

Know About Job Hunting

1. Relevant experience

Twenty-three percent of hiring managers say the candidate's ability to relate their experience to the job at hand is the most important factor in the hiring decision. Unfortunately, new graduates often underestimate the experience they have through internships, part-time jobs and extracurricular activities, but 63 percent of hiring managers say they view volunteer activities as relevant experience.

2. Fit within the company culture

Just because you look good on paper doesn't mean you're a shoo-in for the job. The trait employers most want to see in a candidate is the ability to fit in with co-workers and the company. Offering up a blank stare when the interviewer asks why you are the right fit for the job will not go over well. Just be yourself, but mind your i's -- never insult, interrupt or irritate the interviewer. This can also be evaluated by that "unimportant" small talk at the beginning of an interview or non-job-related questions like "What was the last book you read?"

3. Educational background

Nineteen percent of hiring managers place the most emphasis on your educational background: the institution you attended, major, minor and degree earned. Be sure to also include courses taken and completed projects if relevant to the job. With grade point average, it's tricky. A good rule of thumb is to omit it unless it is 3.0 or higher and denote if it's your overall or major GPA.

4. Enthusiasm

Passion for the job is the top characteristic 19 percent of employers look for in a candidate. Employees who are passionate about their jobs tend to be more productive workers. The answer to "Why do you want to work here?" should always focus on the strengths of the company and the challenge of the position, not the perks. A "take or leave it" attitude about the job will leave the employer feeling the same about you.

5. Preparedness

Eight percent of hiring managers say the ideas you bring to the table and the questions you ask carry the most significance. Come in prepared to discuss how your qualifications can specifically contribute

to the success of the company. Actually put yourself in that role and explain how you would perform your work and ways to improve it.