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JOB ASSIST. COMMON MISTAKES IN JOB INTERVIEWS

1. Introduction

This paper has been written in the framework of Job Assists project. The aim is to stress the common mistakes that job seekers commit in the job interviews. When any person is in a job searching process, a final job interview with the employers is the principal aim. All the efforts made; writing a resume, sending thousands of emails applying for a job, filling hundreds of questionnaires etc. are just a step in this long road. Any successful job searching process should end up in an interview session, considered by many experts the most important part in the process.

2. Definition

What is an interview? A job interview is a part of a recruitment and selection process where the employer wants to obtain information using a variety of techniques and questions, while the interviewed tries to transmit all his personal characteristics that make him the ideal candidate for the job, in order to persuade the interviewer.

The interview, in this job process, will help the employer in this aspects:

- ✚ To validate the suitability of the candidates to the job.
- ✚ Required competences ability.
- ✚ Personal competences.
- ✚ Identify, detect and analyse strength and weakness.

3. Common interview errors to avoid

- Interviewed
 - ✓ **No- shows and tardiness.** Do not cancel any interview if it is not necessary. Show up in the meeting place 10- 15 minutes before the interview. Be sure you get to the right place on time and ask in the reception for the contact persona. Do not confuse or forget names.
 - ✓ **Cell phones.** To bring a cell phone to a job interview, even when it is turned off, is not consider polite. Leave your cell phone in the car or at home.

- ✓ **First impression.** “There is no second chance to cause a first impression”. Smile, make direct contact eye and shake hands firmly are tips to cause a nice first impression. Most of the times, a poor first impression can spoil a whole interview.
- ✓ **No research on the company.** It is so necessary to research the company you are applying to work for. For a human resources director, and for any person involved in the process, is very uncomfortable to interview a candidate who does not know anything about the company he “wants” to work for.
It is mandatory to have wide information about the company; their mission and vision, values, environment policy etc. Everybody needs to show a real interest in working for a certain company. You cannot give the impression that you just want any kind of job in any company.
- ✓ **Negativity.** No matter the amount of bad experiences you have had to deal with, negativism is not helpful in an interview. Try to focus on positive aspects of pasted bad experiences.
- ✓ **Dishonesty.** Do not lie in an interview. Making up “stories” about fake past jobs will spoil the interview and, even though you do not get the job, you may gain a bad reputation in other companies because of LIES. Lies might be the worst enemy for a job seeker being interviewed.
- ✓ **Rude behaviour to others.** A job interview starts by the moment the company contacts the candidate. The way you answer the phone, the way you salute the receptionists or the way you access to a private building will cause an impression. It is a big mistake to consider the interviewer the only evaluator in this process.
- ✓ **No questions made.** An interview is not an interrogatory. It is a business conversation in which all the parts ask and answer questions. Do not let the interviewer lead the conversation on his own, causing a bad impression on your communication ability.
- ✓ **Show weakness.** Do not let the interviewer know your weaknesses. This is a perfect moment to show that there are no weaknesses, just competences and skills that need to be improved.

- ✓ **Not know yourself.** It is mandatory before you affront a job interview to make a profile on yourself. Most of the candidates research the company they apply for, but they forget to do the same on them. An inventory of skills, knowledge, experience, personal and social competences must be done before the interview.
- ✓ **Lack of interest or enthusiasm.** Some candidates seem to be unhappy with the opportunity of being in an interview. Short answers, low voice and a nonverbal communication can give the impression that there is no interest in working for a certain company.
- ✓ **Inappropriate language.** Vulgar and obscene language is a fast ticket to a job rejection. Do not use slang or common expressions that may sound impolite or show low cultural skills.
- ✓ **Dress inappropriate.** A job interview is not a ceremony, but the way people dress must be cared and according to the company style. Even though the company may allow employees to wear jeans, it is no appropriate to wear them during an interview.
- ✓ **Talking too much.** The interview is a tow way conversation. Let the interviewer ask all the questions he needs, and then answer back and /or ask new questions about the company. Do not step over the conversation. It is rude, impolite and may spoil the structure of the interview prepared by the company.
- ✓ **Trash talking.** Do not talk inappropriate about passed bosses, no matter you are right about the discussions you may had. It is a bad idea to reveal passed discussions you may have had involving passed bosses. The interviewer will not like to hire a person than in the future could send a wrong message about the company if the worker finishes his laboral relation with the company.
- ✓ **Being too modest.** A perfect profile will show exactly your weaknesses and strengths. It is so important to prove your abilities with real facts that allows you to give an objective impression of your merits. Do not let interviewers to make an idea of your profile. Prove your abilities with goals you have achieved.

