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Top Ten Interview Criteria What is the prospective boss looking for?

By Tom Cronin

What are the most impressive qualities that employers see in potential job candidates?

1. Effective results

I think that truly driven, passionate people leave behind them a wake of results wherever they go. Talking about measurable outcomes separates the contenders from pretenders. Candidates that can tell me an anecdote about how they got something done, against all odds, really impress me the most. Those who understand the rules and conduct of business but are not afraid to push the envelope a bit in the name of a job well done.

2. Groundwork

I am always impressed when a candidate shows that they have done their research by knowing something about me, and my business. When a candidate asks questions, it demonstrates not only their interest in our company and the issues we're facing, but also their research skills. The most impressive candidates are those who think about what they discovered in their research and then ask really great questions.

3. Inventiveness

I look for the ability to take a project and run with it, to function autonomously and creatively with a minimum of oversight. Taking initiative, being able to operate independently, and finding a way to get things done are all important qualities.

4. Wittiness

A recruitment cycle is long and listening to the same pre-prepared answers can get annoying. A candidate with faith and a sense of humor de-dramatizes the atmosphere and sets themselves apart.

5. Enthusiasm

Typical candidates answer questions the way they believe they should. I want to see their passion for the company, the job opening, and the industry. I want them to tell me why they are truly excited about the opportunity rather than every other opportunity out there. For me, passion is the ticket to a second round of interviews. Passion is energy, drive, motivation, and commitment. Candidates who are infused with this quality demonstrate an enthusiasm and energy that is contagious to their colleagues and clients. Enthusiasm can be harnessed to learn the job to be done and

then to do it without having to be constantly encouraged, prompted, or micromanaged. Such people are willing to "go the extra mile" to ensure that everything is done and done well. They demonstrate initiative and creative problem-solving skills. Truly passionate candidates are not only likely to excel in their role, but, because they enjoy what they do, they will also remain engaged in their responsibilities and energize those around them. If an employee is not eager to learn, he or she will have difficulties accepting change and bringing innovative ideas to the table.

6. Self-assurance

Confidence shines as knowledge, humility, skilled verbal and written communication, friendliness, and appreciation.

7. Competence

How the candidate presents him or herself. Are they projecting an image of professionalism? Are they showing enthusiasm

and motivation for the position? Are they really listening to the questions and answering them accordingly? These are the qualities that are not shown on a résumé and are near impossible to teach. Being a professional—no matter what your industry or career—demonstrates that you have the right blend of technical and soft skills, mixed with enthusiasm and dedication. Presentation, presence, energy ... how they carry their personal power—they need to be engaging and personable.

8. Body mannerisms and facial expressions

The hand shake: it has got to be strong and firm from the get-go. Candidates usually come prepared to an interview, but I'm looking for people who come to the interview telling me what they can do for the company and what they can add to the position. Body language—a firm handshake, confident shoulders, a smile, eye contact—really helps.

9. Endurance

A consistent job history is important. People move around so much, that longevity says a lot about the stability of a candidate.

10. Mind-set

The most impressive quality is to be a high performer—a package of the right attitude, a passion for doing the work, and the skill. Attitude may mean different things to different people, but it boils down to having an "I can" mind-set.

