



Randy's Work *and You*

February Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

2008 hiring outlook continued:

Companies in professional and business services and information technology reported the strongest hiring plans; 45 percent of respondents in both areas said they expect to add jobs. That's followed by transportation and utility employers (37 percent), financial services (34 percent) and hospitality (32 percent). In the health care and retail sectors, 28 percent of hiring managers reported plans to add staff.

Source: CareerBuilder.com said its survey of 3,016 hiring managers and human resource professionals in the private sector.

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This month's topics:

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1. Alpha Male Syndrome

From a description of the book, "Alpha Male Syndrome: "Curb the Belligerence, Channel the Brilliance"

The business world swarms with alpha males-powerhouses who take charge, produce astonishing results, and bring enormous value to their organizations. But many alphas also leave a path of destruction in their wake. Competitive, belligerent, and impatient, these hard-charging leaders can run roughshod over colleagues and employees, to the detriment of their careers and the bottom line. In Alpha Male Syndrome, Kate Ludeman and Eddie Erlandson build on their Harvard Business Review article "Coaching the Alpha Male"-sounding a wake-up call to all alphas and the companies for which they work. The authors show alphas how to leverage their unique strengths while confronting their

destructive "flip side risks." They describe the distinguishing dynamics of the alpha male syndrome and identify four breeds: commanders, executors, strategists, and visionaries. By understanding each type's nuances, alphas can transform themselves into leaders that are more effective. And those who work with alphas can transform nightmare work groups into collaborative dream teams. Exercises, checklists, and tips enable readers to harness the enormous power of the alpha personality while minimizing the downside of alpha behavior.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/24e9ou>

2. Five Interviewing Mistakes That Make You Look Dumb

By Joe Turner

Don't be one to say, "*if I could only do it over*", after your next interview. It's not uncommon to lose sleep over an upcoming interview or to fret over your performance afterwards. It's something else though, to lose a shot at a great opportunity after you realize you made a dumb mistake you could have avoided.

Avoid these 5 common interviewing mistakes that can make you look dumb and eliminate you from further consideration.

1. Not Doing Your Research

This is one of the most common complaints hiring managers make today. By not conducting research beforehand, you lack basic knowledge about the company and the job opportunity. You look foolish and you'll likely be rejected because you've given the strong message that you don't care enough about the company or the opportunity.

Before your interview, find out:

How large is the company?

What products/services do they offer?

Who are their competitors?

Where do they rank in their market?

What is their financial situation?

Knowing as much information as possible up front puts you in a power position when you interview. You're now prepared to talk intelligently about the company, the opportunity and the company's products, and to use this information to engage in a knowledgeable *conversation* with your interviewer.

2. Being Needy

Neediness could be the number-one advantage-killer in an interview. Even if you have the car payment due and the rent to pay, don't project yourself as needy. Employers can sense desperation and it's a major turn-off. Neediness negates any advantage you hold with your strong skills and achievements.

Remind yourself before walking in the door: you need food, air, and water. You do NOT need this particular job. Keep things in perspective.

3. Getting Emotional

At times the interviewer may hit a nerve. He or she may even consciously try to provoke you into an "outburst." Don't fall for it. Before you walk into the interview room, clear your mind of any fears, anger, smoldering resentments or other negativity. Perhaps you just had a disagreement with your partner, your dog may have died, or a close relative was just diagnosed with cancer. Life happens. Put it all aside for the next hour so you can maintain a calm, open-minded presence with your interviewer. When negative emotions enter into an interview, failure follows.

4. Not Asking Questions

Tattoo this on your forehead: You're here to interview them. Your objective is to discover whether this organization is a good fit for YOU. Too many candidates treat the interview as an interrogation when it should be a *conversation*. Don't just answer their questions. You want to find out more about what this job is really about and whether you want it.

Arrive with a list of prepared questions about the company, the position, and the people who work there. Ask questions that begin with "*what*," "*how*," and "*why*." Avoid simple yes/no questions. Get your interviewer talking as much as possible, and then take notes. Most interviewers are unimpressed by candidates who have no questions, as it shows a lack of interest or initiative.

5. Not Closing

There is one important question most candidates don't ask at all. This is the closing question at the end of the interview. You need to know what happens after this interview. Many books advise asking for the job here, but you may feel intimidated to bluntly do so. With other candidates scheduled to interview, the hiring manager is not likely to make you an offer yet. You may need to do some additional research on the company, making it too early to ask for the job.

A good compromise is to let them know you're interested in the job. Then, ask this question, "*What's our next step?*" This way, you won't be left with any surprises. Remember to ask for the interviewer's direct phone number and the best time to call to follow up.

Summary

A successful performance at your interview can make all the difference in winning that job offer. You can get there a lot faster by avoiding these five common interviewing mistakes that not only make you look dumb, but also lose a good opportunity.

