

MEMORABLE INTERVIEWING

The interview is an integral part of the recruiting process. An employer is looking not only for the right skill set, but also the “right fit”- someone who fulfills the technical job requirements and meshes with the current staff and company culture. The interview is your opportunity to showcase your skills and personality. It’s also your chance to assess the company and decide if this opportunity will meet your needs. *Effective interviewing ultimately hinges on six key components.*

The 6 “BE’s” of Effective Interviewing

BE Prepared
BE a Good Listener
BE Inquisitive
BE Specific & Cite Real Examples
BE Energetic & Enthusiastic
BE Yourself!

BE Prepared

Preparing for an interview is of the utmost importance. With the amount of information available on the Internet, you can uncover a variety of intelligence regarding a company’s business strategy, their latest press releases, and in some cases, details about their management team. Many interviews that fail are the result of a lack of preparation. There’s nothing more unimpressive to a hiring manager than a candidate who’s failed to read the job description or who lacks an understanding of the company’s core business. Useful resources of information include LinkedIn, corporate websites, analyst reports, press releases, blogs, *The San Diego Business Journal*, *The San Diego Daily Transcript*, *FreshNews.com*, *SignOnSanDiego.com*, recruiters, and most importantly, your personal network.

BE a Good Listener

Listen carefully; one of the worst offenses you can commit during an interview is to constantly interrupt the interviewer. Not only does this demonstrate your lack of listening skills, but it also causes the interviewer to question your ability to manage a team and communicate with others. Bring a notepad with you to take notes and write down your questions as they arise. Before asking a question, determine whether it’s the most appropriate time. With some patience, perhaps the interviewer will answer the question before you ask it. Finally, *you should always leave your cell phone in the car during an interview to avoid being distracted or interrupted*; well-qualified candidates quickly lose all credibility if they receive or accept phone calls during an interview.

BE Inquisitive

This is one of the most obvious components of an effective interview, yet it’s often underutilized. Having read the job description and researched the company, you’ll arrive at the interview with a very basic and purely academic understanding of the company and position – nothing more. An in-person interview provides you with an opportunity to discuss the true substance of the position. During the interview, you’ll discover the company’s

culture, the long-term prospects for growth, the day-to-day activities, the hiring manager's expectations, the manager's work ethic and work style, and the makeup and tenure of the department. Without asking the proper questions, much of this substance remains a mystery... and the worst time to solve it is after you start working for the company!

BE Specific & Cite Real Examples

The current trend in screening talent is *behavioral or situational interviewing*. This style of interviewing challenges you by asking about specific situations such as "Tell me about a time when..." or "Give me an example of a situation in which you..." or "How did you handle a situation with a difficult..." The most effective way to demonstrate your experience and showcase your talents is to provide specific examples of your accomplishments. Once again, this can't be accomplished without properly preparing for the interview. Ideally, the examples you cited on your resume are the same examples you'll use during the interview process. Be sure to outline your role in each accomplishment, the reason you were involved in the situation, the challenges you faced and how you overcame them. Most importantly, describe the outcome and how it benefited the team, department and company. **A word of caution: don't take credit for other people's successes.** At some point during the process, your exaggerations will be discovered!

BE Energetic & Enthusiastic

A positive attitude and an enthusiastic demeanor won't single-handedly secure a job for which you're under-qualified, but you'll almost certainly *lose a job that you are qualified for if you fail to demonstrate your interest and excitement during the interview*. Throughout the screening process, the hiring manager will spend a great deal of time evaluating your culture fit in addition to your technical fit. Whether the department is high energy or low key, the hiring manager wants to hire someone who's passionate about the work he'll be doing. Remember to smile, use open body language, nod in agreement, ask follow-on questions, maintain eye contact, and show emotion in your responses. *Caution:* This is not an invitation to be disingenuous or annoyingly "peppy." If you're unable to demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm in the position, perhaps it's not for you.

BE Yourself!

Finally, but most important of all, **be yourself!** The only way to avoid a mismatched placement is to provide the interviewer with a genuine picture of your approach, style and skills. (*Note: this includes the presentation of a truthful resume.*) While there's always some degree of "selling" during the interview process, you'll avoid surprises and misaligned expectations *if and only if* you discuss your work style and work ethic in an honest fashion from the very beginning. A recent survey conducted by Leadership IQ indicated that 46% of new hires fail within 18 months...with nearly 89% leaving their position due to a lack of culture fit.

The process of Interviewing can seem overwhelming, exhausting and nerve-racking if you're not prepared. However, by adhering to these six guidelines, you'll greatly enhance your success rate and gain a competitive edge.