

Jobboo Jabber, Volume 5

Dear Readers,

You've got a great client with a great position. And after all your hard work, you've found the perfect candidate for the job! You've screened them and you know it will be a match made in recruitment heaven.

But there's still the interview. This is where it can go well or where it can fall apart. One recruiter tells the following story:

"I had a great client with a great job. And I had not one but two candidates, both equally matched. The client wanted to talk to both and I obliged. Candidate A was knowledgeable and quietly confident. Candidate B was equally knowledgeable and came across as extremely confident. Candidate B's confidence won the client and Candidate B was hired. Then, 3 weeks later, the client called back. Candidate B wasn't working out because his high level of confidence began to seem overbearing. The client asked for Candidate A to come back for another interview. He interviewed again, with the same level of quiet confidence and knowledge, and was hired."

This is a great story because it tells the power of the interview for all parties involved. And in this case, I wouldn't advise Candidate A to do anything differently, particularly since he was himself and that turned out to be the choice that got him the job.

From the perspective of the candidate (and the recruiter) interviews are a careful balance between salesmanship and transparency. On the one hand, a candidate needs to sell themselves in the interview. On the other hand, they shouldn't be different from who they are or it will spell trouble on the job. So how do you prepare the candidate for the interview? Here are a few ideas I have:

- Talk about the job ahead of time, describing what they will do and what skills they can expect to use. By doing this you will highlight what is important to the client.
- Don't be afraid to recommend good practices. I like mentioning to candidates that they should bring a pen and paper and arrive prepared with questions to ask. This looks good for them and it looks good for you.
- Tell the candidate why you chose them to interview for the job. Avoid feeding them lines that they might regurgitate to the client but be honest about what skills they have that you felt would make them a good match.
- Discuss concerns up-front. If you're worried that the deal could come off the rails in the interview, candidly but politely address it before the interview. For example, I might say "The client may have some concerns around the number of jobs you've had in the past year so you may want to address how you've made big changes in your life and you're looking for a steady position again."
- Review with the candidate the material you'll be handing to the client on their behalf, like a summary, their resume, or an application. This will outline the talking points that the client may be looking for.
- If you're concerned that the candidate may not interview well because of jittery nerves, then consider these alternatives: Don't call it an interview! Or, have them meet you first just for small talk, coffee, and to go over the project details, and schedule the meeting with client 15 or 20 minutes into your meeting so that the candidate is warmed up and hasn't been sitting in a waiting room getting nervous.

In future editions of the Jobboo Jabber I'll give some more tips about candidate preparation for the interview stage.

Dedicated to Improving the Recruitment Community through Inspiration,

-Julie

PS, Please email your questions, feedback, and ideas to: dearjobboo@jobboo.org. I'd love to hear about your success stories and horror stories from interviewing candidates. When sending your stories, be sure to tell us what it was that made it a success or not, so that we can all learn something from your sharing. And don't worry, anonymity will be preserved!