

CAREER SEARCH AMERICA

CAREER TRANSITION TOOLBOX WHITEPAPER

THE SELF-MARKETING JOB INTERVIEW:

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MARKET YOURSELF TO
YOUR NEXT EMPLOYER



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WHY ARE JOB INTERVIEWS SO INTIMIDATING?

There are many reasons, but here's a big one: it's an artificial situation.

Even when an interviewer does her best to put the candidate at ease, the job interview is still an artificial situation. Most job-seekers, who don't go in with the right mind-set, posture and strategy (and that's most job seekers), see themselves trapped in an "underdog / overdog" situation. The hiring manager has all the power and the needy applicant is at her mercy. They are unprepared. They don't know what to expect, and whatever self-confidence they have evaporates completely as soon as the conversation begins.

Time to shift your perspective!

USE THE SELF-MARKETING APPROACH TO BUILD CONFIDENCE AND GAIN CONTROL

One way to make interviews less intimidating is to embrace a new model, one that helps you maintain your personal authority, sell you services for top dollar, and foster a peer relationship with the interviewer right from the start.

To successfully use the self-marketing approach, you have to know a few things. First of all, understand what a job interview really is. It's not a power game; it's a two-way relationship where both parties have something to sell and something to buy. If the company is interested in you, they are going to have to sell you their opportunity. At the same time, they are going to buy your time (by giving you a paycheck), talent and ability to help them achieve their business goals.

You are selling your valuable services and buying an opportunity to succeed which you are willing to pay for in hours, effort and dedication. That in a nutshell is our self-marketing approach to the job interview.

How do you gather all of the information you will need to understand the company well enough to effectively use the self-marketing approach? You conduct career research. Career research is critically important. If you haven't researched the company and don't know what problems it faces, you won't be able to identify a need that hiring you could solve.

THINK OF YOUR INTERVIEW AS A SALES CALL

Once you've conducted your research, you need to present your case for hiring you effectively. This means your interview is essentially a type of sales presentation, but it's not a "hard sell." It's helpful to keep a few things in mind during the interview, so that you put your best foot forward when using the self-marketing approach.

To begin, professionalism is a top priority. At its most basic level professionalism means knowing what you're talking about; otherwise, you're not a professional. You're an amateur. Your professional knowledge should be the foundation upon which you build the case for hiring you. In addition to professional talent, courtesy is key. Think about it, good salespeople are polite and show respect, even when dealing with customers who are rude and inconsiderate. If you aren't courteous, an employer will have difficulty envisioning you as part of their working environment.

In addition to courtesy, interpersonal skills are valuable to you as a potential employee. People pay attention when they are paid attention to. Listening, showing empathy and concern, knowing when and how to respond, these are all components of interpersonal skill that are hallmarks of good salespeople. Not only should you pay attention to others, you should respond to them in clear, solution-oriented speech. This is the heart of the self-marketing approach. You should know how to keep the conversation on track so that neither you nor the interviewer become distracted by topics unrelated to their problem and your ability to fix it.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THE INTERVIEW HAS ENDED

Whether or not you “close the sale,” follow up is extremely important. To begin, always do this in writing. Emails or phone calls will work against the professionalism you’ve worked hard to convey during the interview. Your follow-up note gives you the chance to reinforce the good impression you have created and it should help establish your positive place in the manager’s mind as he or she considers who should fill the company’s open position. Furthermore, even if you don’t receive an offer, but a new opportunity opens up, you are that much more likely to be called.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

- Understand the job interview as an opportunity for you to market yourself and your abilities
 - Know what it means to market or sell as a professional
 - Be sure to follow up after every interview in writing
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