

# LaSalle Network



## Preparing For Your Interview



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# Before the Interview

## Understand the Role

Do your homework on the job for which you're interviewing. Have a solid understanding of the position responsibilities, required experience, education and skills.

## Know the Company

Research the company and industry, as well as the person(s) with whom you're interviewing. You should know the company size, mission, products/services, history and any impressive accomplishments, as well as the career history of your interviewer, if possible. Utilize the company website, LinkedIn and any recent press. The more you know about the company, their competitors and your interviewers, the more successful your interview will be.

## Know Where You Stand

Know your capabilities and limits in advance. Will you travel? How much and how far? Do you mind long hours? Have a clear picture of what you want and need from a job, as well as what you're willing to compromise on. Being certain of your limits prior to the interview will allow you to answer difficult interview questions with confidence.

## Dress For Success

Ask your Project Manager what the appropriate interview attire is. If you are interviewing at a manufacturing plant, a suit may not be appropriate. If you are unsure, it is always better to be over-dressed than under-dressed. Wear a black, gray or navy suit with a conservative shirt underneath. Don't forget to polish your shoes.

## What to Bring

Bring several copies of your resume in a professional leather binder with a notepad and pen to take notes. Bring your references, just in case. On the top of your notepad, have your list of questions based on your research.

## Practice

The more practice you have explaining your accomplishments prior to your interview, the more confident you will be. Practice answering sample interview questions aloud, to sharpen your ability to provide concise, yet detailed, responses. Be sure to relate your prior experience to the job for which you're interviewing.

## Check Your Social Media

Your online presence is fair game during the interview process. Be sure your public information, including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, are appropriate for a potential employer's eyes.



# The Interview

*When going into an interview, it's important to know yourself. Your strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, and most importantly, how you can tangibly add value to an organization. An interview is not the time to "wing it." Follow the below tips to ace your interview and land the job.*

## **Be 10 Minutes Early, No More No Less**

Tardiness, no matter the excuse, is a major mistake. Plan your route in advance and leave extra time to allow for heavy traffic or public transportation delays. If you are running late, call your LaSalle Network Project Manager immediately. However, do not arrive more than 10 minutes early. Doing so shows a lack of respect for your interviewer's time.

## **Be Neat and Thorough**

If you are asked to fill out an application, fill it out as neatly and completely as possible. The application is the client's first example of your work.

## **Be Outgoing, Positive, Enthusiastic**

Be positive and upbeat to everyone you meet, including the receptionist. There is no substitute for a positive attitude, and organizations want to hire people who are excited about the new role and approach challenges with positivity and confidence. Being outgoing from the moment you walk in the door can also help calm your interview nerves.

## **Be Attentive and Involved**

The most effective interviews are those that consist of a two-way conversation. Begin to interject your own inquisitive and probing insight early in the interview. Strive to build rapport with your interviewer by exhibiting sincere interest in their company and the open position. If you wish to take notes on details of the position or company, be sure to ask permission from the interviewer first. Maintain good eye contact and sit forward in your chair. These actions can generate momentum during the interview.

## **Provide Examples to Establish Your Worth**

Support statements about your skillset with specific examples. Detailed, yet concise, examples add legitimacy to your claims. For example, have you built long-term relationships with clients? Juggled multiple tasks successfully? Worked within a budget? Managed others? Went above and beyond your job duties? Prepare examples that prove you've been successful in the past. Past performance is often the best indicator of future performance, and managers will hire accordingly.

# The Interview (continued)

## **Know 3 Key Strengths and Weaknesses**

Be prepared to discuss, with examples, two or three key strengths and weaknesses. A common interview question is a variation on, “What do you consider to be your key strengths/weaknesses?” Having a prepared response will allow you to remain calm and poised when asked this dreaded interview question. Remember to remain positive when answering the “weakness” question. Turn each weakness into a strength.

