

Tips on how to ace the interview

Secret 1: Ability and suitability: The first secret is to show the interviewer you have both ability and suitability. Every working professional has a combination of skills that broadly define those two aspects.

For example, a good computer programmer working in a bank has both technical and professional skills; that is, the ability to program a computer as well as knowledge of how to get things done in the banking industry and the capacity to work well with bankers.

Yate suggests you itemize your technical and professional skills as they parallel the requirements of the job. Then recall an incident to illustrate each of those skills. If applying for a job in an industry with which you're familiar, consider highlighting your industry sensibilities by describing how you've successfully collaborated and accomplished goals with other industry professionals.

Secret 2: Willingness: The second secret is not to flip out if your interviewer asks if you're willing to make coffee or take out the trash -- especially if you're looking for a job in a small office.

More and more potential employers are using these questions to gauge whether you are the kind of person who is prepared to do whatever it takes to help the team.

Think of a time when you went the extra mile and how your doing so helped the company. Then rehearse the story until you can tell it in 90 seconds.

Secret 3: Manageability and teamwork: Avoiding a nightmare employee is a major concern for managers who develop, over time, a remarkable sixth sense when it comes to spotting and weeding out mavericks and prima donnas.

Being "manageable" and a team player means that you can work independently as well as with others and can take direction and criticism. Also crucial is the ability to work and get along with a diverse workforce in terms of sex, age, religion, race, politics, abilities/disabilities or national origin.

Make sure you demonstrate with words and actions that you are someone who gets along well with people and has no problem tolerating differing opinions or beliefs. Don't bring up religious, political or racial matters during the job interview.

Secret 4: Professional behaviour -- Yate says there are universally admired behavioural traits common to successful people in all fields: Drive, motivation, communication skills, team chemistry,

energy, determination, confidence, reliability, integrity, pride, dedication, analytical skills, listening skills, goal-orientation, efficiency, economy, ability to follow procedures.

Yate suggests you pick several of the traits that apply to you and that you can back up with stories from your work history. The idea is to create a mental movie of an event, which is much more powerful than simply stating your strong points.

Secret 5: Everyone hires for the same job: All companies are looking for problem solvers. So think of your profession in terms of its problem-solving responsibilities. Then, identify a list of related problems you have solved for your past employers.

Come up with specific examples for as many different success stories as you can think of. Then, ask what the first projects you as an employee would be involved in if hired. From there, you can select the most relevant problem-solving examples to share. When reciting these examples use the following formula:

- State the problem
- Isolate relevant background information
- List your key qualities
- Recall the solution
- Determine what the solution was worth

Remember, stories help interviewers visualize you solving their problems -- as a paid member of the team.

Keep these secrets in mind when preparing for your next interview. Approaching the interview from the employer's perspective and demonstrating your strengths through stories will cast you in a great light and make it hard for the interviewer to forget you.