

CLASSIFIEDS

THE INTERVIEW: Local hiring experts share their advice



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Presented by the Post-Dispatch Advertising Department

What are you looking for most during the interview?

I look for two primary qualities, compatibility and competence. I have to feel comfortable that an applicant will fit well in an organization and can do the job. Specifically, I want to see a positive personality, intelligence, commitment, and a can do attitude. Show me how and why you are a winner.

What are the most common mistakes candidates make during the interview?

The worst mistake is not being prepared. The hire decision is based upon the company's perception that an applicant can help solve the company's problems. A candidate must know the company and its issues. Research, research, research. Make sure to understand the company's culture. Show them how you can fit in.

Another mistake is not making the interviewer look good. An applicant must make the interviewer feel comfortable with their compatibility and competence. Never display any hostility, attitude, or defensiveness. It is an absolute deal killer.

What is the worst thing a candidate has done during an interview?

One took a call from his wife and proceeded to exchange hostilities at a high decibel count and with colorful profanity. He then spent the rest of the interview berating his wife and her in-laws.

What are the biggest challenges you face in recruiting?

Finding competent committed people who will work well in a variety of environments. There is a prevailing sense of entitlement among many applicants. Hiring managers want to know what an applicant can do for them, not be subject to quires about what will the company do for them. Remember who is going to whom for what.

If you could make one recommendation to job seekers, what would it be?

Present yourself as a highly motivated, committed and likable solution to a company's problems. Be thoroughly prepared, research the company, and practice your interview and responses to various questions. If possible, smile more and relax. Companies tend to hire people they like.

Reader questions:

How can a person who has little work experience handle a question about his lack of work experience?

Try answering with a question, "What specifically are you looking for?" Determine what specific skills and experience the employer is seeking. Never defend your position or become hostile. Likable, eager, and intelligent people are trainable and often better employment bets than people with more experience.

How does an experienced worker the age of 50 plus get a good job?

Target organizations that reward experience. Research company websites/AARP/etc. to find these types of companies. Make yourself a desirable solution to a company's problems.

What would you suggest for someone who has a criminal record or even someone who has been to prison? What can we reformed criminals do?

Tough hurdle. Seek out advocacy organizations that work with these issues. They can be your advocate for employment and address some of the company's concerns.

GOT A QUESTION OF YOUR OWN?

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