

Getting a Job vs. Doing the Job

First off, don't go looking for a job. When you send your resume to someone you don't know and who doesn't know you, you're looking for a handout. You're wasting your time and the senior executive's. Instead, start by understanding how your skills can profit a particular business. If you can't explain this to a prospective employer, why should he or she hire you?

Most job hunters project the attitude "I'm looking for a job" rather than "I'm here to do the work that should have been done". This can kill you in an interview. There is a big difference between looking to get a job, and offering to do a job. A good headhunter has a tremendous edge because he selects and prepares the candidate who can walk into the meeting with the employer and do the job, right there in the interview.

Obviously, this takes some research. Headhunters do a lot of research, and it makes all the difference in the world. Unlike most job hunters, headhunters don't sit by the phone, waiting for someone to call back on a resume. The headhunter seeks to control all aspects of the deal, so that every candidate he submits hits the ground, runs in the interview and is desirable enough to hire.

Make doing the job in the interview your goal. The interview isn't an experiment or a fact-finding mission. It's not where you go to "learn more about the job", even though that's how most job hunters view it. Don't go on an interview unless you are prepared to control it, and to demonstrate your ability to do the work.

The New Interview

Is the job interview The Moment of Truth? Nah. The Land of Bunk is more like it. Never have more stupid questions been answered with the same repetitive drivel as in the job interview. You can sit down and easily list ten questions everyone is asked in an interview. Human resources jockeys will tell you that's the point: there are certain things we just must know about everyone.

Bunk. Every job is different. Every CEO is different. Every candidate is different. When you enforce rules that encourage candidates to sound and act the same, it becomes impossible to separate the right candidate from all the droning wannabes.

That's what makes The New Interview work. A good headhunter will not let a candidate meet his/her client unless the candidate is ready and able to control the interview by making it a hands-on, at-work meeting that focuses on the work that needs to be done. If you spend an interview doing anything else, your effort is wasted.

Control The Interview

Don't let an interview turn into a rote question-and-answer session about your greatest accomplishments and your biggest weaknesses. That's not what will win you a job offer. Focus on what you can do for the business. It's up to you to take control of an interview, and turn it into a solution to the business' challenges.

The Agenda Is The Work

Prepare the interviewer before your meeting. Let him or her know that you want to clearly demonstrate how you would do the work that needs to be done. If all you do in an interview is talk about your history, you will leave the senior executive unconvinced that you can do the work. A headhunter will never jeopardize his fee by letting a candidate treat an interview like a tea session.

Be Ready To Do The Job

You must initiate to offer solutions to the business' challenges during the interview. Do the job. Sound intimidating? Well, if you can't do it, why bother interviewing for this particular work? You have to be able to do it. You might as well get ready since you will have to do it if you win the job.

Introduce Yourself

Introduce yourself to the senior executive before you meet, in a phone call, or through a referral made by someone who knows you both. Leverage. Such an intermediary can be another employee, another manager (from this or another company), a vendor of the company, or a customer. If you have to, spend some serious time finding someone who will do this for you. Don't consider this a minor option. Don't go on a blind date. Companies retain headhunters because they hate blind dates.

Join The Team -- Enlist!

Be tentative and you'll die. Don't wait to be asked to participate in the organisation's work. You'll never be asked. Be proactive -- enlist! Be on the job when you walk into your meeting. Arrive to face the senior executive's challenges with him/her. Your goal is to perform like an executive who wants to create an impact in the organisation's bottom line. Act like you're on the team. If you don't, you never will be.

Offer Profit to The Manager

Be ready to discuss or do something in your meeting that will help the senior executive with a problem he/she is facing now. Ask him/her to put a relevant challenge on the table, so you can show how you'd go about solving it. This single technique -- which focuses totally on your work skills -- does more to impress an employer than anything I've ever seen a candidate do in an interview. Roll up your sleeves! When you're done, ask to be reviewed like an employee.

Want The Job

Every day, job candidates fail to win offers for one reason: the employer isn't convinced the candidate wants the job. If you would accept a position given the right offer, don't leave the interview without telling the senior executive. Do you wonder why it sometimes takes an employer forever to give you a decision? It's partly because you probably never gave the employer a decision at the end of the interview. Look the senior executive in the eye, without a smile on your face, and say "I can do this job for you profitably -- I want the job." Afraid you might ultimately end up turning the job down if it were offered? That's another issue. You can want a job but legitimately reject an offer that can't be negotiated to your satisfaction.

Here's the point: would you hire someone to work on your team if they didn't make it clear they wanted to work with you? I wouldn't.

Worth, Value and Profit

Your worth is what makes an employer want to hire you. Your worth is determined by the value you offer the employer. That means you have to take the initiative in your job hunt. An employer cannot extract value from you -- you must offer it. You can only offer value if you know what is valuable to the employer. That means a lot of research up front, before you approach any employer.

The headhunter earns his fee by establishing the worth of a candidate and the value to be offered before any meetings with the employer take place. You can do the same for yourself. The bottom line in any business enterprise is profit. It's the thing that enables us to survive to work -- and succeed -- yet another day. Your job hunt is a business enterprise. If it doesn't promise profit for the prospective employer, it won't produce profit -- in the form of a healthy job offer -- for you.

Make your next interview count!