



Help with my Resume

An interview with the interviewer

To give you some insight into the way an interviewer selects candidates for interviews, we've captured a real life discussion with just such a person.

Q *What do you look for in an interview?*

A First and foremost, I look for fit. Will this candidate fit the role and will they fit the organization. The first fit has everything to do with competence, potential and abilities while the second one has more to do with attitudes and behaviours.

Q *What about first impressions - can you tell if someone is right in the first 30 minutes?*

A Yes and no. I do know that I can tell if someone is WRONG in the first 10 minutes. If I can get some positive impressions in the first 10 minutes or so - I will likely work very hard at uncovering more information to validate or change my first impression. A good interviewer will use all of their intuition as well as what facts are presented by the candidate. Non verbal communication is important as well as verbal.

Q *What are the key things that you look at in an interview?*

A Well that depends on the job. I am looking for different skills and behaviours in an accountant versus those for a public relations manager or a truck driver. But there are some common themes:

- Is the individual being open and truthful rather than guarded and answering questions with 'what I want to hear'?
- Does it appear that the resume matches the candidate and vice versa?
- Does the candidate appear interested, and excited about the opportunity?
- Did the person show up on time and are they fresh, rested, clean, well presented and free from any alcohol or other influences?
- Can they speak clearly to describe the competencies that I require and demonstrate the level of competence that they have achieved by relating to specific examples of past performance?
- Does the candidate ask pertinent questions which demonstrate an understanding of the job requirements and their understanding of their fit for the role and to my company?
- Does the candidate seem like they are:
 - excited about the job
 - able to learn at an acceptable speed
 - the kind of person who will be easy to manage
 - positive and have a strong work ethic
 - a person who will 'fit in' to our culture and our work unit
 - someone with high potential to succeed

Q *What are things that turn employers off a candidate?*

A That really depends on the employer. Hiring someone is an art and a science and the interviewer needs to balance the science of investigation to uncover facts and competencies with the art of intuitive connection with the candidate. I have turned down many candidates that on paper, were likely a good fit but there were some behavioural indicators that the candidate would likely not flourish in the job or the environment. There are some key points however that would likely cause me to reject someone as a candidate...

- Does not have the necessary experience to do the job
- Seems to be hiding or embellishing facts - skirting around the topics I am introducing to avoid answering them
- Talking instead of listening - that tells me two things - that the candidate doesn't care to listen and that the candidate may be someone difficult to train or to manage.
- Late for the interview
- Has been drinking alcohol (even the night before will have residual effects on appearance / 'brightness')
- Being too casual, familiar or too interested in being my friend as a way to impress me
- Being too quiet - sitting passively and only answering questions with short answers
- Low energy, apparent low interest in the job - ie - more interested in the benefit program than the job duties
- Slouching, avoiding eye contact - unfocussed, distracted, not paying attention
- Inappropriately dressed - jeans / tee shirt for an office job interview

Q *Why is that some people go to interviews only to be rejected?*

A There are many reasons for that - Don't despair though - if you have presented yourself in the best possible way then you have done all you can. Don't think you are a bad person for it. You should be aware of the pitfalls of the process and what happens after an interview. An employer will likely do reference checks and sometimes that is a problem for a candidate. For example ...

- if you listed your ex boss as a reference, are you CERTAIN that he / she will say great things about you?
- If you listed a relative or friend for a personal reference, the employer might not even call them because they will assume that they are biased.
- If you listed references for jobs many years ago, an employer might assume that you don't have anyone who can speak to your current experience - why?
- If you lied about ANYTHING on your resume - you will be rejected. One untruth will cause the employer to doubt everything that you have said. Never, never, never lie on a resume or in an interview!
- Finally - you might wish to get some interview skills training - that can help you prepare for the process and get better results by interviewing better than your competition!