SOJC Interview Guidelines

Congratulations on getting an interview. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

**Prepare.** Research the organization and position description. Understand the position and what the organization is looking for. How do your specific experiences match up with their needs?

**Logistics.** Know where your interview will be taking place and how to get there. Plan to arrive ten minutes early and account for traffic/finding parking. Dress professionally and aligned with the company's culture. Bring extra copies of your resume, portfolio and thank you cards to draft and send after your interview.

**Interview Questions.** Most questions get at one of three things: what can you do for this organization, why do you want this job/company, and why should we hire you? These questions allow the interviewers to assess your fit, skills, and potential contributions to their company. Go into your interview knowing how to address those topics.

**Question Structure.** Questions could be structured in one of the following ways:

- Direct: Require a specific answer
- Open Ended: No specific answer; expand on what you have to offer
- Behavioral: Ask interview to illustrate past behavior
- Situational: Presented with a scenario that you must respond to
- Zany: Unpredictable questions that often highlight personality

➤ NOTE: Questions about your race, color, religion, nation of origin, citizenship, ancestry, medical condition, marital status, arrest record, group affiliations and age are prohibited by federal, state, and/or local laws.

**Answering Questions.** Answering questions is a three step process.

1) Make sure to directly answer the question. Provide a response that illustrates a strength.
2) Provide a story/example that supports your claim/response.
3) Detail how you will apply this skill or strength in your new position.

**Common Questions.**

- “Tell me about yourself.”
- “Describe your strengths/weaknesses.”
- “Why should we hire you over someone else?”
- “What interests you about this position?”
- “Why do you want to work for this organization?”
- “Where do you see yourself in five years?”
- “What are you most proud of?”
- “Tell me about a time you were struggling/challenged, and how you overcame this obstacle.”
**Consider Stories.** You can't predict all interview questions. Preparing detailed stories that highlight your strengths can be a great way to feel prepared no matter what questions appear. Stories should be flexible, have broad applicability, and have a specific outcome.

**Things to do:**
- Rehearse introducing yourself.
- Breathe.
- Pause before answering.
- Have a question repeated.
- Write minimal notes.
- Make and break eye contact.
- Ask about interview structure and expectations in advance if needed.
- Ask about timeline and next steps.
- Be aware of your non-verbal cues
- Note and avoid your own personal nervous habits.

**Phone/Electronic Interviews**
- Can feel awkward
- Often part of the initial round of interviews
- Allow you access to support materials
- Make sure you double check phone numbers or skype handles
- Solidify who is supposed to contact whom
- Double check time zones
- Have your resume on hand
- Charge your technology
- Be in a quiet professional space
- Dress for an interview
- Be familiar with your technology

**Concluding the Interview.** Tailor at least five follow up questions to showcase your research. Stay within the interview timeframe. Thank interviewer(s) for their time, and reiterate your interest in the position. Send a thank you note electronically right after the interview and another thank you via snail mail.

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