



“Dear Job Seeker, Here’s What I Want.”

Are you employer wish list material?

A checklist employers want you to know

As one who hires—and on occasion fires—I’m often baffled by job seekers who arrive unprepared for an interview—especially with all the job search advice and resources that are available 24/7. While screening details may differ depending on the specific job opening and interviewer, basic hiring criteria remain. So, let me share an essential checklist of what I look for in any candidate who may be joining my organization.

#1. To start: seriously, why do you want to work for me? And don’t say you need the income. It should go deeper than that. Are you clear on what you’re looking to gain from the experience? How does my organization fit into your career plans? After all, your goals can figure prominently in how you prepare and connect with me. I’m going to assume that you read the job description carefully, that you’ve done your homework and researched the company, our mission, current news, even social postings, to make sure your skills align with our needs and direction. It should be clear in your head that what you bring to the table is relevant to the position I’m looking to fill, and that your participation will enhance the organization. If you haven’t done the above, please do. Few things are more irksome than an unprepared job candidate.

#2. I’m busy and don’t have enough hours in the day. So, don’t be late to our interview. I won’t meet with you. If you can stand in line for hours to snag the latest concert tickets or smartphone, you can certainly arrive early and wait in a coffee shop before meeting with me on time to discuss your future. Also, calling me five minutes before our meeting to “let me know” you’re running 30 minutes late won’t help you. Being late is unprofessional and rude, and I won’t penalize my staff, or any candidate scheduled after you, for *your* poor timing.

#3. Like you, I’m looking forward to our first encounter. So, don’t walk in with a beverage or food, either in your hand or mouth. I want my first impression of you to be a warm smile, friendly disposition, firm handshake, and good eye contact, all backed by a well-dressed, well-groomed appearance. And be genuine: if you’re less than polite to my receptionist, chances are, I’ll hear about it.

#4. Did you know I’m pretty fluent in body language?

Your posture, hands, eyes, even feet can speak volumes. So, while I expect some nervousness, don’t let me catch you zoning out or looking at your watch during the interview. I’ll assume that you have some place more important to be and won’t detain you. Also, telling me that you’re looking to be your own boss in two years or waiting for something better to come along will guarantee I don’t hire you. My investment of time and resources in you should be part of a bigger picture that works for *both* of us.

#5. Are you enthusiastic, proud of and passionate in what you do? If so, show me your portfolio. I want to see your accomplishments and work experience, what lights your fire and gives you purpose to come into work. If you really want to impress me, articulate how you can bring value and contribute to my organization; I’ll know you’ve done your homework.

#6. Are you the right fit for my organization? Do you have a personality? Your résumé hits the right notes. But, I need someone who will work well with the rest of my team. I might even opt for a slightly less experienced but eager-to-learn candidate over one with qualifications in everything *except* soft skills.

#7. I want to thank you in advance for not interrupting me; for listening carefully to my questions before answering concisely; for letting me bring up the topic of perks, salaries, and vacations—or not; and for bringing extra résumés for my associates. Know too that I *expect* you to ask smart questions—the sign of an active mind, enquire about the next steps, and, finally, send a prompt thank you and follow up.

Remember, as much as I am looking to fill a position, I am also looking out for the best interests of my organization. So expect me to evaluate everything you say and do from the moment you contact us through to our decision. See you soon!



i n a nutshell:

Employers have seen just about everything, so don’t sabotage your job candidacy by not preparing.

- **Be clear in what you want and prepared to articulate it; it will save us both a lot of time**
- **If you’re late, don’t expect me to meet with or hire you**
- **Be poised and confident in your comportment and abilities, enthusiastic and compelling in your delivery**
- **Be authentic and honest; I want to know who you are**
- **Let me know that I matter and what you’ll bring to the position**
- **Don’t take things personally; just like you, I’m looking for fit and value in the other party**

Focus on what I’m looking for in a hire. It’s the most direct route to helping us *both* meet our needs.