4. Common mistakes made by interviewers

4.1. Introduction

Interview mistakes do not belong exclusively to job applicants. Sometimes interviewers spoil the whole interview making mistakes that do not allow to obtain the necessary information from the interviewed, or this information is not obtained by using objective methods.

4.2 Common mistakes

These are the most common mistakes made by non-expert interviewers:

- ❖ **Halo Effect:** The tendency to rate a person high on all factors even though the person was outstanding on only one factor.
- ❖ **Horns Effect:** The tendency to rate a person low on all factors even though the person was unsatisfactory on only one factor.
- ❖ **Central Tendency:** The inability to rate all or most applicants anywhere but in the middle.
- ❖ **Similar to me:** The tendency to rate higher those people who look, act, or have a background most like the interviewer.
- ❖ **First Impression:** Making the hiring decision within the first few minutes of the interview, instead of evaluating all the information from the full interview.
- ❖ **Contrast Effect:** The tendency to compare the interviewees between them and not with a standard.

5. USEFUL TIPS FOR JOB INTERVIEWS

- 1) **Avoid interview mistakes.** Prepare the interview. Do not give the impression that you do not care about the job searching process. Be a professional even before they hire you.
- 2) **Dress properly.** It is a serious event. Dress according to the company style.
- 3) **Say thank you.** Do not forget to thank the opportunity of being interviewed. It is a real victory, these days, to participate in a job interview.
- 4) **Check out the company.** It is so embarrassing for interviewees when they are asked about the company activity and there is no answer. Show the company that you are willing and yearning to work for them. Get information about them in their web page; their mission, vision, values, principal activities etc.
- 5) **Stay calm.** Being nervous does not help at all. Stay calm is one of the most important tips to receive. Imagine a situation where you are calm, answering the questions you have prepared previously will help to develop a perfect interview.
- 6) **Non verbal language.** Your non verbal language needs to be developed according to the verbal language. Non verbal language normally tells more about a person than all the words in the world. It does not lie, so in case of doubt, your non verbal actions will be the lead evidence.

6. PRACTICAL EXERCISES

6.1. Objective.

The objective of the exercises is to know how to avoid the common mistakes in the interviews, watching and identifying practical situations.

6.2. Methodology.

With this purpose, we will use two methodologies:

- A role play methodology will be used. The trainer will select two pupils, in order to represent a role play, consist of a dialogue between the interviewer and job seeker. One of them will be the interviewer, and the other, the interviewee. Both will have a sheet with their assignment questions (interviewer) and answers (interviewee). They will represent the dialogue. Afterwards, the teacher will suggest the attendants to identify the mistakes and talk about them, and the correct way to answer. Finally, a new dialogue will be „performance“, with the correct situation.
- The pupils will watch some videos on youtube, concerning useful tips for job interviews.

Some practical examples about the dialogues could be these ONES:

✓ **DIALOGUE 1**

INTERVIEWER: I would like to know why you are interested in working for this company?

INTERVIEWEE: *I have finished my unemployment benefit and I need a job.*

INTERVIEWER: What attracts you to our company?

INTERVIEWEE: *I think it is a good company.*

INTERVIEWER: What added value can you bring to our company?

INTERVIEWEE: *I am a very competent worker and excellent at my job.*

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything that you would like to ask about our company?

INTERVIEWEE: *Umm. No. At the moment I can't really think of anything. I'll get in touch with you if I can think of anything.*

✓ **DIALOGUE 2**

INTERVIEWER: I see from your CV that you were working with PMG until just recently. Could you tell me why you left your last job?

INTERVIEWEE: *Well, uummm. My line manager was an incompetent person.*

INTERVIEWER: Can you be more specific please?

INTERVIEWEE: *He expected me to work late to finish reports, because he wasn't organised! I finish work at 5.30 not at 7.00. I had other things to do than finish reports.*

INTERVIEWER: So you like to finish work on time?

INTERVIEWEE: *Managers should be more competent and respect the working hours. I don't think I should work longer hours because my manager isn't good at his job.*

✓ **DIALOGUE 3**

INTERVIEWER: Do you work well in a team?

INTERVIEWEE: *Sometimes.*

INTERVIEWER: Could you explain a bit more please?

INTERVIEWEE: *Sometimes people don't do their share of the work and I have to do more work than them, because if they don't do it someone has to do it. So I don't really enjoy working in teams unless I have a really competent team. They also expect me to share my information and if I have got my information, why do I have to share it?*



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