



## CFAA Event 10/28/2014

### “Career Development Panel: Put Your Job Seeking Skills Under The Interviewers’ Microscope”



With the beginning of the hiring season months away this is a great time for those looking to break into the finance industry to really practice and perfect their interviewing skills. In October, CFAA hosted a career development panel on how to launch a career in the investment management industry. The investment management industry is jam-packed with highly qualified candidates, whether it is graduate students looking to land their first job or those professionals attempting to pursue the next level of their career. Whether new or a veteran to the game, no interview is the same. Each of our panelists all have their unique way of finding that perfect candidate for the job and spoke to all attendees about what they can do to land the job.

Our panel consisted of Vivian Lin, CFAA President and VP at Calamos Investments, David Tang, VP and Quantitative Analyst at Neuberger Berman, Simon Zhang, Partner and Senior Quantitative Analyst for LSV Asset Management, and finally, Xiaoying Chen, Head of Application Development at Hightower Advisors. Before diving into what the panelists look for in an interviewee, each told their own stories about how they received their first internships. David shared his memory of having to go to an interview wearing a suit in 105 degree weather. “I was in DC at the time and had a flight home in two hours when I received a phone call to meet up with someone so of course I had to take it. When I got out of the car I put on my suit and by the time we found each other we were sweating like pigs; I had to wear the suit but of course he didn’t.” He said while laughing. “I was just sweating so badly that day, it was the worst interview experience I had, but at the same time I showed the employer that I was available on the spot.” For all the





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panelists it was clear that dedication and passion for the industry are must-haves. It's important to have that spark, without it, a career can seem to be just a daily job that turns into a mundane task rather than an adventure to pursue something new.

The interview process varies greatly in terms of subject matter from company to company and the individuals themselves. It's important to be prepared to speak not only on technical matters pertaining to the job duties themselves, but a good personality can bare just as much weight to sway the decision in your favor. Being quantitative analysts, both David and Simon have a more technical approach towards interviews wanting candidates to show their worth by discussing their past projects in detail, probing to make sure candidates can handle the heat and answer questions on the spot with confidence. On the other hand, Vivian and Xiaoying both feel that a candidate needs to show good character in order to work well with a team. Vivian shared a few ideas she learned from former employers about interviewing, "There are three things to look for in a professional: Attitude, Aptitude, and Ethics. You need to have the passion and a good team spirit; be a pleasant person. It's so important to smile in an interview because we are all human beings and when you come through the door you are portraying that positive attitude. You need to be trusted because we are making decisions on millions of dollars on a daily basis and if we can't trust you it will be very difficult."



Whether a candidate is grilled on their technical skills or are analyzed to see how they conduct themselves in a group environment, there are a few themes that all four candidates kept stressing. Investment management requires the best of the best and showing up unprepared to an interview, making even the slightest mistake, just like in investment management, can be fatal. When a candidate walks into that room they must have a clear mind. Being able to concisely and clearly convey your thoughts in a short time is necessary as there is usually not much time for interviews and getting to the point will help a candidate to get all the positive attributes about themselves that they want to show. So be prepared to tell short stories about yourself and work you have done that pertain to the job at hand.



But, while candidates would like to try and answer all the interviewers' questions as best as possible, they should not be afraid to say, "I don't know the answer." If this is the case, tell the interviewer that you will look into it and follow up with them later. But, make sure to actually do that! That extra mile will show your dedication. Whatever you do though, do NOT try and lie your way through a situation, although it may work during the interview and let you slide by some situations, when it comes to the actual job and you can't perform or do what you say or knew you could do, then your credibility will come into question and it will have negative consequences on your current job and even future positions if those employers decide to research your background and contact your professional network.

Near the end of the event the panel opened up the floor for attendees to ask questions they had about the interviewing and job seeking process. A few questions discussed were about turning the role around and asking the right questions to the interviewer. It's not only the company that is looking for the right candidate but it's also the candidate who is looking for the right company. "People don't leave the job; they leave the team or boss." Xiaoying mentioned. Find out how their leadership works and the company's work ethics. Don't forget to ask about career development if you were to receive the position; are there events or programs you can receive as an employee to better your professional skills?

The first step to jump starting your career path is to put that extra effort into the interview process. If you can't express how you will be an asset to a company then you will never get the chance to prove it to them first hand. The interviewing process is always an interesting topic and CFAA was lucky to have a panel of experienced professionals in the investment management industry give their thoughts on this process. Thanks to the panelist for taking their time to be with CFAA and all those that came to the event!

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## About CFAA

Chinese Finance Association of America (CFAA) is an independent not-for-profit, non-partisan organization committed to promoting educational and cultural exchange among finance professionals between the United States and Greater China through facilitating communication and the exchange of ideas in the financial industry. Incorporated and headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, CFAA is aimed to serve Chinese finance professionals and others who are interested in the financial industry of Greater China. Please visit our website [www.ChineseFinanceAssociation.org](http://www.ChineseFinanceAssociation.org) for more information about CFAA. To become a CFAA member, or to renew your CFAA membership and make your membership payment, please go to the [membership section](#) on our website. If you are interested in the volunteering opportunities at CFAA, please submit the [volunteer and staff application form](#). For global career opportunities in finance, please visit our newly launched [Online Job Center](#) through our partnership with one of the leading global career placement companies eFinancialCareers.com.