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Interviewing Advice from Recruiters

By Meagan Hughes

It has taken me years to learn how to interview well, and I am by no means done learning. I remember approaching my first interview thinking if I memorize the company's Web page and do not make a fool of myself, I would get the job. I quickly learned there is more to it. Over the years, I have developed a better sense of the do's and don'ts of interviewing, usually by doing them.

In hopes of helping others avoid some of the mistakes I made and having to learn through experience, I reached out to recruiters for interviewing advice. Three principals and partners of actuarial consulting firms kindly took the time to offer insight into things one should and should not do during an interview.

Brian Frost from Towers Watson shared some examples of poor interviewing habits:

- Coming to the interview without having any idea of what the company does
- Coming to the interview and repeating language from the company website in the attempt to show they know everything about the field
- Not asking questions
- Expressing interest in a different field than the job for which they are interviewing
- Carrying themselves like a student instead of like a professional whom we could envision working in our office

Kevin Connolly of Deloitte Consulting provided some things to do when interviewing:

- Make sure you know why you might want to work for the company you're interviewing with. It's not just about you, but about your 'fit' with that future organization.
- Think through your answers before responding ... being organized in your thinking is more important than being quick in your responses.
- Don't chew gum... Wow do I really need to say that?
- Try not to look at your watch too much... it shows you might have something more important to do.
- Focus on your strengths and how they would be useful in the position you're

interviewing. It's not just about ability—but having the insight on how to apply your abilities.

- Do your best to relax—it's ok to let off some nervous energy by chatting at the beginning of the interview.

Brian Levine from Hewitt Associates provided additional insight on interviewing do's:

- Know your resume and be able to give examples of things you've done. Whether it is a previous job, a class you took, or an activity, be able to give a detailed example of what you did and what your role was. What skills did you learn or utilize? How did you ensure success? What pitfalls did you have and how did you work to overcome them?
- Have copies of your resume for each interviewer. More than likely they will each have a copy already but sometimes an interviewer will run from one meeting to another and may not have had a chance to print your resume. If this were ever to happen you should have one available. It makes you look prepared and that you are anticipating needs.
- Ask relevant, insightful questions that will help you make a decision about whether you want to work at the company or not. This is your time to interview the company too. Plus, it proves to us that you are thinking critically about your decision. This will translate into how you do your job later.
- Make sure to have different questions prepared for each interviewer you speak with. It's okay to have a couple of common questions but in addition make sure to have unique questions for each interviewer. Otherwise, when the interview team recaps they may discuss the questions you asked and then find out that each interviewer was asked the same questions.

Meagan Hughes is an actuarial candidate and will join Deloitte Consulting as a human capital analyst in the end of July.