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Advertising Feature

What to say to hear 'you're hired'

Setting yourself apart during interviews

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An interview is when an employer gets to find out if you're as good as your résumé suggests. You know to dress professionally, have a firm handshake, arrive on time and practice your answers beforehand. So does everybody else. Sometimes what sets you apart isn't a handshake; it's what you say.

Let your personality show

Job seekers, eager to show off their vast knowledge of an industry, are quick to throw around jargon and insider terms, but they shouldn't get hung up on showing off, either, says Debra Yergen, author of "Creating Job Security."

"A certain amount of jargon is expected, and using it only makes you sound knowledgeable when not using jargon would seem clumsy or awkward," Yergen cautions. How much you pepper your conversation with insider terms will depend on the industry and your role. "What matters to hiring managers is that a candidate sends a clear message that she or he can do the job and do it well. Jargon is only one element of that."

When carefully choosing what you say, don't forget about your delivery. What often separates the candidate who gets hired from the candidates who don't is an intangible quality.

"There are so many times when a



CREATIVE OUTLET

During an interview, a good handshake is key, but it's important to remember your words speak just as loud as your actions.

hiring manager will have two or more relatively comparable candidates and will absolutely lean toward one over the others. Call it tone, energy, confidence or charisma. If you can control how you relate to a potential supervisor or hiring manager, whether it's how you answer questions or the overall package you bring to the table, you absolutely should make conscious decisions to give yourself an edge," Yergen advises.

The trick is to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible. That chemistry won't happen if you're forcing yourself to answer every

question how you think you should answer it, rather than how you actually feel about it.

"If you're nervous, remember to smile, speak slowly and thoughtfully, listen to what the interviewer is saying and asking, and respond in a friendly and succinct way to the best of your ability," Yergen recommends.

A calm demeanor will pay off when the interviewer asks if you have any questions. If you've been too anxious to pay attention to what he or she is saying, you won't be able to ask follow-up questions.

"People love to share their opin-

ions and you should use this time to make your interviewer feel great," Yergen says. "Ask why they would recommend the company as a great place to work. Nothing makes someone want to hire you more than having them explain why they think you'd be a great fit for the job and the organization."

Leave a lasting impression

Never forget that your purpose at the interview is to say what a résumé can't. This is why interviews, especially in the second or third round, involve meeting with your potential co-workers. Employ-

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ers want to know if you'll fit in with the crowd.

"The most important thing at this point is to be likeable," Yergen reminds. "If you can give potential colleagues the feeling that you already acknowledge their history with the organization as having value, you've built an alliance before you've even been hired."

That alliance can help you even after you've left the interview room. As you hopefully realize, a thank-you message to the interviewer is a must. You want to show the employer that you have manners and that you appreciate the time they set aside to meet with you.

Yergen encourages job seekers to use the thank-you note to pinpoint specific moments in the interview that stood out for them. A specific example shows that you not only paid attention to the conversation but that you thought about it. Don't assume the employer will draw that conclusion; tell them yourself in the letter.

"Courtesy is important but in this economy it's not enough," Yergen reminds. Don't leave anything to chance. Just say the right thing and you'll increase your chances of hearing "you're hired."

Anthony Balderrama is a writer and blogger for CareerBuilder.com and its job blog, www.TheWorkBuzz.com.

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