

10 ways to be liked in your job interview

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Everyone wants to make a good impression in job interviews. But did you know that too much smiling or asking too many unrelated questions can circumvent that goal?

I received a press release in my e-mail box this morning for a new career guidance book. Normally, those things go in one eye and out the other, but the title of this book just made me laugh.

The book, *I Hate People! Kick Loose from the Overbearing and Underhanded Jerks at Work and Get What you Want Out of Your Job*, is written by Jonathan Littman and Marc Hershon. As you know, I favor advice that doesn't lose itself in the gray areas. Simply stated, there are some tried and true facts about interviewing, and it's refreshing to see someone point them out in blunt terms.

Here, from the book, are 10 ways to be liked in your job interview. My notes are in brackets following each point.

1. Don't be a smiley face.

Excessive smiling in a job interview is seen for what it is — nervousness and a lack of confidence. A Smiley Face exudes phoniness, which will quickly be picked up by the interviewer. Instead be thoughtful and pleasant. Smile when there's something to smile about. Do a practice run in front of a mirror or friend.

[Look, I'm as friendly as the next guy, but if you're wearing a stuck-on smile while I'm describing the rigors of the job, I'll just be creeped out.]

2. Don't be a Know-It-None

Your job is to be knowledgeable about the company for which you're interviewing. Random facts about last night's episode of *Dancing With The Stars* episode or your favorite blog will not get you the job. Never feel you have to fill an interview with small talk. Find ways to talk about serious subjects related to the industry or company. Pockets of silence are better than padding an interview with random babble.

[I think small talk is OK if the interviewer starts it. But be hyper-aware of your interviewer's demeanor. If he or she starts to zone out, nip it.]

3. Don't Sweat

You can lose a job by wearing an undershirt or simply a little too much clothing. Sweaty palms or beads on your forehead will not impress. You are not applying to be a personal trainer. Sweat will be seen as a sign of weakness and nervousness. Do a practice run with your job interview outfit in front of friends. The job interview is one place you definitely don't want to be hot.

[Ew.]

4. Put down that Stop Sign

Interviewers are seeking candidates eager to take on challenging projects and jobs. Hesitance and a naysaying mentality will be as visible as a red tie — and seen as a negative. Practice saying “yes ” to questions about your interest in tasks and work that might normally give you pause.

[If you're naysaying in an interview with me, I won't be able to show you the door fast enough. I realize that some people consider naysaying a method for displaying their knowledge of a situation, but if you're negative at the interview stage of the relationship, what can I expect from you as an employee?]

5. Don't be a Sheeple

Asking the location of the lunchroom or meeting room will clue the interviewer into your lack of preparation and initiative. Prepare. Don't ask questions about routine elements or functions of a company: where stuff is, the size of your cube and company policy on coffee breaks.

[At first I thought this tip meant that you should wander around aimlessly in the office building instead of asking someone where the interviewer is located. But I think they mean during the interview itself. Good points.]

6. Don't be a Liar Liar

Studies show that employees lie frequently in interviews. Lying won't get you the job. In a job interview even a slight exaggeration is lying. Don't. Never stretch your resume or embellish accomplishments. There's a difference between speaking with a measured confidence and engaging in BS. One lie can ruin your entire interview, and the skilled interviewer will spot the lie and show you the door.

[I once had a job candidate claim that he had worked at a now-defunct company. The problem is, I'd worked at that company nearly from its inception and knew that he'd never been employed there.]

7. Don't Be a Bad Comedian

Humor tends to be very subjective and while it may be tempting to lead your interview with a joke you've got to be careful about your material. You probably will know nothing about the sensibilities of your interviewer, let alone what makes them laugh. On the other hand, nothing disarms the tension of a job interview like a little laughter, so you can probably score at least a courtesy chuckle mentioning that it's “perfect weather for a job interview!”

[I've written about the subjectivity of humor in an interview before. When it's done right -- that is, you're engaging in a quip-trading tennis game of sorts with your interviewer -- then all is good. But it's a fine line to walk. Remember, too, that some people have no discernible sense of humor.]

8. Don't Be High Maintenance

If you start talking about the ideal office temperature, the perfect chair for your tricky back, and how the water cooler needs to be filled with imported mineral water, chances are you'll be shown a polite smile and the door, regardless of your qualifications. Nobody hiring today is going to be looking for someone who's going to be finicky about their workspace.

[That's a red flag if I ever heard of one.]

9. Don't Be A Minute Man

At every job interview, the prospective hire is given the chance to ask questions. Make yours intelligent, to the point and watch the person across the desk for visual cues whether you've asked enough. Ask too many questions about off-target matters and you'll be thought of as a Minute Man, destined to waste the company's resources with insignificant and time-wasting matters.

[Yes -- don't ask questions just to be asking them or to exhibit your interest. Ask questions that you really want answered.]

10. Don't Be A Switchblade

Normally the Switchblade is thought of a backstabber, often taking credit for someone else's work. In an interview setting, the Switchblade can't help but "trash talk" his former employer. If you make it seem like your former workplace was hell on Earth, the person interviewing you might be tempted to call them to find out who was the real devil.

[See my blog on this one: Never trash former employers in interviews.]

For more information about the book, go to www.ihatepeople.biz.

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umm.. no wedge@... | 07/17/09

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My, that was a little patronising wasn't it? Tony Hopkinson | 07/17/09

nope cyberserf | 07/17/09

Nay saying Tony Hopkinson | 07/13/09

Yep! Right there with Tony.. CG IT | 07/13/09

I'm with you on that Shellbot | 07/13/09

Yep this might be painful for you interviewing types Tony Hopkinson | 07/13/09

unmissable 😊 Shellbot | 07/13/09

I got one recently Tony Hopkinson | 07/13/09

Delphi Shellbot | 07/13/09

I used to be a paradox expert back in 2.0 days Tony Hopkinson | 07/13/09

really now.... Shellbot | 07/14/09

It's one of those things. You think you must have forgot Tony Hopkinson | 07/14/09

Expect me to be in touch 😊 Shellbot | 07/14/09

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It shows value Tony Hopkinson | 07/13/09

Careful Oz_Media | 07/13/09

Indeed beggars can't be choosers Tony Hopkinson | 07/13/09

I'm too easy Oz_Media | 07/13/09

Well being without a job Shellbot | 07/13/09

How dare, you! Oz_Media | 07/13/09

Demanding Shellbot | 07/13/09

Confident vs cocky jdclde | 07/14/09

Show enthusiasm dstadler66@... | 07/17/09

#5... Justin James | 07/13/09

#5..please correct me if i am wrong... rbmfernandez@... | 07/17/09

You misread #5 Justin James | 07/17/09

A headhunter looking at a cake's icing gary@... | 07/14/09

Looking for the Quick Buck MRHaupt | 07/14/09

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12. Keep the interview moving, if you have to a.barry@... | 07/14/09

Cast the truth in the best light keith2468a | 07/16/09

the question on my mind is... tarose.trevor@... | 07/17/09

What I will ask the interviewer it@... | 07/17/09

Another good one to ask... seanlangesean@... | 07/17/09

That's a good one Tony Hopkinson | 07/17/09

Avoid Negativity pdonahu1 | 07/17/09

If you can't say something good..... dstadler66@... | 07/17/09

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