



Solve Anything with Dr. Mark

Career
Advice
for the
Working Class

Apply these tips to land the job

Q: As a job applicant for an entry-level management position in a financial services company, what are the do's and don'ts if I want to make the best first impression and distinguish myself from the competition?

A: David Booth and Deborah Shames, the principals with Calabasas-based presentation training company eloqui.biz, offer five tips:

1. To make a good first impression, don't wear anything that would distract from your competency, i.e. flashy jewelry, gaudy ties or strong cologne. Keep the clothing color scheme fairly monochromatic, so all the attention goes to your face. The more outlandish your clothing the more it will seem that you want to get attention, more than you want to land a job.

2. Sit upright with good posture and stay physically open, never crossing your arms. Lean forward to show interest and engagement. For one thing, such lousy posture is contagious and the last thing you want is your interviewer catching your low energy.

3. Research the company as much as possible prior to your interview. Find out who its clients are, what the corporate culture is and what sets it apart. Sprinkle your interview with these findings. You can always start with "correct me if I'm wrong, but I understand that here at this company, you encourage team work as a way to solve problems."



4. Rehearse your answers to questions to make sure you don't ramble and can stay on point. Think of brief anecdotes you can tell which highlight your experience and education. They already have your resume. It's your job to tell stories that exhibit



your value. Don't speak negatively about previous employers or jobs you've held.

5. Most people are prepared to sell themselves, but what's equally important is to find out if the company is the right fit for you. Prepare specific questions about the job's responsibilities and what is expected of you. Potential employers will appreciate your thoroughness and self-esteem.

Bonus tip: Ivan Rosenberg, president and CEO of Studio City-based consulting firm Frontier Associates, adds an additional question that your interviewer will find eye opening and satisfying and be grateful to you for having asked it.

Rosenberg suggests saying to the interviewer: "I want you to imagine that it is a year from now and people are reviewing who your company hired in the past twelve months.

When it comes to this position, imagine everyone agreeing, 'He/she was an extraordinary hire that really exceeded all of our expectations.' What would be the qualities of such a person and what would they accomplish to cause such a statement?"

Then of course, if you are hired, make sure you do everything you can to become that person they'll be glad they hired.

Make it or flake it

Q: I have trouble keeping my commitments. I have all the good intentions in the world when I make them, but then I just don't seem to follow through. I don't like flaky people, but I have to admit that I have become one. How can I increase the chance of doing what I say I will do?

A: David Ackert, principal at the Encino-based business and executive development firm, Ackert Advisory, suggests selecting someone in your life who you highly respect, who cares about you and who you would hate to disappoint.

Contact them, tell them what it is you want to commit to and ask them to contact you by phone or e-mail in two weeks to make sure you keep it. Then have them tell you of a way that you can return the favor.

Ask Mark • Mark Goulston is a Santa Monica-based management adviser, executive coach and author of "Get Out of Your Own Way at Work...and Help Others Do the Same." Question him at mgoulston@markgoulston.com.