

CRUCIAL RESEARCH TO CATAPULT YOUR INTERVIEW PERFORMANCE AND YOUR CAREER

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Millions of dollars are spent annually on marketing research by savvy companies aiming to maximize their marketing dollars when showcasing their products and services to their prospective clients. They recognize that to capture the attention of a potential customer and successfully elicit a subsequent purchase, their wares must be targeted specifically to their clients' needs. Unprepared companies that lack thought and consideration in their marketing research and going in blindly with their promotions are often left feeling disappointed at the lack of response their advertising campaigns receive.

When it comes to your job search and 'advertising' campaign, which company are you most like? Do you carefully plan and perform extensive research of your potential 'buyer' enabling you to align your experience with their needs, or do you just go in blindly? Strategic research and revealing the needs of your potential 'buyer' is also crucial for a job seeker. Just like the company not paying much attention to their clients' needs, if the company's needs are neglected by the job seeker, they too may be setting themselves up for disappointment.

If you are not currently performing any real research and are not convinced this process is vital to your job search and interview campaign, here are a few of the key reasons why you should. Researching a company and job requirements will allow you to:

1. Prepare responses with relevant examples pertinent to the job's requirements avoiding elimination as you will be positioning yourself as a serious contender for the role;
2. Demonstrate a fit with the company culture;
3. Strengthen your understanding of the company's structure;
4. Establish whether or not you believe this position and organization is a good fit for you, to prevent a possible fallout down the track were you to accept the role only to realize that it was not as expected.

Your research should endeavour to pinpoint:

1. The company's products and services;
2. The company's target market;
3. The company's competitors;
4. The interviewer and their role within the company. [If you gained this interview opportunity through one of your network contacts, you may be fortunate enough to gain inside information as to characteristics, mannerisms and communication style of the interviewer];
5. Special projects the company is working on (that perhaps you may have been involved in during previous employment);
6. Whether the organization is a large or small enterprise which can impact on salary negotiation. Large and longer established companies could have a larger revenue base and may be able to offer a larger salary base compared to a smaller/start-up organization;
7. What structure the interview will follow. Whether it will be a panel (who is sitting on the panel); a group panel, involving psychological assessments etc;
8. Allows you to develop powerful questions to ask the interviewer.

To begin your research regime you can try the following resources:

- Company website
- Advertising brochures and other promotional material
- Newspaper articles, professional journals
- Your contacts that may have dealt with, or are dealing with the company including suppliers, customers, existing/former staff
- Business Review Websites
- Company Research Websites, and the list goes on

The information you compile will assist you in preparing relevant situations from your work experience, qualified with past performance and examples. This information should be strategically aligned to the needs of the organization, thus positioning you as the best candidate for the job.

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