

12

Hiring Manager Secrets

to
**Getting the
Job You Want**

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Here's a fact: hiring managers want to hire you. They go into every interview hoping that you'll be the one they choose to hire. If you don't get hired, it's because you've convinced the interviewer that you're not the person for the job. Why sabotage yourself with a resume and employment habits that make hiring managers want to turn you down?

The "hiring" process starts well before your job interview and continues long after you get the job. Too many of us ignore our resumes and portfolios until the last moment when we need to put it all together in a rush when we start job-hunting. Your resume should be a living document that you're always building. Online resources like LinkedIn make it easier, but we have to make a conscious effort to be mindful of the way our career is progressing. Of course it's not practical to spend all of your time calculating and planning out your entire life. But you should spend a little time every week thinking "how will this activity affect my career" or "what should I be doing for the future." You don't want to be the [interview horror-story](#) the hiring manager talks about at parties.

The purpose of this document is to give you insider tips that will help you get inside a hiring manager's head and understand what they really want to see from employees. Not just SAY what the employer wants to hear, but legitimately give the employer what he/she needs from you as an employee. You may not be able to do all of these things at once. But you can start working on them today. It's never too late to turn around a sputtering career (or even to improve a successful career).

1. Make My Company Better

You get the job because you'll bring value to the company. Make sure you're bringing as much as possible. If you're replacing somebody, be better at the job role than the previous employee. Be prepared. Take it upon yourself to understand the company and the position so you don't need a lot of extra training. Be confident, enthusiastic and positive. You want the day that you start to be a better, more productive day for the company than the one before you got there. According to an [article](#) from Robert Half Technology, some of the best attributes you can bring to the table include **Multidimensionality, Written and verbal communication skills, Certifications** and **Leadership**. Make it your goal to improve the "seat productivity" of your position, not just replace it.

2. Don't Job Hop

Six jobs in the last five years? That doesn't speak so well about the likelihood that you'll give me a lot of value as an employee. Either you're going to take off for another position, have too much baggage to maintain a position OR you're just not capable enough. None of those qualities are attractive. Hiring managers aren't blind to the fact that people want to move upward and onward, but at least show me some loyalty. If you can stick around for two to four years at most of your positions, it shows me that you'll be around long enough to make an impact and that you're competent enough to be valuable.

3. Don't Job Squat, Either

Although you don't want to move around too much, you also don't want to look like you're married to a previous position. Unfortunately, the days of working 30 years for the same firm and retiring with a gold watch are gone for the most part. Staying at a position for too long can make it appear as if you're not confident or that you're scared to make progress. And you certainly don't want to show a hiring manager that you're going to want to start making changes because that's "how we always did it back at so-and-so company." Show life, vitality and confidence with the career moves you make.

4. Show Me What You Can Do

Back your credentials up. So many people put the burden on the employer to find out what you can do. That's wrong! The burden is on you. Get a certification that shows you can perform the job role. Take a course. Give me evidence that you can do the job that you're applying for. And don't waste the hiring manager's time. Be qualified for the advertised position (44% of applicants are underqualified). Be familiar with the [technologies that are in high demand](#). Today's most popular and valuable certifications for IT professionals include:

- Cisco Certified Network Administrator (CCNA)
- Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP)
- Microsoft MCITP Enterprise Administrator
- Microsoft MCITP Enterprise Desktop Admin with Windows 7
- Project Management Professional (PMP)®
- ISC2 CISSP®

5. Show Fresh Challenges

Expertise with new technologies, expansion of your scope and movement across boundaries are all qualities that show you're willing to improve. That's what a hiring manager wants, someone that's willing to improve personally and professionally. It's easy to maintain a status quo, follow orders, do the same things every day, collect a paycheck and go home. It's more valuable in the long run to have an employee that will stick his/her head out and recommend change. Caution! Make sure you look for improvements from the company's point of view. Adopting new technologies may make YOUR life easier, but have little to no benefit for the company. There's a difference between identifying legitimate areas for improvement and simply complaining about things in the office. And certainly be sure to display these challenges prominently on your resume, blog, LinkedIn and all of your other personal communication outlets.

6. Have Current Skills

Even if your company is still running Server 2000, you should be ready to make the migration BEFORE your company is. You don't want your current or potential employer to be forced to wait it out while you got up to speed. Be the person driving innovation. New stuff is fun! Most software is available on a trial basis for free, so it doesn't have to cost you a lot to stay up to date. Keep up with sites such as [digg](#) and [arstechnica](#) to be aware of new releases and updates. Staying up to date allows you to bring the new technology to the table (see #5).

