

Tips for Outshining Your Competition during a Job Search

Know yourself

Determine what skills you are marketing and to whom. Write them down, rehearse your pitch and refer back to them often during the interview. This will show the interviewer that you know yourself and have clear goals and objectives – both highly desirable attributes. Finding the right job is a mental game. You need to know yourself and your craft well. Spend as much time learning about the craft as you do looking for a position.

Know your prospective employer

Use every available source to find out as much as you can about the employer. Your knowledge of the company you're interviewing with will help demonstrate your sincere interest in working for them. Be ready to answer the question, "Why do you want to work here?"

Develop a focused message and marketing strategy

From resume to thank you note knowledge of the job market and sense of fit between the two is crucial. Job seekers need to know that a job search is essentially a self-marketing campaign in which they are the product. Once the job seeker knows the product, they can begin to think of themselves in job market terms.

Prepare for the interview

One of the most common interview questions and often the first is, "Tell me about yourself." Other popular interview questions include: "What is your greatest strength?" and the dreaded "What is your greatest weakness?" There's no reason to wing it during the interview. Book Reference: "Knock 'em Dead," by Martin Yate dedicates an entire section to "Great Answers to Tough Interview Questions," which gives readers a comprehensive understanding of why interviewers ask certain questions, what information they are really looking for and how to answer them in a way that improves your chances of landing the job.

Keep the conversation flowing

Ask relevant and insightful questions throughout the interview. The give and take nature of this dialogue will show the interviewer your interest in the company and the job and your expertise for the position.

Build rapport

Rapport - and your ability to build it - is one of the most crucial elements of the job interview. Let's face it; likeability and personal chemistry are crucial in most situations – especially job interviews. How do you build rapport? Appearance is the first step. A polished and self confident image sets the stage for that critical first impression. Wear professional attire that looks good and feels comfortable. Your facial gestures are also important. Smile upon greeting your interviewer and try to relax. Look your interviewer in the eye and relax. Speak enthusiastically and in a friendly tone. Be sincere and professional. Determine what aspects of your character set you apart from others, how these fit in the company's culture and work environment.

Listen carefully

Oftentimes during a job interview candidates are so busy selling themselves that they forget to listen. In the job interview, you should listen as much as you speak. When you really need a job and are anxious to find out about the salary and health benefits, it's easy to forget that your first task is to show how you can help the company solve its employment need.

Drive home your experience and qualifications with a story

When explaining your skills, painting a mental picture in the mind of an interviewer will make your experience more relevant and memorable. Identify and describe a problem or situation you faced and describe the actions you took to resolve it. Finally, describe the end result of your actions in measurable terms, including why your strategy was effective.

Follow up is essential

Send a thank you letter to your interviewer within 24-hours of your interview. In addition to being polite, a thank you letter provides you with another opportunity to sell your qualifications to the interviewer. This is the perfect time to provide a reminder of who you are and why you are the best candidate. Thank you notes also allow the opportunity to clarify a point you think needed more explanation or say something you may have forgotten.