

# MASTERING THE ART OF THE JOB INTERVIEW

Scoring in a job interview is an art and mastering this art is what will get you the job.

At times of high unemployment employers have a large pool of applicants to choose from. There are approximately five people standing between creative professionals and the job they want, a survey suggests. Job applicants are going to have competition no matter what field they are in. The recipe for success is to get attention from the person making the hiring decision. The following tips are a must for job-seekers hoping to stand out among the crowd.

- Do your due diligence – know more than you have to about the job and the company in order to define what specifically you can offer. Consult various sources, go through articles about the company, ask people in your network for insight, etc. The corporate website is a great source to start with.
- Put your best foot forward – be polite from the moment you step forward through the company's doors; you won't image how powerful the opinion of the Receptionist is!
- Resist every type of disturbance while waiting to be called in; such as texting or talking on your cell phone. Actually, cell phones should be switched off before you walk in the door. You will make a much better impression by sitting patiently and reading any



It's not always the best candidate who gets the job; it's the one who has succeeded in getting the attention of the right people

- corporate literature which may hang around.
- Watch your body language. Gestures and postures teach a lot about a person to an experienced interviewer. Practice interviewing with a friend who can give feedback about any distracting habits you might have.
  - Listen carefully to the questions asked. Most of them would be behavioural questions requiring you to describe either a situation or a task, the actions or steps that you have taken to solve the business problems and the final results of your actions. These answers are commonly known as STAR answers – **S**ituation/**T**ask-**A**ction-**R**esult
  - Ask good questions and not just about money and vacation benefits. Interviewers respond to you when you give them something to talk to you about, says Brian Marchant

- Director of the business career centre at Queen's University School of Business. So ask detailed questions about the job, or how the team you would be joining works together. Doing so reinforces your interest in the position and company while providing you with useful information about the company, its culture, values, business practices and management styles that will help you determine if the job is a good fit for you.
- Don't try to exaggerate on your experience. A good interviewer will spot this right away and will automatically disregard your application.
- Be yourself – The Hiring Manager needs to know whether the person sitting in front of him or her is a good job and organization fit. On the other side, you don't want to jump into a job where you will be miserable because it's

incompatible with the person you are.

- Be positive and follow through – If you don't get the job, ask the interviewer for tips about how you could have done better. If you accept rejection graciously, you may even put yourself first in line for the company next opening.

The following tips might sound common sense, yet they are important to be re-stated

- Wear a suit. If the employer tells you not to wear a suit, then wear business casual clothes such as long-sleeves shirt for a man and a skirt that's not too short for a woman - i.e. look professional.
- Arrive at least 10 minutes ahead. You don't want to arrive too early, but you don't want to risk being late. If for any unforeseen reason you happen to be late, phone to inform that you are on your way.
- Park your car in a spot for visitors, some companies will check.

As much as job interviews should be as objective as possible, there's a lot of subjectivity that gets into play when deciding on a candidate. By following these simple tips you will increase your chances of getting the attention of the right people.

Bibliography: Mastering the Art of the Interview by Kim Covert – Ottawa Citizen – Working Section – Wednesday July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010