

# **Why People get hired – or not!**

It is very difficult to know why you are rejected or accepted at any stage of the job search process. Is it your cover letter or resume? Do you look old, shifty, lazy, disorganized, or tired? Some people get a job offer from the first opportunity, whereas others may go for months or years. All one can do is to act in a way to increase the odds. It may surprise people, but it does not start with the resume, though a resume is important. The overriding principle is that perception is reality!

1. The appearance of everything matters. This ranges from how people talk about you to your physical appearance, your LinkedIn or Facebook profile, your business cards, to your clothes. The smart job-hunter is objective and craves honest, objective feedback.
2. Your personal appearance is key. Overweight is bad, but skeletal is almost as bad. Weight says you are lazy, unhealthy, slow, stupid, unaware, and depressed. Hair has to be neat and tidy. For men, straggly, grey, facial hair is a big mistake. Clothes have to be clean, tidy, matching, and appropriate to the place and occasion. Do not over-dress or be flamboyant (unless you are a punk rocker). Women, wear moderate jewelry, and men and women go light on fragrances.
3. You can talk positively about what you have done and can do without appearing arrogant, boastful, or self-important. Some self-deprecation is often useful. Do not boast about family achievements or elite groups to which you may belong unless you know that the interviewer does too.
4. First impressions are almost impossible to change. How you meet people is important. You are known by the company you keep. If you are introduced by a credible person you are more credible.
5. When you write or interview, be brief and to the point. Focus on achievements, without being woolly or vague. Point out how you can help the prospective employer. Your skills and experience are only relevant in this context.
6. Be enthusiastic without being over eager. Too questioning an approach puts off interviewers. Cheerfulness makes you seem more competent than negativity.
7. Your focus is to get the job offer. While you do need to ask questions of the interviewer, do not be too challenging or threatening. Do your due diligence through side channels and after you get the offer.
8. Good references are key. Particularly in smaller companies, the hiring manager may well check themselves. Some probe for flaws. Make sure you know ahead of time what your references will say, and agree on it.
9. Keep salary negotiations to the end. They can never help you early and are likely to hurt. If you can negotiate through a third party, such as a recruiter, do so. Avoid providing a salary history. If the company is fair it will make a fair offer and you can either accept or reject it.
10. Do not stop your job search until the first pay check clears the bank. Some will say that you should not then. All too many people are terminated quite fast through no fault of their own.