5 Things You Need For A Successful Second Interview

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Congratulations! Earning a second interview invitation is no small feat. You've surpassed ample and stiff competition to get this far. So bask in your success for a moment. You deserve that infusion of confidence, and you'll need it to propel you through the next round.

Before you can nail this meeting, it's important to know your purpose. How is this meeting different than your first? Nancy Range Anderson, author, career coach and founder of Blackbird Learning Associates, LLC explains:

"During the first interview, the interviewer asked questions to determine three areas; can you do the job, do you fit into the company culture and do you really want this job. It's pretty certain that in the second interview more senior level staff will be conducting the interviews and while they may ask similar or the same questions that were asked in the first interview, the purpose of this interview is to compare you and your skill set with the other candidates."

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The second interview presents a chance to have a deeper conversation about the job with some of the key players.

Here's what you need to nail it:

A go-to ice-breaker

Enthusiasm is a core component of emotional intelligence because it fosters connection. If you're excited about this

job and this institution, share that. Point out what you observed during your first interview that got your excited.

Sharing your genuine enthusiasm enables you to tap into that of your interviewer; which can lead to a two-way conversation about professional passions.

So think about what appeals to you about this environment and the people you've met so far. Do you sense that they all seem to really love their jobs? Do they seem excited about their work, or about the population they serve?

Consider an ice breaker like: "I met two team members when I was here last week. Both raved about the students here, which made me feel really excited about this prospect. That kind of enthusiasm can't be faked, and it's such a strong endorsement."

This can prompt your interviewers to share what they love about their work and their workplace, which can loosen up the conversation and give you valuable insights.

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A unique angle

A second interview presents an opportunity for you to sell you skillset and to demonstrate how your experience has well-positioned you for the open position.

Anderson points out that at this stage, candidates should detail their accomplishments and focus on the impacts of their professional efforts. Anderson explains: "The interviewer at this stage wants to know, 'What's in it for me/us?' and 'What can this candidate do to help us accomplish our goals that the other candidates can't do?'"

Think about your current role. Maybe you work for an

international organization and you're well versed in the nuances of hosting international guests and colleagues. Maybe your work for a start-up and you know how to work hard and lean.

Find your angle. Then demonstrate to your potential colleagues how your unique professional experience makes you particularly well-suited for this role, and a "must have" for their team.

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Examples of soft and hard skills

A job description is a manager's wish list for his/her ideal candidate. Study this document to drive your prep.

Anderson recommends: "To prepare the candidate needs to focus on the responsibilities, skills and requirements of the open position, and come up with specific behavioral stories detailing his or her actions and results."

Anderson advises a very direct approach: "I suggest that the candidate draw a two-column chart. In the left column, list the hard and soft skills, tasks and job responsibilities required of the position and in the right hand column write out examples of work-related accomplishments that support these. Above all, the candidate should focus on his or her role in these accomplishments and use words such as "I" rather than "We."

While you always want to emphasize that you know how to function well on a team, you also want to highlight the individual successes that set you apart.

Salary prep at the ready

Do your research and know your worth. Anderson advises: "The candidate should be prepared to discuss salary at any time

during the interview process.”

Anderson explains: “Salary discussions usually come up towards the end of the interviewing cycle and most likely will be initiated by the interviewer. This can be a positive sign.”

Meaningful questions

Anderson points out an interview is a two-way conversation. So don’t squander your opportunity to ask questions by posing queries that you think will impress the interviewers. Get the lowdown you need.

These are some questions Anderson recommends:

1. How would you describe the company culture?
2. What are the challenges your team is facing right now? How can the person stepping into this role help?
3. What kinds of people really grow here?
4. What are the long and short term goals of the department?

Remember, getting this invitation is a huge deal. You’re a stellar pro, and you have a lot to be proud of. Good luck!

By Eileen Hoenigman Meyer