7. Hate Complacency (Employers Do)

Few things are more frustrating to a manager than an employee who won't take action and has to continually be told to perform. Be careful that your resume doesn't display a lack of initiative, and especially don't let that show in an interview. When asked situational questions, be careful not to put the burden on the company for solutions. Instead of answering about how you'll follow policies and procedures or ask management for guidance, discuss how you'll take initiative and how you'll use your abilities. Employers would rather consider a risk-taker who isn't afraid to be wrong from time-to-time than someone who is unproductive because they're overly cautious.

8. Don't Look Stupid on the Internet

Social Media makes it very tempting to be more and more transparent about your personal life. It can be easy to let your guard down and reveal facts that shouldn't be for public consumption. Now is the time to reel it back in. Carefully manage your privacy settings and closely monitor the content you allow to be seen publicly. Better yet, you may want to follow this rule: only post material that you'd show directly to your boss. It's important to be in control of your online presence. Employers Google your name, you should do the same to see what comes up.

Be purposeful about your online presence. In response to an online blog, one poster commented that this year they planned to "be more diligent at linking my LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook strategies in order to facilitate more of a personal connection." This is a wise strategy you can employ for yourself. It's also important to keep to the topic at hand. Not all social media serve the same purpose. Look at what the "mission statements" are for Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Twitter: Discover what's happening right now, anywhere in the world

Facebook: Facebook helps you connect and share with the people in your life.

LinkedIn: Over 65 million professionals use LinkedIn to exchange information, ideas and opportunities

Stick to the topic! Try not to include too much personal activity on your LinkedIn. Your contacts won't appreciate it. Don't use Facebook and LinkedIn for minute-by-minute updates, that's what Twitter is for. Use your social and professional media to your advantage, don't let it tear you down. Also, make sure they you use the highest integrity with your screen names, avatars, email addresses and even your passwords. No hiring manager wants to seriously consider a candidate with sexydude37@yahoo.com for an email address.

9. Finish Your Work

People aren't hired for the amount of work they do, it's the amount of work they complete. Too many people feel that if they show up and work for eight or nine hours then the job is done. That's not necessarily true. Did you get anything finished? Are any of the open loops on your desk closed by the end of the day? Until you've finished a project, the work you've done has little to no value to the company. Direct your focus toward finishing projects at work. When looking for a new position, be sure to highlight the work you've completed and to display an attitude that shows you're a closer. Develop clear objectives for yourself, with tangible, quantifiable outcomes. Hiring managers love to know that a potential candidate is someone who can

recognize a task that needs to be done, and to follow it through to completion without a lot of direction from management.

10. Be an Awesome Communicator

Interpersonal and “soft” skills are a big buzz topic in the IT community. The difference between becoming an executive and working at a help desk forever is often found in a person’s ability to communicate. Speak clearly and announce, don’t mumble. Use eye contact (but don’t stare). Smile! These are simple things you can do to win the favor of a hiring manager. They show you care and you’re enthusiastic. Stick to the point in conversations. Be an excellent listener. When in an interview, make sure you’re answering the question that you’ve been asked. There are many fast and effective courses you can take that will help you communicate more clearly. They are just as important to your career as your technology training.

11. Make Me Want to Know You

Your resume and cover letter are the first pieces of information I have about you. Make sure they speak volumes. It’s very easy to bust out a template and simply replace the recipient name on your resume and cover letter. Don’t do that, especially for jobs you want (which should be any job you apply for). Take the time to personally apply for the position. One [hiring manager writes](#) that “if you’re going to include a cover letter, make it a killer.” Check out this great example of a [personal, effective cover letter](#).

12. Be Humble

This is a tough one. In the professional world, companies desire employees that put the needs of the company in front of the needs of the employee. You’re there to serve the company. Do tasks that others may feel are beneath them. Don’t be afraid to take risks because you may be wrong. Don’t be afraid to voice opinions because you may not get buy-in. Make sure that you’re not delaying an activity because it’s personally unattractive to you. By taking one (or many) for the team, you show your loyalty to the company and you reduce the headaches of your supervisors. You wouldn’t believe how highly valued these traits are in an employee. You don’t have to be a pushover, but service with a smile goes a long way. Adopt this attitude at work, and it will show through during your interviews and your career.

The best way to impress a hiring manager is to be an impressive candidate. Many times that means more than having an impressive set of skills (although a rockin’ skill set won’t hurt!) By thinking and acting proactively, you can develop the attitudes and build the credentials that will give you the advantage with most hiring managers. There is no better time than the present to get started. What will you do today to give yourself a better chance at getting the job you deserve? An excellent way to get started is to get access to the training you’ll need to have that rockin’ skill set. For a dozen years, PrepLogic has helped thousands of IT professionals get certified and improve their careers. To learn how you can get the training you need for your career, give us a call at 1-800-418-6789 and speak to our IT training counselors. Thanks and talk to you soon.