## **Be Yourself**

Relax and be yourself. Companies want to hire people, not robots, so don't be afraid to let your personality shine through during the interview. Professionalism and personality can, and should, co-exist.

## **Be Prepared for Key Questions**

Practice your responses to all the typical questions, e.g., “Tell me about yourself, why are you looking?” (See Frequently Asked Questions). The interviewer will not only listen to what you say, but how you say it. How well you speak is just as, if not more important, than what you say.

## **Be Self-Confident**

High self-esteem and self-confidence are hallmarks of a successful individual. Be able to demonstrate how you have overcome obstacles with confidence. There is nothing wrong with feeling good about yourself. Be confident of your past work experience, your accomplishments and your skills. If you feel confident, you will appear confident. However, be careful not to come across as cocky.

## **Ask Probing, Open-Ended Questions**

A few strategic questions can clearly demonstrate your intelligence, analytical skills, assertiveness and knowledge of the industry and company. Have these prepared from your research.

## **Be Positive About Past Employers**

Do not “bad-mouth” previous positions, managers or companies. Stress only the positives about previous employers, no matter how charmingly you are invited to be critical. With this question, the interviewer wants to find out how loyal and positive you are.

## **Don't Talk Salary**

Do not bring up salary. If the interviewer asks you about your salary requirements, you can say, “I am aware of the salary range for this position, and I trust you would be fair in your offer. The opportunity is what's important to me.”

# Closing the Interview

## State Your Interest

At the conclusion of the interview, briefly restate your interest in the position and why you would be a smart hire. Don't forget to smile!

## Ask For the Job

Ask the interviewer, "Is there anything we discussed today about my background that would lead you to believe I'm not a match for this opportunity? I ask because our conversation reaffirmed that I want this job! I want to reassure you of my profound interest in this position and I am looking forward to next steps in the process."

## Set Next Steps

When you leave the interview you should have clearly defined expectations for next steps. Ask questions like, "What will the next steps be in the process, when do you hope to make a final decision and when should I expect to hear from you?"

## Write Thank You Notes

Within 24 hours of your interview, send a personalized thank you e-mail AND a handwritten thank you note to each person with whom you met. If you met multiple people, be sure to personalize each e-mail and note based on your conversation. Your interviewers might even compare thank you notes, so don't write the same message to everyone. Sending follow up thank you's demonstrates you are professional and can convey sincere interest and appreciation. It is an excellent touch and will set you apart from your competition.

# Interview DeBrief

After the interview, we want to hear how it went! Call your Project Manager immediately following the interview to discuss your feedback in-depth. In order to represent your interests in negotiating with our clients, as well as to place you in a fulfilling role you enjoy, it's important you are honest and open throughout the entire interview process. Be prepared to speak on the details of your experience, your opinion of the opportunity, likes and dislikes and salary expectations. Your Project Manager needs to hear what your gut is telling you, so please don't be afraid to be completely honest about your interview experience.

# Keys to a Successful Phone Interview

## **Avoid Distractions**

Be sure you are in a quiet place without any distractions and always use a land phone if one is available. Only use your cell phone if your location has excellent reception.

## **Always Do Your Homework**

Take notes when you research the company and prepare a series of questions for the interviewer. Review your LaSalle resume and keep it in front of you to ensure that your employment history and career accomplishments are fresh in your mind.

## **Be Enthusiastic**

Your voice paints a picture, so make sure it is void of dullness and full of energy instead. It's crucial that your enthusiasm be apparent through the wires. Stand up while you are interviewing; you will be less nervous and your voice will project better.

## **Actively Listen**

Although you may be nodding in agreement, be sure to periodically respond with "yes" or "I understand," to ensure that your interviewer knows you are engaged. As a rule of thumb, in order to avoid interrupting the interviewer, count to three after they pause before beginning your response.

## **Close the Interview**

If you are truly interested in the position, make sure the interviewer knows it! Tell them you've enjoyed the conversation, would love to continue in the company's interview process and ask about next steps.

