in a candidate who works independently, on a team, cross-functionally, or through a combination of them all? Can you give me an example?

QUESTIONS TO AVOID DURING AN INTERVIEW

Never ask for information you could have easily found with a quick Google search.

Never ask if you can change the job details, the schedule, or the salary.

Never ask many questions about the interviewer's background.

Never ask about pay, time off, benefits, etc. (Wait until later in the process to inquire about these things.)

Never ask "What does your company do?"

Never ask "If I'm hired, when can I start applying for other positions in the company?"

Never ask how quickly you can be promoted.

Never ask "Do you do background checks?"

Never ask about gossip you've heard.

Never ask if the company monitors e-mail or Internet usage.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Tip 1: Thank the Interviewer.

After the interview, send a handwritten note or friendly email thanking the interviewer for their time and consideration, as well as restating your interest in the position.

Tip 2: Follow up.

If you don't hear anything within a week, it is appropriate to call to politely ask when they will be making a decision.

Tip 3: Understand that every interview is a learning experience.

Even if you don't get this job, when the next interview rolls around, you'll be better prepared and more at ease, which will improve your chances of being offered the next job.



CONTACT CAREER SERVICES *TODAY!*

**Contact Career Services at: 304.260.4380 ext. 3335 or careerservices@blueridgectc.edu
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