



Don't hesitate to go the extra distance for dream job

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In these turbulent economic times, getting the job you want is especially important to your financial security and to the advancement of your career.

Whether you attempt to get ahead where you work or pursue opportunities elsewhere, perfecting your interview skills is essential. For advice that could help you, I spoke with top recruiter Tom Ruff of Thomas Ruff & Associates in Manhattan Beach.

Ruff feels that before an interview, you must do your homework. Go on the internet and learn more about your target company's products, its performance, its industry, and other useful information so that you enter the interview knowledgeable and confident.

What interview advice does Ruff offer?

"Smile and be enthusiastic, energetic, and maintain eye contact. Posture is also important. Sit up straight and don't slouch. Ask good, educated questions, which is where your homework is critical. Don't waste time asking questions whose answers you can find through research, such as, "Tell me about your company, tell me about your products, tell me about the financial status of the company."

"Instead, uncover what the manager's needs are, what the job's areas of responsibility and authority are, who the top performers in that job are and what made them so. Also, what will it take to become successful in that position, what challenges will it present, and if you become a top performer, what is the promotion opportunity?"

"Then do a trial close. Say, 'After meeting with me and reviewing my background, do you have any hesitation or concerns that would prevent you from hiring me for the job?' Listen to the response and resolve any issues. Then close by asking for the job. Say, 'Based upon the research I have done and the impression you've made today, there are reasons why I want this job. What do I have to do to become part of your team?'"

"Also, bring a 'Brag Book' in a nice three ring binder. It's a book of accomplishments. On the outside, put 'Professional Accomplishments Of (your name).' The first page is your resume. The second page, a copy of your college degree if you have one, and then, in chronological order, performance evaluations, training certificates, awards, letters from supervisors or customers, and a list of references. During the interview, you can say, 'have documentation to support my resume if you'd like to see it.' Have an extra copy to leave behind if they want it."

“As the interview concludes, ask for a business card and treat that card with respect. Then follow up that same day with a handwritten note and take it back in and give it to the receptionist. Also, leave a short message on their voice mail thanking them for the interview and reiterating your desire for the job.”

It also can help to be creative.

“Three years ago, a gentleman I helped land a job at Johnson & Johnson did something very clever. Because he had no industry experience, they called him an ‘underdog,’ so he made a poster board showing the ‘Top 10 Underdogs.’ Two through 10 included such things as Truman defeating Dewey in the 1948 presidential election and Cassius Clay beating Sonny Liston to win the heavy weight championship. But No. 1 on that list was to show himself becoming ‘1999 Rookie of the Year’ at Johnson & Johnson. He Fed-Exed it in and the manager called him the next morning and said “That’s one of the most creative things I’ve ever seen.”
“He was then invited back for another interview and he got the job over several candidates with industry experience.”

So, the next time you’re the underdog, try this approach and remember as well, the words of Helen Keller who said, “Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature....Life is either a daring adventure or nothing.”

So, be daring, give it everything you have and victory could be yours.

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