## **Call Your LaSalle Project Manager**

As soon as you are finished with your interview, immediately call your Project Manager to debrief. If the interviewer is more than 15 minutes late, call your LaSalle Project Manager to let them know.



# Sample Thank You Notes

## SAMPLE #1

Dear Michael:

Thank you for your time and engaging conversation today. Your insight into the overarching goals for ABC Corporation provided clarity on the role the accounting specialist plays, and I hope to have an opportunity to contribute to the department's continued success in the future.

I am confident my previous experiences have prepared me well for success in this role, and I look forward to progressing in the interview process.

Best,

Jim Halpert

## SAMPLE #2

Dear Michael:

Thank you for your time and consideration today; it was truly a pleasure meeting you. Your insight into the human resources generalist role at ABC Company only reaffirmed my interest in becoming a member of the team, and, if hired, I am confident I would add value quickly. I am excited for the opportunity to contribute to the organization's continued success and look forward to next steps in the process.

Regards,

Pam Beesley

## SAMPLE #3

Dear Michael:

Thank you for your time and consideration today. I was truly impressed with the team, and I hope to have the opportunity to become a value-added member in the near future.

I look forward to next steps in the interview process.

Best,

Dwight Schrute



# Frequently Asked Interview Questions

## **Tell me about yourself.**

Spend 4-5 minutes maximum to share your information. Start with a brief history of where you grew up and your education. End in the present and explain why you're interested and qualified for this position. Remember, the key to all successful interviewing is to match your qualifications to what the interviewer is looking for. Strive to do this when answering every interview question, including the inevitable, "Tell me about yourself" staple.

## **Why are you leaving your current position?**

This is a very critical question. Don't "bad mouth" previous employers. Don't sound "too opportunistic" by saying, "I wasn't planning or looking to leave. LaSalle recruited me."

## **What do you consider your most significant accomplishment?**

Choose an accomplishment that exemplifies why you would be a good fit for this opportunity. Discuss, in concise detail, the hard work and dedication this project necessitated, and the learning experiences this accomplishment allowed you. Be honest and speak from the heart. Your passion and pride will shine through.

## **Have you ever accomplished something you didn't think you could?**

The interviewer is trying to determine your goal orientation, work ethic, personal commitment, and integrity. Provide a good example where you overcame numerous difficulties to succeed. Prove you're not a quitter and that you know how to work hard and smart when faced with a difficult and seemingly insurmountable challenge.

## **What do you like/dislike most about your current role?**

The interviewer is trying to determine compatibility with their current opening. Stating you dislike overtime or "management" can cost you the position. Instead of going on a rant about the flaws of your current/previous employer, focus on the positive. Talk about what you like most about your role and what you've learned in this position that has prepared you for success in the role for which you're interviewing. Always remain positive.

## **How do you handle pressure? Do you like or dislike these situations?**

High achievers tend to perform well in high-pressure situations. Provide a good example, with details, giving an overview of the stressful situation and how you handled it. Let the interviewer "feel" the stress by your description of it and understand your role in ensuring the situation was handled efficiently and effectively.

# Frequently Asked Interview Questions (continued)

## **What are your career goals? Where do you see yourself in 5 years? 10 years?**

Reassure your interviewer that you're looking to make a long-term commitment. For example, "I see myself with the same company in five years. I hope to have received more responsibilities and will have become more of an asset to the company. In terms of my future career path, I am confident that if I do my work with excellence, opportunities will inevitably open up for me. It has always been that way in my career, and I am confident I will have similar opportunities here."

## **What do you consider your most significant strength?**

Be prepared. Know your four or five key strengths. Be able to discuss each with specific examples. Select those attributes that are most compatible with the job opening.

## **What do you consider your most significant weakness?**

Everyone has weaknesses, but steer clear of revealing deep character flaws. Instead, show how a weakness can be turned into a strength. For example, how being ultra-motivated and driven makes you a workaholic.

