

Career Services Assignment 4 – Soft Skill Interview Prep

Points possible: 50

Category	Criteria	% of Grade
Completeness	All requirements of the assignment are complete.	50
Quality	Answers show thought, proper grammar, and would be acceptable in most interview situations.	50

Instructions: Find a job post online for a role and company you would like to apply for. Answer the following questions as if you were being interviewed for the job. Research the STAR method of answering behavioral interview questions and where applicable, utilize the STAR method in answering the below questions.

The Job: UNIX Application Administrator, at Colorado University
<https://www.indeed.com/cmp/University-of-Colorado/jobs?jk=d4573dd5b1ec25f4&start=0&clearPrefilter=1>

How did you hear about this position? (Make sure you remember where you heard about the role so it doesn't look like you are just applying randomly to every position possible.)

Actually, while I found this job by searching for Linux admin and Linux developer jobs in the Denver area on Indeed and other sites, this position and this company in particular stood out to me. This one in particular stood out to me initially because it is with a college, and so I figured that there might be more ways for my skills in learning and experience with academia to show up in this job, either regarding the problems that need creative solutions or regarding the social context. I understand a lot of the needs of students, professors, and administrators, and I share many of their interests, and I believe this understanding of multiple perspectives is an asset.

What do you know about the company? (Research the company, website, products/services, and reviews. Talk about good reviews that make you want to join.)

What's more, my daughter was born at the Colorado University Anschutz Medical Campus in Aurora almost 4 years ago, and my wife and I really loved our experience at the hospital. Last

year, I stayed with the same daughter for about a week on the Anschutz Campus while we tried to figure out some health concerns. (I also remember going to the Anschutz campus a couple times with my mom when I was a kid.) I really felt that my daughter was being taken care of, that all the avenues were being explored by a number of experts, that they did a really good job of being thorough in their work, communicating with us often, and really taking care of my little girl. I have to say that in my personal experience, I'm very impressed and I really like the idea of working with Colorado University.

Along with those very positive personal experiences, I can also say that Colorado University - between the Boulder Campus and the Anschutz Medical Campus - is reputable, that you have very nice buildings and a large number of excellently trained and caring staff. But I also am drawn by what look to be nice benefits and good pay - pay that matches what I need for my family and the skills I've been pushing myself to learn. Also, the tuition options - which I'm a big fan of since I'm pretty serious about being a life-long learner - I can imagine a number of ways I would love to engage with Colorado University regarding all of this and more.

Why do you want this job? (Be very specific. Talk about what appeals to you about the role but focus more on the value you'll add to the team and company rather than what the company will do for you.)

I have to admit upfront that I don't have any experience as a UNIX Application Administrator. And yet, I really believe that I actually fit pretty well the description of the "key responsibilities of this position" and the description of the person you are looking for for the job. I am very driven to learn and very flexible to different needs and situations. I definitely have a "can-do attitude" which has been re-enforced by a good number of experiences overcoming difficult situations that I honestly didn't think I could overcome - but which I sincerely tried to anyways. I am well-attuned to understanding the needs of others, the complex issues associated with their needs, and this with people from a large variety of backgrounds.

So far, I get the most excited about Linux and bash than about any of the other coding languages or tools I've learned. I really love those two. So when I started looking more seriously for coding jobs, I made sure to include Linux jobs in the search. Not to mention that I love colleges and multi-cultural places that try to foster an environment of care, discussion, courtesy and learning. And again, I really appreciate the personal experiences with CU. Overall, it seems like a pretty good fit for the person I am.

As a result, I've started researching the things I don't know about, for instance, regarding the Oracle's Identity Management Suite, Database Administration and Exadata Cloud Administration. Or business continuity, disaster recovery, and "full-lifecycle implementation."

Finally, I am interested in this job with Colorado University because throughout my life I have gradually become aware of how I am neurodivergent and how neurodivergent people get treated differently than neurotypical people. The impression from what I've heard, experienced, and found - between the dual CU cultures of Boulder and Anschutz – is that I will not be disrespected for being neurodivergent, but that it will be valued. And that matters a lot to me.

