

Ask the Career Coach: Interviewing—The Art of Woo

How to work the interview so you can make it to the second round of consideration.

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I am getting interviews but never making it to the second round. I am trying to understand what I can do differently to get to round two. Please help.

ME
Short Hills

Congratulations on getting invited in for interviews. Your resume and online or social media presence must be strong in the industry and functional areas you are targeting. Questions to ask your self are:

- Are the companies inviting me for an interview the ones with which I want to work?
- Am I connecting with the initial interviewer? If yes, on what level—intellectual or emotional?
- Are you able to distinguish yourself from other candidates?
- Are you showing your enthusiasm for the company and the position?

The ability to think quickly on your feet in response to questions and delivery thoughtful answers requires you to connect on an intellectual and emotional with the interviewer. It is your goal to create a chemistry that distinguishes you as a candidate. Are you charismatic? Do you show your willingness to embrace new ideas, show your innovative style and express your thoughts both verbally and nonverbally?

According to a study by Mehrabian in the 1970s, people tend to be more influenced by speech tonality and nonverbal behavior rather than the spoken word. The study concluded that content was the most important element of communication and identified that 7 percent of the attitude clues came from the content, 38 percent from the tone of voice and 55 percent from the facial expressions and looks.

Interviewing requires you to organize your thoughts and prepare to address issues. In an interview setting, being effective requires you to understand your audience, create an appropriate elevator pitch, identify the organization's needs, select appropriate stories, structure the content and take the interviewee on the brief journey in which you describe how you can answer their needs.

Your focus should be on the receiver of your message and their needs and less on your needs as a candidate. Focus on content, emphasizing how it relates to the job requirements and the needs of the organization. As an interviewee, share your passion regarding how you can deliver answers for the organization's needs. Your nonverbally actions are critical in either supporting or contradicting your message. Be aware of your gestures, tone of voice, expressions, and movement and how they relate to your message.

When answering questions, offer a brief story to support your response. Frame the story so the interviewer can connect on a metaphorical level. Keep it simple, honest and touch on a personal note if appropriate. The story should guide the interviewer to your core message and be delivered in less than three minutes.

A typical mistake people make when answering questions is loading too much detail, language and emotion into your stories. Identify what is most important. Support your message with your tone of

voice, facial expressions and body gestures. Gesturing can be very helpful or very distracting. Keep them simple. Do not cross your arms. This is a defensive posture. The right posture is important. If you need to buy some time to think, paraphrase the question.. Remember to listen carefully and ask a clarifying question if needed.

About this column: "Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com. Lisa Chenofsky Singer is a Millburn-Short Hills resident and the founder of Chenofsky Singer & Associates LLC. She offers Executive and Career Management Coaching and Human Resources Consulting, writes and speaks on job search and career-related topics. Her web site is www.ChenofskySinger.com.