As a recruiter, Joe Turner has spent the past 15 years finding and placing top candidates in some of the best jobs of their careers. Author of ***Job Search Secrets Unlocked***, Joe has interviewed on radio talk shows and offers free insider job search secrets at:

<http://www.jobchangesecrets.com>

3. Boomer Corner - Most Significant Workforce Trend

Retirement of Baby Boomers Most Significant Workforce Trend in Next 10 Years

Nearly one out of every two senior executives (47%) surveyed said baby boomer retirements will have the greatest impact on the workforce over the next decade, according to Robert Half International. The survey contains information from 150 senior executives from the 1,000 largest companies in the U.S.

Executives were asked, "Which of the following trends do you think will most significantly alter the workforce in the next decade?" Their responses:

- * Baby boomer retirements -- 47%
- * Global business interactions -- 31%
- * Outsourcing -- 11%
- * Remote work arrangements -- 5%
- * Other -- 5%
- * Don't know -- 1%

"The looming retirement of baby boomers has captured the attention of business leaders who are concerned about retaining the expertise of their most tenured employees," said Max Messmer, CEO of Robert Half International and author of *Human Resources Kit For Dummies*. "Fortunately, many baby boomers are considering working past the traditional retirement age to stay active and continue earning."

Messmer added, "Businesses that accommodate valued staff members who are not ready for retirement but seek new work arrangements, such as flexible or part-time schedules, are best able to keep top performers. Consulting arrangements allow experienced individuals to remain challenged professionally while maintaining the flexibility to pursue outside interests."

Source: *IndustryWeek*.

4. Success Story

Full Circle

By Mike Dyslin

With a 20+ year career in IT, I thought finding a new job would be relatively easy. Sure, I had heard the job-finding stories from friends in other industries, but then they were saying those same things in the 80s and 90s. Surely an IT generalist with management experience would be a desirable commodity. That was January of 2004. This is my story through today.

January-May 2004

The first months took some getting used to. I was quickly learning that recruiters no longer return calls or emails. Sometimes they would return my call, but I quickly learned that they were looking for very specific skill sets that only a very limited few could have. Why?

Because the few companies that were hiring could get reams of resumes from the usual Web-based sources. They only outsourced to recruiters the very difficult-to-fill positions.

June-July 2004

Enter Randy Block. (BTW this is not a commercial... just the facts). He assigned me a new job -- to build and nourish a network. While doing that, we looked at skills and talents. Nothing surprising: teamwork, decision making, computer literacy, negotiation, dealing with ambiguity, strategizing, analyzing, working with numbers, planning/organizing, evaluation. As we began to talk, a profile began to emerge that I had not been aware of or promoting.

One of the big breakthroughs for me was realizing that being over 50 meant contracting. So I reviewed the contract positions on Dice, Monster, and Hotjobs. Clearly there were/are PM positions for specialists and those with certifications (PMP). And there was this new thing called IT Auditor for Sarbanes-Oxley. Friends all cautioned me about going down an unknown path. But the more I researched, the better this looked. For one thing it was all new, and IT generalist was the desired skill set. With some coaching help, the resume was redone to emphasize audit (some HIPAA experience) and natural talents.

August 2004-To date

Contract as Lead QA Sarbanes Oxley IT Auditor at Boeing in Long Beach. Yes, it means travel, but a paycheck is much better than a transfer. And the best part is that I'm back in the game. Let me explain.

The work requires someone who can read, write, analyze, speak mainframe and client-server, negotiate and influence. Remember how Y2K had a finite deadline? Sarbox is being slowly but surely rolled out. There are extensions for filings this year to the 4th quarter. But next year it is on, and it will have legs as companies deal with the issues it brings out and begin remediation. In addition, as HIPAA has shown, it will touch all the vendors of the publicly traded companies.

I predict that there will be new emphasis on the role of IT auditor -- not as whistle-blower -- but as "value added" to the business process. The public markets will demand that. The generalist has a bright future. The cycle has come full circle.

5. Humor Department - Job applicant comments

*These were comments that were **actually written** by job applicants during their searches for employment.*

In a cover letter:

"Here are my qualifications for you to overlook."

"Please call me after 5:30 because I am self-employed and my employer does not know I am looking for another job."

"My goal is to be a meteorologist. But since I have no training in Meteorology, I suppose I should try stock brokerage."

"I demand a salary commiserate with my expensive experience."

In a resume:

"I was working for my Mom until she decided to move."

"Marital status: Single, Unmarried, Unengaged, Uninvolved, No Commitments."

"Note: Please don't misconstrue my 14 jobs as 'job-hopping.' I have never quit a job."

"Marital status: often. Children: various."

"Reason for leaving last job: They insisted that all employees get to work by 8:45 am every morning. I couldn't work under those conditions."

6. Words that Inspire

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield".

--Lord Alfred Tennyson

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