BLURB:

WHEN INTERVIEWING--PRESENT YOURSELF AS THE “SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM”

Most jobs are created when the employer has a “problem”. When you see a posting for an open position, think about the needs of the company and how YOU meet those needs. When you have been invited into an interview, focus on “value added”. This approach will be most likely to get you the job, or at least invited back for the next round.

FULL ARTICLE:

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Most jobs are created when the employer has a “problem”. It could be a positive “problem”: business is growing and the organization needs more help to handle the volume; a member of the team was promoted to a leadership role, leaving a gap in the company structure. It could be a negative “problem”: an employee left (or was asked to leave) due to a misfit for the role. And there are all kinds of other scenarios that would create the need for the creation of a new position or a replacement hire.

As a candidate, it is much more positive to present yourself as “the solution to a problem” than as a needy job seeker. This positioning allows you to walk into the interview room and **offer** help and solutions to the prospective employer instead of **asking** for help. It will help you feel strong; while otherwise you might feel weak and display a lack of self-confidence. In your previous roles, you have always solved problems—no reason you cannot solve them here, in a new organization.

The hiring manager has everything you want: the job, the paycheck, the office, the title, the benefit package. You have what s/he needs—the ability to solve problems and move the business forward. This will become your “Value Proposition” and the basis for all responses to the interview questions.

Learn as much as you can about the business and try to understand the challenges that are being faced. Identify the reason that the position is being filled and think of yourself as the solution.

The “problem” is usually identified in the first line of the job description: “needed a Financial Analyst with 10 years’ experience in Financial Services”. Package yourself as the perfect fit for the role and analyze the challenges as if you were already working for the company. Establish your “personal brand” and back up your value with specific examples of how you solved similar problems in your past positions.

Your entire job search campaign and all your job search materials prepare you for your self-presentation in the interview process. When you build out your accomplishment statements in your resume, you are creating an agenda for the interview. The Challenge / Action / Result format is not only relevant for writing your resume, but it works well in the interview to help you specifically highlight your accomplishments and describe how you added value to the business. Each well-crafted accomplishment statement demonstrates business results (increased revenue, process improvement, cost reduction, training of others, etc.). These results represent solutions to the needs of the company.

Now take your resume and the job description and create a “T” letter that matches your qualifications to the job requirements. This is helpful to you, the candidate, as you prepare for the interview, keeping you focused on the needs and wants of the employer. The end result is also extremely helpful to the hiring manager or pre-screener. It brings the most relevant information about your experience to the attention of the reader, demonstrating clearly how you will be able to solve problems in the organization and move the business forward. It can be used as a cover letter to get you the interview but can also be used to present to the hiring manager or to the recruiter to impress them with the excellent “fit”.

To be certain that you move forward in the hiring process, it is important to ask good questions. We have established that understanding the issues and challenges that face the organization are the reasons that the open opportunity has been created. Towards the end of the interview, you will be asked if you have any questions. This is your chance to demonstrate that you “get it”. Your questions should be directed to the “problems and needs” that you now know exist in the business. In your research about the industry and the company during your interview preparation, you will have made certain assumptions based on the job description and other available information (company website, news articles, networking contacts). Listening carefully to the interviewer, you will learn if your assumptions were correct. Verify this conclusion, showing that you are truly the individual who can make a significant contribution to reaching business goals.

BE THE SOLUTION! GET THE JOB (or the next interview)!