So... Did I Get The Job?

By Anna Wells, Editor, IMPO *[1]*

When I saw the CNN.com headline “43 Weird Things Said in Job Interviews,” I had to click. Throughout my career, I’ve enjoyed the odd task of interviewing dozens of prospective job candidates for positions within our publication group, and I’m always up for a disastrous tale of inappropriate behavior. Some of the highlights:

Why should we hire you?

"I would be a great asset to the events team because I party all the time."

Do you have any questions?

"What is your company's policy on Monday absences?"

Why are you leaving your current job?

"Because I (expletive) my pants every time I enter the building."

Personally, my favorite interview scenario is the one where we spend 20 positive minutes communicating before the interviewee—in one spastic moment of verbal negligence—shoots him or herself in the foot. Sometimes we both realize it; other times, it’s only me, while the candidate jabbers on, blissfully unaware of the faux pas.

It’s this situation I find most interesting, because it leads me to believe that many of us are somewhat oblivious as to how we present ourselves to others.

Maybe I’m taking this too far, but perhaps our reality-TV culture has placed too high a value on displaying frank, candid portraits of ourselves. What happened to the concept of putting forth your best face? Just because you’re not a morning person doesn’t make you not qualified for certain positions; I’d just rather not know.

Considering that right now we sit in the toughest job market in decades, it seems reasonable to expect a basic level of preparation and aptitude during a job interview. Perhaps I’m the youngest “old school-er” around, but I’m a piranha in there; don’t drop a curse word or forget your necktie, or you probably won’t make it out alive.

I joke about the “rules,” but ultimately, it’s not about a set of arbitrary guidelines of professionalism. Really, it’s about finding the right people for the job, a task that’s not as easy as it sounds. Can you decipher, beyond a good resume, who might function best in a team environment? Are you asking the right questions in order to

find that out?

When it comes to the few jobs that are available: What are you looking for in a candidate once they sit down in front of you? Heck, I'd even like to hear about your interview horror stories. Post them below.

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