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# What Employers Want From Every Candidate They Meet

John Hackett channels some expertise from the U.S. that makes great reading for job seekers.

**A**s employers we want everyone we meet in a job interview to be the ideal candidate for our job vacancy. We want to be spoilt for choice and have a tough decision to make between a number of highly relevant candidates. Which brings me to a very interesting article I read last month by Jeff Haden, a columnist and speaker from the United States.

By outlining what he would like from job candidates he interviews he has provided an excellent instructional guideline for all job seekers.

- 1** I want you to be likeable.  
I want to work with people I like and who also like me. So, I want you to smile, make eye contact, sit forward in your chair, and be enthusiastic. If I don't think I'll enjoy working with you, I'm probably not going to employ you.
- 2** I don't want you to immediately say you want the job.  
I do want you to want the job, but not before I tell you what the job entails. No matter how much research you've done, you can't know you want the job until you know everything possible about it.
- 3** I want you to stand out...  
I tend to remember candidates I interview by impressions rather than a list of facts. That impression could be your clothing, something unusual about your background or a significant work project you achieved. So use this to your advantage. Instead of letting me choose, give me one or two notable ways to remember you.
- 4** ... but not for being negative.  
I won't remember everything you say but I will remember anything negative. Like the candidate who complains about their employer, co-workers, or their clients. I want to hear why you want my job, not why you're desperate to escape your current one. Interviews are like a first date so I know I'm getting the best possible version of "you". If you grumble and complain now, I know things are not likely to improve once you join us.
- 5** I want you to ask lots of questions about what really matters to you...

I need you to be sure the job is a good fit for you so I want you to ask lots of questions: What I expect you to accomplish, what attributes make our top performers outstanding, what you can do to drive results, how you'll be evaluated... all the things that matter to you, me and my business. I don't know what makes work meaningful and enjoyable for you until you tell me, so please speak up.

- 6** ... but only if the majority of those questions relate to work.  
I know you want a positive work-life balance, etc. But save all those sort of questions for later. First, let's find out if you're the right person for the job and whether the tasks and responsibilities are right for you. Then we can talk about the rest.
- 7** I want you to bring a "project."  
I expect you to do some research about my company, but to really impress me use that research to describe how you will contribute as soon as you come on board. If you bring a specific skill, show how I can leverage that skill immediately. Remember, I have to pay your salary from day one, so I'd love to see an immediate return on that investment from the beginning.
- 8** At the end I want you to ask for the job... and I want to know why.  
By the end of the interview you should have a good idea of whether you want the job, and if you do please ask for it! But I also want to know why, so explain to me objectively why the job is a great fit for you.
- 9** And I want you to follow-up.  
Every interviewer appreciates a brief follow-up note. Saying you enjoyed meeting me and will answer any other questions is nice. But "nice" may not separate you from the pack. What I will really remember is when you follow up based on something we discussed. The more you listened during the interview, the easier it is to think of ways to follow-up in a natural and unique way. **m**

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