Why should we hire you? (Be very specific. Talk about your skills, passion, and willingness to continuously learn to be an asset.)

The reason why you should hire me is above all that I really care about people and thinking things through carefully. I have been called “deep” more consistently than anything else in my life; while I have discovered in the last year or so that I am neurodivergent, which does mean that sometimes I need extra time to process things, I have also had it made very clear to me from a number of qualified people since my diagnosis that I really am very intelligent, resourceful, competent, patient and creative – more so than I had ever realized.

I taught myself philosophy, analytical and critical thinking, the German language and the Japanese writing system. I collected over 20 mostly free fairly rich resources for learning how to code, and have cobbled together my own kind of library of learning resources. I am very capable of turning to research when I don't know the answer to a question, and I like to gather people whom I can reach out to when I don't know the next steps to take. I taught myself how to learn, and then taught myself how to teach others the same thing. I excel at clearly communicating difficult concepts and discussing technical topics.

Again, my personal and work experiences make me somewhat familiar with many different aspects of CU's culture, clients and their needs. For instance, my experience as a caregiver for the elderly and special needs communities, as well as my experiences with tutoring college and high school students, and teaching my own kids how to read, are assets for connecting me both professionally and culturally to the main goals of Colorado University. I am a person that considers seriously *how to care*, and I seek to respect and learn about diverse cultures and to create a shared culture of thought and care.

What is your greatest professional achievement? (STAR)

While I feel good about the efforts I've put into working as a tutor, as a caregiver for the elderly, facilitating a high-ropes course designed for people with special needs, learning German, learning to code, writing a book of my own poetry, starting a rather philosophical blog and now working my way through Promineo Tech's Front End Bootcamp – I feel that probably my greatest professional achievement was at a summer camp in New Mexico.

The situation was like this: I was the team lead under the Camp Director in charge of a team of 6 employees. Among other responsibilities, we were responsible to facilitate a 1,000 zip-line and a climbing rock-wall. However, the training that we received to do this amounted to roughly an hour long walk-through. I had actually been hired in large part because I had previously had up to three weeks training and two summers of experience at Camp Barnabas on their ropes course. So I knew that this hour-long walk-through at this other camp was simply not enough for me and my team to be safe and reliable facilitators of this zip-line and rock wall.

My solution to this problem went like this: First, I thoroughly looked over the equipment and the elements of the zip-line and rock wall. Second, I took a test run on the zip-line, following the instructions we had been given during the 1 hour walk-through – because I felt that I wouldn't be confident sending anyone else down the zip-line until I tried it out myself. Third, I designed a number of procedures based on procedures at the ropes course at Camp Barnabas, but adapted thoughtfully and carefully to this other camp's ropes elements. Fourth, I trained my team on the procedures, helped them practice, worked out rough spots in the procedures, making adjustments as necessary, and supervised vigilantly whenever we as a team facilitated the zip-line or rock wall for campers.

I am proud to say that as a result of my careful work designing and implementing this solution, we had a summer free from any significant incidents or injuries. The campers had a great time, we as camp staff had a great time, and I learned a lot about leadership in that time. I really think that might be my greatest professional achievement.

Describe a difficult work situation and how you overcame it. (STAR. Never speak negatively about anyone else or any companies. Perhaps talk about change you experiences, as change is always difficult to overcome.)

I have a decent amount of experience helping others to calm down when they are feeling escalated – including helping an elderly man suffering from dementia to calm down. I also have been able to connect with people whom others around me felt were difficult to connect with, and

whom I myself doubted I could successfully connect with – but with whom I tried all the same because of what was at stake. More recently, I learned how to face down some rumors that were told about me – which was an awful situation but one in which I pulled through in a way that seemed to me overall surprisingly well.

But I want to talk more specifically about how I have been turning my life around in the last year, since August 2021. Things were incredibly low. I was unemployed in the pandemic, just barely making ends meet for my family, and feeling like I had no idea what to do with my life. I felt like my primary task was just to figure out what next steps to even take.

Gradually, I started cobbling together different skills (above all coding skills) and finding different pieces of a full support system. I got a job, learned how to communicate my needs better than ever before and have since experienced one of the most difficult but most rewarding years of my life - mounting steadily all along in the same direction.

