

Hiring Manager Secrets: The 5 Smartest Interview Moves

By Kate Lorenz

Ever wonder why you don't get called back after that first interview? What's holding you back from that great job while others are getting hired after shorter job searches? It could be something you DIDN'T do.

Careerbuilder.com recently asked hiring managers what the smartest things are that a candidate can do in an interview. What are the traits of a good candidate? How can you make a good impression? Here are the top five ways to win over your interviewer and get a leg up on the competition.

1. Demonstrate or communicate your experience and skills

The number one thing a candidate can do in an interview is intelligently and clearly articulate professional experience, capabilities or knowledge. Hiring managers are most impressed when a candidate is able to "think on their feet" during the interview - this demonstrates competency. They're also impressed when a candidate takes an active role in helping a customer or rectifying a situation right on the spot, whether posed by the interviewer or introduced by the candidate.

2. Act professionally

A candidate who is professional during the selection process will stand out among fellow job seekers. When a candidate communicates intelligently, uses proper grammar, makes eye contact, listens and asks intelligent and relevant questions. This demonstrates how that person will act within the parameters of the position with coworkers and clients. A hiring manager will want to choose a candidate who will represent the company well.

3. Prepare

Skimming the company's website five minutes before you leave won't help you at all. Simple steps to prepare for the interview include researching the company, market and opportunity, arriving on time and dressing appropriately. Bring extra copies of your resume and work samples, as well as your portfolio. And, don't forget names of references and letters of recommendation. Thorough preparation for an interview can make or break your chances of landing the job. As someone once said - Proper planning prevents piss poor performance.

4. Exhibit enthusiasm

Go ahead, be an eager beaver. Hiring managers are impressed when a candidate shows enthusiasm for the job and want to hire someone who is gung ho. The candidate who is ready and willing will likely carry those traits into the position. Plus, it demonstrates an eagerness to learn. This doesn't mean you need an overly peppy personality with permanent grin, but zeal for the position, the company and profession will show you'll go the distance.

5. Be honest

Be sincere and truthful about the past. Honesty shows that you have integrity. Be candid and open about past jobs. This doesn't mean you have to churn out all the dirty details of previous employers or supervisors. If you are coming from a bad experience, think of ways to put a positive spin on your previous situation. For example, if you were let go from your last job, be truthful without being negative and highlight your strengths or how you learned from that situation.