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A Second Look at First Impressions

By Cheryl Ferguson

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No matter how good you look on paper, everything you do - from how you treat each member of the interview team, to what you're wearing, to what you say or don't say during the interview - is noted, and taken into account in the hiring decision.

If you don't believe me, listen to what I've heard recently from hiring managers about why they won't be moving forward with otherwise qualified candidates.

A Human Resources Director had this to say about a senior level candidate who was being considered for a high visibility position at her company: "He kept me waiting for several minutes while he finished a cell phone conversation in the lobby, failed to recognize me from an earlier meeting, and didn't treat me as a peer during the interview process. A used car salesman came to mind." Arrogance, or the impression that "I'm more important than you, or my time is more valuable than your time," screams "difficult employee" to everyone who comes in contact with this type of individual. A seasoned hiring manager will gladly keep a position open until a candidate with a more professional demeanor comes along.

In the category of "there's no such thing as a sure thing": A senior level executive, familiar with the organization he was interviewing with, was referred in by the CEO to interview for a Business Development position. He had all the right stuff: industry experience, a golden rolodex, and a term sheet listing deals in the U.S. and abroad. He was so comfortable that he didn't ask any questions of the people on the interview team about their roles at the company, their view of the business, or how they might work together - and left them with the impression that he was really not interested in them or the company. Overconfidence can be misconstrued as indifference, and indifference suggests, well, it suggests you could take or leave a job offer. Nine times out of ten, you won't get the offer.

The turn-off for a Quality Control Director and the rest of the interview team at one company: "The candidate, with elbows on the table and toothpick in hand, picked her teeth at lunch." In another instance, a Vice President of Finance heard back from six different people on the interview team that a particular candidate "swore like a sailor" during each of her interviews." Did your mother ever tell you to

A Second Look at First Impressions

sit up straight, get your elbows off the table, or watch your language? She did it for a reason. She knew that other people judge us by our behavior. Unsuspecting candidates step in this minefield all the time, blowing their chance for an invitation to join a company.

When asked why he wouldn't be moving forward with a candidate who had applied for an Account Executive position within his organization, the President of the company replied, "His shirt was so wrinkled that it looked like he'd worn it the day before, balled it up in a corner of his room, put it back on the next morning and wore it to the interview. He didn't even bother to try and cover it up by putting a jacket over it. My thought was that if he couldn't even take the time to impress me at our first meeting, what was he going to be like with our customers?" "Dress for Success" was the title of a popular business book in the 70's, and while the rules have relaxed somewhat, employees at high tech or west coast companies may dress more casually than employees in traditional industries or companies on

the east coast, there is simply no excuse for wrinkled shirts, thigh-high skirts or coffee-stained ties at an interview.

Arrogance, overconfidence, bad manners, and sloppy attire are mistakes that no interviewee can afford to make. Professionals know that the sure way to get the offer is to back up their skill set and experience with a first impression that leaves no doubt in anyone's mind that they're the right candidate for the job.

So, if you've been wondering why you didn't get the offer for a job that you're otherwise qualified for, you may want to take a second look at the impression you left with the people at the company you interviewed with. Actions speak louder than words.

Cheryl Ferguson is the host of The Recruiter's Studio (www.therecruitersstudio.com), a career resources website featuring web cast interviews of people talking about what they do for a living.

Thousands Of Banner Displays – For FREE!

By Michael Hopkins

Here's a little trick that's quick and easy to execute and will get your banner displayed thousands of times across the web. Putting this tip into action requires no big commitment on your part – in most cases you just do it and forget about it.

Here's how it goes...

You're probably familiar with the concept of banner exchanges. In a nutshell, banner exchanges facilitate having your banner displayed on other people's websites in exchange for you displaying those other people's banners on your site.

The problem with banner exchanges is that you have to display banners on your site that you may not want to have there, and with banner click-through rates continuing to get smaller, you may be asking

A Second Look at First Impressions

yourself if it's worth it.

The good news however, is that you can take advantage of banner exchanges **WITHOUT** the need to have banners displayed on your site.

You see, there are lots of banner exchanges out there that will give you free banner displays on their member's sites just for signing up. That means that you can go around to these exchanges, sign up for an account, get your free banner displays and then forget about it.

Here are a few of the exchanges that offer free credits when you sign up:

(600 impressions)

(500 impressions)

(2500 impressions)

(2000

impressions)

(1000 impressions)

(25,000

impressions!)

(2500+ impressions)

(600 impressions)

(200

impressions)

That's a total of 34,900 banner displays for your site! And this is, by no means, an extensive list of exchanges that offer free impressions. Run a few searches for 'banner exchanges' on the search engines to find more.

NOTE: Please note one thing, some exchanges will manually verify that you've added their banner HTML to your site before your account will be activated. If this is the case, you have the choice of either (1) displaying their banners temporarily until your account is activated and you've earned your free credits, or (2) just forgetting about them and finding another that has no such requirement.

And there you have it – free banner displays without the pain!

Michael Hopkins is owner of BizzyDays eBook Publications.
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