## **Deadlines, frustrations, difficult people and 'silly' rules can make a job difficult. How do you handle these types of situations?**

Most companies, unfortunately, face these types of problems daily. If you can't deal with petty frustrations, you'll be seen as a problem. Giving examples of how you overcame them in the past is important. Diplomacy, perseverance, and common sense can often prevail even in difficult circumstances. This is part of any organization, regardless of size or industry, and you must be able to deal with it on a regular basis.

## **One of our biggest problems is \_\_\_\_\_. What has been your experience with this? How would you deal with it?**

Think on your feet. Ask questions to get details. Break it into sub-parts. Most likely you have some experience with the sub-sections. Answer these, and summarize the total. State how you would go about solving the problem, if you can't answer directly. Be specific. Show your organizational and analytical skills.

## **Why should we hire you for this position? What kind of contribution would you make?**

This is a perfect chance to summarize. By now you know the key skillset and competencies for which they're looking. Re-state briefly how your prior experience has prepared you for success in this role. Relate to specific attributes and specific accomplishments. Don't be cocky. Demonstrate a thoughtful, organized and confident attitude.

# Additional FAQ's

- What do you know about our company?
- Why do you think you'll be a good fit for this company?
- What qualifications do you possess that will allow you to be successful in this position?
- What is the most important thing you've learned from your previous experience that will enable you to be successful in your next position?
- What do you think it takes for a person to be successful in your field?
- How do you feel about looking for a new job?
- What do you look for in a job and a company?
- Describe your ideal work environment.
- How could you have improved your performance in your last position?
- Why do you want to work here?
- Tell me about your understanding of the job you're applying for.
- Describe your "dream" job.
- Why do you think you'll be successful in this job?
- What kinds of people do you find difficult to work with?
- If you're hired for this job, how will you approach the first 30 days?
- How do you prioritize your time?
- What are the three most important features to you in a job?
- If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you look for?
- How would you describe your leadership skills?
- What do you know about our competitors?
- Do you have plans to continue your education?
- What motivates you?
- What interests you about our products/services?
- How do you cope with stress on the job?
- What does the word "success" mean to you?
- How did you prepare for this interview?
- What does "growth" mean to you?

# Behavioral FAQ's

- Tell me about a time when you and another co-worker had a differing opinion on an issue. How did you resolve the issue?
- Name a time when you made a mistake on the job. What did you do to resolve the situation?
- Tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult client with challenging demands.
- Tell me about an experience you had working on a team.
- Tell me about a stressful time at work. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time when you dealt with an unethical situation. How did you respond?
- Name a time when you received superior customer service. Name a time when you gave superior customer service.
- What would you do if it was five o'clock and your teammate still had a ton of work?
- What would you do if you were asked to do something outside your job description?
- Name a time when you took the initiative to do something above and beyond what was expected of you.
- What would you do if you had a lot of things on your plate and something urgent came up that needed to be resolved? How would you handle this situation?
- Describe a time where you were faced with an irate customer. How did you respond?
- Name a time when you were working on a team and you disagreed with someone on your team. Name a time when you were working on a team and someone disagreed with you.

# Questions to Ask During an Interview

- What are the most critical aspects of this position?
- What are the most important objectives for the person filling this position?
- What characteristics-personal and technical-must an individual possess to be successful in this position?
- To whom would I report?
- How many people will I be working for? (or have working for me?)
- How will success be measured in this role?
- What would an average day be like?
- What are the biggest obstacles your department is currently facing?
- Based on my background, how well do I fit in to your already established team?
- Why is the position available?
- What is your favorite thing about working here?
- How would you describe your personal management style?
- How long have you been in this role?
- Is there anything I could do in advance to hit the ground running, if I am hired?
- Do you have any hesitations regarding my background?
- What is the next step in the interview process? Is there a timeframe for the final decision?

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