

Introduction

Hiring is a major concern for companies, who face tough times. The job market has changed, and things are even tougher for the job seeker, with such trends as: cutbacks, mass layoffs, downsizing, and offshoring. It is harder to find a good job and to stay employed. Being unemployed is stressful, with worries about self-worth, income, and the future. And with health insurance in this country tied to employment, if you don't have a job, you probably cannot afford to see a doctor.

So you need a competitive edge when applying for jobs, in addition to the knowledge and skills required for the position. You need interviewing knowledge and skills. You need to stand out as the perfect candidate. This book will help you to improve your interviewing skills, to give you that competitive edge.

The odds are stacked against you. For any good job there may be dozens or even hundreds of applicants. Here's a typical scenario: a recruiter or Human Resources (HR) person scans for minimal requirements and takes the first bunch of resumes that look good enough. From that stack, the field is winnowed down to about a dozen, who are then screened by telephone (see the section The Telephone Screen on page 21). From those applicants, three to six are selected to come in for a preliminary face-to-face interview at the company. From that group, they may find two or three people they want to bring back for another interview. Then one person is selected to fill the position.

The worst part is, the more desperate you are, the more you are likely to have difficulty during the interview. Many people fear the process and are nervous when applying for a job. Following the guidelines in this book will remove your fear and uncertainty, help you avoid common mistakes, and prepare you to make the best impression. Make this an energizing experience and a way to reinforce your career accomplishments. You will be focused, confident, and comfortable when you interview.

Interviewing for a job is like going on a blind date. Let's look at the similarities:

- You dress up in nice clothes and try to look your best.
- You go off to meet a stranger at an appointed time for some conversation.
- You hope to spark an attraction that leads to a relationship.
- You try to find enough in common to maintain interest.
- You hope the other party will be worth your while, with no obvious bad qualities.
- You do not want to be rejected for any reason. You want to be the one with the choice of moving forward or not.

In both interviewing and dating, the intent is to present yourself in the best light possible, showing all your good qualities, and hoping for a mutual attraction. You want the interviewer to like you, to remember you in a good way, and to call you again, so you can continue to meet them and stay with them for as long as you wish.

Studying this book will improve your chances of having that “second date,” in hopes of leading to a relationship. Do not assume that you will get a job just because you are the most qualified. ***People hire based on feelings.*** If you don't feel right, you're out. This book shows you how to get that “feel.” Although there are different types of jobs, learning to deal with people and interviews is the same across all of them.

This book presents what you need to know, in easy-to-follow concepts and instructions. The information includes dealing with the time before you go to the interview, taking you through the entire process, and discussing what happens afterward. Although this book focuses on jobs in the professional sector, there are good rules to follow for any job-seeker.

Just like in dating, there are do's and don'ts, questions to ask, and questions to avoid. A big part of the process is listening to what the decision makers want, before stating what you can do for them. This book covers how to do this, in steps along the way to transforming yourself into the perfect candidate.

- **How to Avoid Mistakes**—Even if a person is qualified for a job, many people fail an interview by doing something wrong. This book will show you many mistakes to avoid.
- **How to Prepare**—You will find out how walk into an interview prepared. Many people arrive for an interview without adequate preparation, and miss a chance at a good job. Using the guidelines in this book gives you an edge over other candidates, because you will have prepared as a professional. Confidence will show, and practicing these techniques will make the difference.
- **How to Speak With Confidence**—This guide prepares you to talk about yourself and your accomplishments in ways that show your talents in the best light. Don't wait and hope for the right conversational line; discover how to lead the interviewer and to do well every time you answer a question, or ask a question. It's not just saying the right things; it's also how you say them. Listen, then leverage the discussion to your advantage. Many interviewers will be relieved if you take the burden of leading off their hands. This will prove to them that you are the right choice for the job, because if you can do so well at the interviewing process, you can do well in the position.
- **How to Get Additional Assistance**—While telling you many of the things you need to know, this book should only be the start of your interviewing research. Use the Internet, libraries, bookstores, and other people to access a vast array of knowledge. Many resources are free or low-cost, but the quality varies widely. Cast a broad net for information that is verifiable and good.

A companion to this book is *How to Improve Your Resume*, which shows you how to sharpen the important tool that lands you the interview. Resume blunders can screen you out before you've even had a chance. Your resume is your advertisement, and a well-done resume means your message will reach the client.

For questions about this book or other titles in this series, contact the author at:

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