How to interview your interviewer

Evelyn May

ce4553dr@metrostate.edu

Have you ever ignored red flags while interviewing for a job? I have, and it never works out well. It is just as important for you to evaluate your interviewer as it is to make a good impression.

One time, I interviewed at a law office. The job was low paying compared to my skill level, but I was desperate for any kind employment — that’s probably the reason I stuck with the interview in spite of the weird things that happened. I arrived early to the office in downtown Minneapolis, and then had to wait until half-an-hour past the scheduled meeting time (red flag number one). I was invited in to the interviewer’s swanky office and sat down.

Before I was even able to say anything, the interviewer closed her eyes and started humming (red flag number 2). Then she psychically read me, as I sat there in silence. She told me all about my glowing chakras and how, “You have a positive energy about you.” Because I needed a job, I didn’t leave, despite her blatantly unprofessional behavior. Eventually, she stopped humming and opened her eyes. I must have passed her chakra test.

Later, I was invited back for a second interview. My interviewer was inflexible with times and dates (third red flag), and I was forced to leave class early. Once again, she ran late. During the second meeting, she expressed several strong political opinions, making me uncomfortable (red flag number four).

During my time at Metropolitan State, I’ve learned the importance of doing research before the interview. If I had known more about the company, I may not have agreed to the interviewed.

The amount of time wasted on failed interviews has inspired me to create this list to help Metro students interview their interviewers and get the job they want.

**1. Go to Career Services to practice interviewing!** Take advantage of being a student at Metro by using career services for mock interviews. In addition, you can receive help writing your resume. Set up an appointment at Career Services by calling 651-793-1528.

2. **Copy and paste the job description in Wordle.com to see the keywords you should use.** If you are a visual person, this is for you. Wordle.com creates a word map. The most frequently used words are the largest on the image it generates. I did this for a job I started a month ago. The job posting used the word “experienced” five times. I decided to use that word in both my cover letter and resume, and it caught the hiring manager’s attention.

**3. Read what employees have to say about the company on Glassdoor.com.** This website is one of the first places to go before you start working on a resume. Glassdoor.com is a place where previous and current employees review their work places. Company pay scales and culture can be analyzed through posted reviews.

**4. Switch up the kind of resume you use depending on the work place.** Don’t sell yourself short by only using chronological resumes. You may have all the skills to start in a new industry, but your work history is in a different field. My background is in the beauty industry as a makeup artist. I have all the skills need to work at an engineering company thanks to Metro State. I used a functional resume to sell my strengths and got the job I wanted.

5. **Use templates to customize cover letters and resumes based on the company.** Even though you may not be a graphic designer, you can make resumes look styled and polished. Browse Hloom.com for hundreds of word templates.

**6. Know your rights and illegal interview questions.** The Minnesota Human Rights Act is in place to protect you! Employers should only ask questions that are about doing the job. You should never be asked about age, if you have children, birthplace, race, sex, disability, religion, national origin or genetic information. The only restriction is if you are not qualified to do the work. This is called the “bona fide occupational qualification” exception. Employers must make an effort to modify the work environment to accommodate for disabilities. Information from http://mn.gov/mdhr/employers/hiring.html.

**7. After researching the company, figure out what questions you want to ask.** Employers want you to ask questions. Review the company’s website and ask about the products, or the inspiration behind the company. Come up with a list of experience that the interviewer may empathize with.

**8. Look up company documents before the interview, know their language.** This is a trick I learned from Fred Carpenter in Writing 280. Try doing a simple Google search of the company’s name followed by the words “PDF document.” You will find a plethora of documents such as annual profit reports, press releases, product information, and all sorts of documents. This gives you a sneak peek into the company’s language!

**9. Learn how to use Lynda.com.** If you don’t feel confident using required software, go to Lynda.com. It’s free for Metro students. Lynda has videos and exercises to help build your knowledge of computer programs. Set up your account by going to this site <http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/resources/academic_ss/lynda/>

10. **Use Handshake.** Found on the Metropolitan State website under the Career Development Center. Type in this link for direction to the site <https://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/pathway/career_development/>. This social networking site can be accessed with your student email. Like LinkedIn, it hooks potential employees up with employers. This site allows you to build a relationship with the employer before an interview. An added benefit of using Handshake is the career planning steps. Using services like this will guide you to companies that fit you and will prepare you to do great in interviews.

Happy interviewing!