

(Plan Your Career) Excellent interview, no job offer: What went wrong?

Written by Julie Desmond
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The worst mistake you make during the interview process probably will not happen during the meeting at all. By choosing clothes, words and gestures carefully, job seekers agree the success of an interview is largely within their control. But standouts drive every part of the process: within and outside of the in-person interview.

If you need a car and you meet a guy who wants to sell you a shiny vehicle, cheap, do you buy it? Maybe. But first you take a good long look at it. You take a test drive to your buddy's house and then to Fred at the Firestone on Glenwood. You decide this is the car you want. Do you buy it now? Maybe. But you want to be sure, so you inquire about the guy selling the car. Where did he get it? Why is it for sale? Is this guy a talented sales professional or a crook? You ask around. You check him out online. You might try to talk with a few of his other customers. You like his commercials on TV. You've seen a product, tested it, and sought out confirmation that you made a good decision. Finally, you drive away happy.

Unsophisticated as it sounds, prospective employers are checking you out the same way. Reading your application, they decide you're worth a test drive. They interview with you and have their colleagues interview with you. If they still see you as a potential hire, they seek to bolster their decision.

In minutes, your facebook, myspace and linkedin can make or break your opportunity. Don't just clean up your presence, enhance it. Reference your associations, awards and successes on your sites. Tweet about relevant industry happenings. Connect to people who know people. Blog about your profession like the rockstar you are. Then ask friends to check you out online so you will know how others see you.

Mending fences goes miles in life and in work. Make an effort to right things with your professional rivals. Agree to disagree, but take your personality out of the problem and try to clear the air. If you make a sincere attempt at professional peace, you will gain some respect from your adversary, which he or she should remember if ever asked about your work. It's a small world; the references your boss-to-be calls upon are not always the names you've provided.

Advertise your talents. Blogging helps, but also be clear with family and friends about your ambitions and skills. Jane is a neuropsychologist. An acquaintance said she should meet his friend who does the same thing. The friend was a dental hygienist. Equally important, but I wouldn't want Jane to clean my teeth.

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You know how to give a perfect interview, but remember that long term decisions – cars and hires – are never made on looks alone.

Please send your career questions to Julie@insightnews.com .