

Shake the Interview Jitters

By Julie Desmond

People are sometimes surprised to hear me say an interview is nothing to be nervous about, but when they think about it, it makes perfect sense. An interview is an opportunity to meet people you might get to work with forty hours (or more) every week for the next several weeks, months or years. Anything you hide now will come to light eventually; anything deficiencies you have in your skills will be apparent the day you start your new job. So you might as well be yourself – your best self – during the interview. If you are not the one who gets hired, then chances are it was not the best fit for you anyway.

So don't be nervous. Easier said than done, right? With some preparation and practical steps, you can get from application to interview to hired without having a nervous breakdown in the process.

Apply smart: apply to work with companies where either you know someone or where the company is located very near your home (5 miles or so). Both are huge selling points in an interview, and improve the odds that you will be more familiar than the average candidate regarding the company's past, present and future activities.

Know your strengths and weaknesses: review the job description with a fine tooth comb. Know every requirement and know whether you hit or miss on each one. Where you are completely comfortable, this is a strength. Where you're going to have a learning curve, that's a weakness.

Know your salary requirement: do your research and know what

fair pay is for the job you're applying for. Do not apply for positions that won't pay what you need. No one will hire you if you're overqualified, even if you tell them you don't mind the cut in pay. Truthfully, you do mind, don't you?

Know what you need to know: create a list of Additional Questions which you can ask at the end of the interview. Rarely will a hiring manager be impressed if you say, "No, I don't have any questions." You should have some. Your question can be, "How do you see me having an impact from day one?" or it might be, "When should we re-connect?" When asked if you have additional questions, the correct answer is always, "Yes!"

Preparing yourself for the job interview gives you the confidence to walk in and have a friendly conversation. These are people you want to work with; be sure you are someone confident and friendly; someone they want to work with, too.

Julie Desmond is a recruiter with Specialized Recruiting Group in Edina. Write to Julie.desmond@expresspros.com

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