

Interview woes - what to do before and after

 By [Juliette Attwell](#)

25 Aug 2014

In this week's column, we look at what can you do to really nail that interview and what to do afterwards.

"I recently when for an interview and I didn't get the job. I wanted to know if it is a good idea for me to ask for feedback from the people who interviewed me?" - Boitumelo

Hi Boitumelo,

Thanks for your question, it's a great one.

If the interviewer didn't give you feedback as to why you didn't get the job you can certainly ask them. I would send them an email asking for their opinion and perhaps what areas you can improve on to increase your chances of getting the job. If you went through a recruitment agent, you can ask them to send the email on your behalf.

Best of luck and I hope this helps.

"I just finished reading your article on BizCommunity and thought maybe you might be able to help me. I have failed many interviews in the past two years than any other person would in their lifetimes. The closest I've came to getting the job is 3rd interview but failed that too. Can you please help with some tips?" - Eunice

Hi Eunice,

Thank you for your question. Below are some pointers that could be useful for you, I hope they help you secure your dream job

Making your interview count

It's a well known that when you are selected to be interviewed you have already partly convinced your interviewer that you can already do the job. This just on the content of your CV. The secret is in convincing your potential employer that you match up to your cv, that you are indeed the correct person for the job. Contrary to popular belief, this is the part of the process that is actually in your control. It is now up to you to ensure that you get all the required information across during the meeting and that is done by following a simple, structured interview process backed by some solid preparation.

- **Prepare before for your interview.**

Firstly, do your research on the company that will be interviewing you. This can be achieved by visiting their website. It also helps to remember a certain fact, either a recent event or some other noteworthy mention on their website and to bring this up during your interview. It will show your enthusiasm for the position and the fact that you did indeed prepare for this meeting.

Secondly, *KNOW YOUR CV*. It might shock you to realise that you don't know your own CV as well you should and I'm sure you can imagine how that might come across during an interview. Review your CV and try to predict where you think the interviewer might ask you questions. Write these down and prepare your answers beforehand. This helps with your instant recall during the interview and will help you avoid those stuttering moments when you try to recall exactly what you need to answer.

Also, prepare examples of when this happened in your own career, always try to put your answers into context as any interviewer will tell you...it is very easy to simply answer yes or no to a question, examples in your own career are the proof to your own answers.

I often tell my candidates that the decision being made during the interview process is actually a much bigger one for them than it is for the interviewer. After all, the company is interviewing to fill a vacancy while the candidate is interviewing for a change of career. With this in mind, the candidate should always feel empowered realising this will affect them more so than the company. It is now time to take control of the meeting.

- **Structure your interview.**

Candidates always feel anxious before and during an interview because they have no real idea what the interviewer will ask and how they will respond to said questions. This can partly be overcome by focussing on the structure of the interview itself. So no matter what the interviewer asks, you will still have your overall plan in mind, your goals to accomplish.

Goal #1 - Understand the job you are being interviewed for.

This involves asking every question you can think that might relate to the position, the company and your place in it. This process has a dual benefit. Not only do you get to completely understand the position you are applying for, you also get the interviewer to speak more during the meeting. This puts the interviewer at greater ease in your presence as it is quite well known that the person doing most of the talking during a meeting feels the more confident and comfortable.

Goal #2 - Ask yourself the question, "Is this a position that I can confidently take on?"

This might sound a bit silly but it is vital to a successful completion of the interview. After having gleaned all the information you could on the role and the company, you need to compare what you have just learned to your past experiences and your own known potential. Please remember that the goal isn't just for you to get the job, it is actually to find the perfect fit between the company and yourself. If you are not entirely convinced you can do this, the company won't be either. If you are confident you can do the required job you have to then ask yourself the most important question...

Goal #3 - Ask yourself, "Do I actually want this job?"

Never leave a meeting if you have not entirely satisfied yourself to this question. The purpose of an interview is for both parties to transfer information to find a good fit between the company and the candidate. The answer to the question should only ever be one of two, yes or no! There is no grey area here. If you are unsure at this point you need to revisit goal #1

- **Closing the meeting**

This is generally the point where most interviews will draw to a close. However, this is where you, as the candidate, really need to take control. At this point the interviewer will generally ask the candidate whether he has any further questions. Of course you do, you need to ask the interviewer how he thought the meeting had progressed, ask him his feelings on how it went.

Although it shows a lot of initiative and interest on the part of the candidate, the true goal is not to get a definite answer out of the interviewer but rather open the door to the next, more important question. Most recruiters will tell you that interviews

that have often not been successful were so because the two parties didn't learn enough from one another in that meeting. I suggest to you that this is possibly your one chance of your dream job, you should make sure that you leave no stone unturned and give yourself every opportunity to get this job.

What you need to do at this point is to ask the following question:

"Great, so the interview, in your opinion, went well. At this stage, is there anything about my CV or about me personally that concerns you about me potentially getting this job?"

What you are now doing is actually giving yourself the opportunity to defend you and your CV on possible critical points that might not have been raised initially. No one knows your CV and yourself as well as you do, certainly not your recruiter. You are giving yourself every opportunity to get this job and if it turns out later that you didn't get the position, at least you will probably know why and work on that issue before your next interview.

Last step in the process is to thank the interviewer and ask him/her what the next step in the process is. Once again this will confirm your initiative and interest.

To conclude, you have to view the interview process as a continuous learning curve. You never stop learning about yourself and how you will react in certain situations. This process allows you to adapt yourself and improve during every subsequent interview. Take control, the only thing stopping you from getting that job is yourself.

Best of luck!

Always love what you do!

Juliette

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