

## How to Make a Splash at Your Second In-Person Job Interview

Dating and interviewing have some significant things in common. When you begin dating, you never know how far the courtship will go. One date? A relationship? Marriage? And when you begin interviewing, will it be just a phone screen conversation, an in-person interview or more "dates" leading to a long-term position?

Think about all the ubiquitous first date questions: Tell me about your family. What are your favorite colors, things to do, movies, songs, TV programs, actors and actresses? Where did you grow up and go to college? What do you do for work?

They are analogous to those canned first interview questions. Tell me about yourself, what are your strengths and weaknesses and where do you want to be in five years?

If you and your date pass each other's general test of, "Is there some potential here?" you are on to the second date. The conversation then gets more personal, as you start to reveal things of real significance to each other. Questions take on a tone of, "What are you really all about, and what are you really looking for in a relationship?"

It's really much the same way in the interviewing process for a job. You only get past some of the superficialities when you go back to the employer for a second or third interview. By this point, you and the employer have come to the initial conclusion: This just might be a fit. From this point forward, the questioning and evaluating on both sides get much more detailed and intense.

You have to assume that you still have competition for the job, and it's not yet "yours to lose." And that means you have to pull out all the stops as you prepare.

Expect these conversations to run you ragged. You'll likely encounter a series of individual or group meetings lasting many hours. And, if they give you a break for lunch with someone from the company, remember that this too is part of the interview process. Don't let down your guard just because the atmosphere and interaction may seem to be more intimate and friendly.

Employers have every right to presume you will do your homework and not simply expect to be "wooned" to join their company. They'll want to know your impressions of the company. They want to know not only that you can do the job, but that you really want to do it. And they'll probe to determine how you will go about doing the job if given the opportunity. This is not the time to play coy.

While you certainly should have done some basic research on the company before ever applying, now is the time to dig deeper. Be prepared to discuss virtually anything that is on the company's website, including linked articles and pages.

What are the company's current and next-generation products and services? How do they go about selling whatever it is that they sell?

If it is a public company, what kind of guidance is it giving to investors about where it stands within its industry group? Who is its competition, and what are its corporate successes and challenges?

What's going on in the part of the company you wish to join? What are their current projects and where are they likely to go in the future?

Think about all you have learned and figure out ways to incorporate this information into your conversations with hiring authorities.

You will likely be asked something to the effect of, "How would you go about attacking this job?" And you should come prepared to answer.

To show that you really are a go-getter, you might suggest an eagerness to discuss the game plan for your first weeks on the job with your new boss immediately after you accept an offer and before you begin work.

You might suggest, at the same time, that you want to line up meetings with key players in your department and on your team to take place in your first week on the job to learn more about them and to establish productive working relationships.

Make certain that you can explain what you understand the purpose of the job to be, your role within the group of which you would be a part and your specific tasks and responsibilities. Would you do things this way or that way? And how is the corporate culture and role similar or different from what you are accustomed to?

And, of course, you'll want to keep taking the temperature of those in the room. As you talk about the role and how you'll do it, ask, "Please let me know if this is how you see it, because I want to make sure we are all on the same page."

When you don't take things for granted, do your research, envision how you would be successful and convey all that in your second and subsequent job interviews, you'll be heading for success.

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