

Santa Clara Valley Water District

Navigating through a typical Hiring Process

November 2018



Hiring Process: Be Prepared!

- ▶ Set your goals – what are you looking for?
- ▶ Research the Position
 - Talk to the Manager(s)
 - Talk to employees in the unit or doing similar jobs
 - Read available material
- ▶ Consider all factors – this is a big decision!
- ▶ Are you prepared for **this** job?



Need Some Help?

Lots of places to get help . . .

- ▶ **Online training**
(webinars, guides, white papers)
- ▶ **Does your HR provide 1:1 interview coaching and practice?**
- ▶ **Public speaking (Toastmasters)**
- ▶ **People in the position, coworkers**



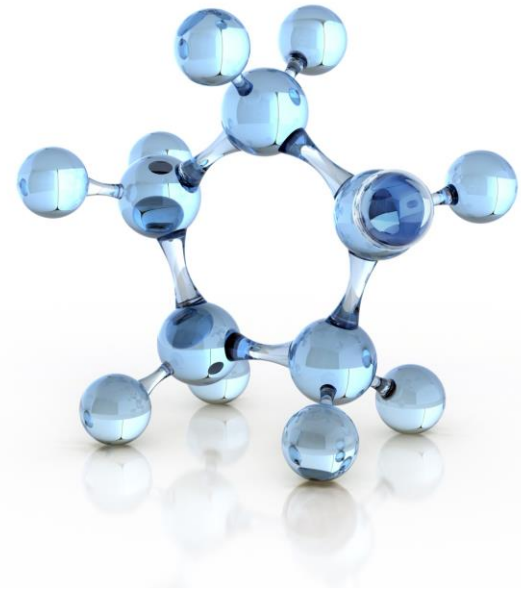
Santa Clara Valley Water District

**Job
Application
and
Supplemental
Questions**



Elements of a Job Posting

1. Duties
2. Minimum qualifications
 - 💧 Experience
 - 💧 Training
 - 💧 License or certificate
 - 💧 Special requirement
3. Supplemental Questions
4. “Ideal” qualifications



Read the Posting and do a “Selfie”

- 💧 Review each section – study what they are looking for
- 💧 How do you measure up? Where do you excel?
- 💧 What will you tell them about yourself?
- 💧 Organize your experience, knowledge and skills
- 💧 Highlight your qualifications
 - use examples to showcase your experience
 - demonstrate your knowledge
 - sell yourself!



Self-Inventory Worksheet

Get organized! This will help.

1. List each duty and qualification as noted in the job posting
2. List your corresponding experience, knowledge, skills and qualifications
3. List your significant achievements and outcomes
4. Then begin drafting the answers to the supplemental questions.



What is the Purpose of Supplemental Questions?



- 💧 Screening tool to help identify candidates who possess the technical and specific experience, knowledge and skills as related to the job – so take them seriously!
- 💧 The questions help the candidate more clearly understand the specific experience, knowledge and skills for the job
- 💧 Allows the candidate to showcase their experience /skills

Additional Tips and Strategies

1. Understand the question
2. Don't do a work history dump
3. Don't go off on tangents
4. Don't plagiarize, be genuine
5. Don't be a "parrot"
6. Give examples of success
7. Start early, don't procrastinate
8. Write clearly and concisely
9. Double-check for spelling and grammar -- ask someone to proof it!



Do your answers hit the mark or need help?

Question: Describe your computer knowledge, experience and proficiency; include specific software programs you have used, (i.e. Adobe Acrobat, scanning software, Excel, PowerPoint, Word) internet, e-mail, calendar.

Answer: Very knowledgeable in Acrobat Professional and all functions of Microsoft Office.

Needs Improvement!



Nope, you missed! Where are the specifics?

Who, What, Where, When, and How are critical ingredients!

Get back in there and expand on your answer!
They won't know if you don't tell them.

Thanks -- now we know who you are!



Question: Describe your computer knowledge, experience and proficiency; include specific software programs you have used, (i.e. Adobe Acrobat, scanning software, Excel, PowerPoint, Word) internet, e-mail, calendar.

Answer: Over the course of my career I have taken the opportunity to develop my skills in the use of Microsoft Office software.

- Excel is the program I have used most extensively over the last ten years and have advanced skills. The program is invaluable in streamlining workload, increasing the accessibility of data and verifying the accuracy of my work.
- I am proficient in the creation of formulas such as SUM, IF, AVERAGE, ROUND, SUMIF, SUMIFS and VLOOKUP.
- SORT feature allows for the capability of looking at a table of data in a variety of ways.
- PIVOT TABLES to compile and calculated a large volume of data into manageable and useful reports.
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, I have used for writing and revising business agreements, and created various applications and reports. To use forms correctly, I needed knowledge of formatting options, text orientation, tables and the use of mail merge features.
- Extensive use of Powerpoint to make presentations, used formatting and animations.

Great Response!

TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Submit an application that makes a great impression!

Make sure you have all information you need before you apply:

💧 **Employment Information:**

- Names, addresses, phone numbers of previous employers
- Supervisor's name
- ACCURATE Dates of Employment (Yes – they check)
- Salary
- Reason for Leaving

💧 **Education:**

- Schools/Colleges Attended
- Major
- Degree/Diploma
- Graduation Dates(s)

**Here is an important tip –
be accurate!
Look it up, don't just guess!
Most information will get verified.**

Read and follow instructions carefully

- ◆ Always take a few minutes to review the entire application. Some applications ask for information differently -- and all have specific spaces in which you are expected to answer questions.
- ◆ Think of the application as your first test in following instructions.
- ◆ Don't leave any blanks! (at least put in n/a) Don't put "see resume" !!!
- ◆ Attach your resume, work samples, appropriate materials (No, do not attach your 87 page thesis . . .)

Here at the District:

- ◆ Include Employment History for the past ten years.
- ◆ List your present or **most recent job first**, *excluding* volunteer or non-paid work experience (list it under activities/hobbies).
- ◆ List separately each position held, even if with the same employer.
- ◆ If relevant to the position for which you are applying, also list positions you have held prior to the last ten years.
- ◆ A response of "See Resume" will disqualify your application.
- ◆ If your application is incomplete, it will be rejected from consideration.

Need I say it? **PROOFREAD** your app!



- **Check for spelling and grammatical errors.** Proofread your job application before turning it in.
- **Double check** that you answered all questions thoroughly and accurately.
- **Ask someone else** to proof it for you – second eyes are invaluable.

(then take them to coffee -- they deserve it!)

Santa Clara Valley Water District

**Effective
Interviewing
Skills**



baywork

The Purpose of Interviews

To Assess Candidates:

- **Qualifications**

- Specific experience and KSAs

- **Communication skills**

- Verbal and non-verbal

- **Interest and Fit**

- A two-way process
- Culture and team
- Career progression



Common Structured Interview Process



1

Welcome,
General
Info
provided

2

Interview
questions
asked

3

Panel takes
notes and
rates
responses

4

Interview
Panel &
Recruiter
Debrief

Structured interview: consistent format and questions

Welcome and information about the position is provided

Interview questions asked: You respond to the questions and describe your experience, knowledge, skills and abilities -- your qualifications for the job

Interview Panel: Hiring Manager, Subject Matter Expert, Recruiter

Panel asks the interview questions, takes notes, participates in the debrief, provides recommendations to the Hiring Manager.

Recruiter ensures a fair interview process and facilitates the debrief and selection

Are You Prepared?



Preparing for the Interview



1. Know the job – review the posting, your application, the supplemental questions
2. Do a “selfie” -- a Self-Assessment (or review the one you did when filling out the app)
3. Anticipate questions
4. Practice!



Anticipate Questions

- What would you ask if you're the hiring manager?
- What questions would help the hiring manager understand your:
 - Qualifications
 - Behaviors and competencies
 - Problem-solving/Decision making
 - Motivation and interest
 - Your handling of scenario-based situations



Types of Interview Questions

4 “Buckets” of Interview Questions

💧 Experience Based

- 💧 What's your experience and qualifications?

💧 Competency Based

- 💧 Do you demonstrate the desired competencies?

💧 Behavioral (Scenario) Based

- 💧 What and how would handle a situation?

💧 Decision Making/Problem Solving

- 💧 What is your thought process? How do you go about making decisions?



Establish Your Interview Approach

This is important!

1. Listen Carefully
2. Understand All Parts of the Question
3. Organize Your Response
4. Do Not Digress
5. Answer Follow Up Questions
6. Plan ahead



Avoid Common Interview Mistakes

- 💧 **Misunderstanding the question**
- 💧 **Rambling**
- 💧 **Not providing clarity**
- 💧 **Not selling oneself**
- 💧 **Losing track of time**
- 💧 **Lacking confidence**
- 💧 **Negative non-verbal cues (body language)**



Additional Tips and Strategies

- **Be Yourself**
- **Be on time** (or arrive early!)
- **Relax** (take a deep breath!)
- **Clear and concise responses**
- **Sell yourself** (yes, you can brag - honestly)
- **Reference the questions**
- **Finish strong**
- **Provide work samples** (only if relevant)
- **Obtain feedback**



Practice Interviewing

Ask a friend, coworker

- 💧 Pick a specific job posting to practice with – doesn't have to be your target job
- 💧 Read the job announcement
- 💧 Write out questions you anticipate and have your interviewer write some
- 💧 Provide 5 minutes for each question
- 💧 Interviewer takes notes and critiques – provides feedback for improvement
- 💧 Try interviewing yourself in front of a mirror, watch your gestures
- 💧 Ask for help to practice!



Further Assistance Needed?



- Call your HR Department
- Ask your Supervisor / Manager
- Get a Mentor