I got involved in a program called Manna Connect with a career coach, then a personal therapist and marriage therapist, I started seeing a psychiatrist, received neurocognitive testing, two sleep studies, was diagnosed with ADHD, began taking some much needed medications, and I learned how to communicate effectively with my boss and supervisors about my experiences and struggles. I spent lots of personal time both before finding my job and since then learning to code, compiling a pretty large library of free or fairly cheap coding resources, various certificates and courses (like Udemy, Mimo, The Odin Project and others). I worked up the courage to start a blog, perilousresonance.wordpress.com/ where I ponder the various intersections of tech, ethics, spirituality and language. I've really demonstrated lots of persistence and grit which I didn't know I had, and I have even somewhat surprised myself at how much I have changed in the last year, at how much my hard work has been paying off. (I feel like there are surely even things I've forgotten to mention.)

Most recently, I started Promineo Tech's Front End Bootcamp through Arapahoe Community College, and am already almost half-way through the course! I am excited to continue working towards my goal of being self-sufficient, using my skills to take care of my family and open the doorway to a new career. The results of my hard work aren't yet showing in full, but I am increasingly hopeful about the future.

What are your goals for the future? (Make sure you answer in a time bound manner and talk about how you are looking to learn as much as possible in your field.)

I have some goals which are time-bound, and some which are constant, overarching, and present throughout all my goals. Some of these later goals are that I really want to be present with my family, teaching them, learning with them, rock-climbing and exploring with them. I also feel a need, to learn from others whenever I can and, when others are open to it, for me to share with others what little I have learned about how to have enough peace to think carefully about how to go forward. I want to influence people around me and learn with others how to steer each other away from escalating conflicts and related dangers in the modern technological landscape. Lastly, I want to learn lots about how to speak languages like Japanese, Welsh, Chinese and others, and how to connect with others and bridge cultural and linguistic gaps.

Turning to my more specific and time-bound goals, however, I would start by saying that in the next year especially (probably the next 2-4 years), I want to accumulate more experience, skills, and certificates working with coding languages and frameworks such as bash, Linux, C++, Server Administration, Full Stack Web Development, and overall design - including really taking ethics and visuals into serious consideration.

Over a longer period of time, say 4-10 years, it has been my goal increasingly for a number of years now to learn as much as possible about the history and future of technology so I can help have some kind of insight into what wisdom might look like in how we relate to technology in a world that is always evolving. This is evidenced in part by some of my writings in a blog I started about ethics, tech, spirituality, and language (perilousresonance.wordpress.com/). I hope to eventually write and publish books on related topics (starting in the nearer future with publishing a book of poems I already wrote in college).

In the further future, something like 7-20 years, I have thought more and more about starting two non-profit organizations. The first would be a center for thinking about the complicated intersections of ethics, spirituality, and modern technology. The second would be a kind of peace center that would seek ways to help people de-escalate difficult situations, especially to help people see what actions are more likely to escalate and potentially cause violence. Both of these ideas have been growing on me for awhile, but I have a lot to learn about them.

I surprised myself just now when I realized that I can confidently say that I have been working - steadily, concretely, and increasingly - towards fulfilling these goals for years now. Speaking with a mentor recently, I realized that I really do have grit and a high degree of resilience.

Why are you leaving your last job? (Don't say anything negative. Mention growth, changing industries, etc.)

The older I've gotten, the more I've realized that I am not using my skills the way I ought to be, and am not pursuing the life that I really want to live, and that furthermore, I haven't even been in any of the right industries to get close to doing that. I want to use a lot of my skills to really start taking care of my family here in Colorado and making the most of my life, so I've been increasingly pursuing learning how to code for the last two years or so and increasingly teaching

myself to approach it as a deep thinker - not just thinking about the code, but about the ideas and realities that underlie modern technology and what responsibilities might come along with those.

So, yes, I decided that I wanted to work my way into a new industry that could better use my real skills and better allow me to take care of my family.

What is your salary expectation?

\$70,000 - \$80,000 / year.