



The Energy of Conversation

Dedicated to Learning & Improvement

Your Journey to Work: The Nine Steps

When preparing for a job interview follow these next nine steps to make your journey to work a smooth and successful one:

STEP 1 – Manager Shoes

Start to imagine what your future manager may be thinking about the prospect of hiring you. Write down what you think his or her expectations are for the interview. Your *interview list* might include the usual suspects: you turn up on time, you are suitably dressed, are clearly spoken, courteous, you appear enthusiastic during the interview and seem genuinely interested in the job. These you know already, try to think of something more bespoke for the job you are going for.

STEP 2 – Second Guess

Now try to predict some of the questions you might be asked. With some thought you may surprise yourself and *second guess* many of the questions that come up at the interview. This way you can start to practice your answers; ask someone you know to help role play this exercise if possible.

STEP 3 – Curve Balls

And now think of a few questions that you would prefer *not* to be asked. What questions would put you on the spot and cause to potentially feel uncomfortable? Practice answering those too, again role play can be very effective. You are now anticipating any ‘curve balls’ that might be thrown at you and instead of dodging them you are learning how to skilfully catch them.

STEP 4 – Perfect Employee

Put the manager shoes back on for a while and start to define what would be *the perfect employee* from the manager’s point of view. Create two lists for this exercise: 1) ‘Essential Qualities’ – i.e. those that you simply *must* have to stand a chance of getting the job and 2) ‘Impressive Attributes’ which will include additional qualities that might make you stand out from the other interviewees. Your ‘essential’ list might start with the same items in the interview list and might also include being receptive to criticism, hardworking, adaptable etc. Your ‘impressive’ list might feature a local community project that you were involved in or could just be the fact that if you find yourself in between tasks you always make a point

of asking those around you if they need any help. Include as many items as possible in both lists.

STEP 5 – Super Critic

For the next phase write down your weaknesses and worst qualities. Don't beat yourself up too much but be very honest in this self-assessment. Your interviewer may well want to know how you intend to make improvements in your areas of weakness, so be a super critic and ask yourself 'what can I do to improve this going forward?' and produce a good answer. Again practice saying the answer out loud until it feels more comfortable.

STEP 6 – Super Me

Now talk out loud for a few minutes about your strengths and best qualities. Do it with confidence but in a fairly 'matter of fact' way. Although you might want to avoid clichés such as 'trustworthy', 'hard-working' and 'reliable' etc.; do include these if they are true! But don't over-emphasise them or spend too long talking about qualities that might be expected of you anyway, just include them as part of a list. Spend more time on those special qualities that you have. If this proves difficult – i.e. you are not sure about your special qualities - ask someone you know and trust to help you out.

STEP 7 – Case Studies

This step is about coming up with very real and specific examples that back up your strengths. This is very important so that when you are asked (for example) to illustrate a time when you showed 'good leadership' or demonstrated 'good organisational skills' you have a readily prepared case study that backs up your strength.

STEP 8 – Cool Observations

Visit the company's website and make one cool observation about them and remember it. Keep it in your 'back pocket' during the interview – in other words produce this observation at an opportune moment – e.g. "I noticed on your website you have developed your own quality system which stood out to me as my understanding of quality management is that it helps to ensure that customers get a consistently good service". While on the company's website think of a great question to ask during the interview which may be linked to the observation – e.g. "I noticed on your website you have developed your own quality system – could you tell me a little more about that?" Another might be "If you were to choose me for this position, what is the most important quality I should demonstrate in my role?"

STEP 9 – Profile Check

Take a close look at your CV and have one last think about how you might have come across in your written application (before the interview) and what the interviewer may choose to

focus on. This is one last chance to wear the manager's shoes and imagine any concerns your prospective employers may have about you. If you can spot any areas of concern, how can you allay their fears? For instance, they might say "you don't seem to have much experience in this field do you?" Your response might be "No I agree, but I am very determined to make up for lost time and get up to speed" or "No but I am very keen to learn and will study in my own time if necessary". Everything you say during the interview should be genuine; you must mean it!

And Relax

Ok time out. Smile and give yourself a pat on the back as you now completed the groundwork for your next interview. If you have already secured an interview, you have done excellently to get this far. Irrespective of whether you get the job or not, see this interview as an opportunity to become a better interviewee. That would be a very useful long-term skill to develop in itself.

To see *The Four Cornerstones* of job satisfaction, check out this film via the following link and think how you will manage your own career by helping yourself to achieve these feelings at work: www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXjrOUll6as&feature=g-upl

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