

Advice from Employers

Welcome to video #3 of the Career Development Series. I think you will find this video especially valuable for your job search process, because you are about to hear some advice directly from employers!

Hello, I'm Mohammed and I'm going to share some advice that companies in Iraq want you to know. Pay close attention, because this advice comes from real hiring managers in Iraq.

Resume Dos and Don'ts

First, we asked employers to share some tips on resume dos and don'ts and here is what they had to say:

- **Tailor your resume** for the specific job in order to highlight the strengths you have to offer. Don't include anything in your resume that you cannot explain and provide background on.
- **Carefully prepare your resume and check it closely for grammatical and spelling errors** to avoid looking careless. Always use a spell checker! Have a trusted friend, colleague or career center staff member review it critically before submitting it.
- **Never lie on your resume.** It's ok not to know some things, you have years ahead of you to gain more skills. For example, having the ability to work in Microsoft Word does not make you proficient in all other Microsoft Office programs, like Excel and Access. **Don't exaggerate your qualifications.**

Interview Dos and Don'ts

Employers also had some advice on what to do, or NOT do, in an interview:

- **Never ask about the salary in the beginning of the interview.** It is against professional etiquette to show that salary is the first or most important thing on your mind. You will not be appointed to a senior position overnight, so focus on getting your foot in the door, even if it means a more junior level position.
- **Always bring a hard copy of your resume to the interview.** You and the interviewer will refer to this and it's good to have in front of you.
- **Practice the interview** in the mirror or with family and friends to reduce your nervousness during the actual interview.
- **Dress professionally.**
- **Don't miss the opportunity to ask questions** about the job or company.
- **Research the company** and know about their activities in Iraq and internationally, if applicable.
- **Turn off your mobile phone** during the interview and stay focused.

Networking and Job Search Process

For other tips on how to get a job, we asked employers to share advice on networking and job search strategies. Here is what they had to say:

- **Ask around, visit companies.** They are not that hard to find. **Search online and use Facebook**, you will be surprised by how many opportunities you will miss by only relying on your family members and friends.
- **Attend events and conferences to meet people who are already working in your field.** From there, get to know them and ask them whether their company or another company they know is hiring. Make business cards with your name, contact information, profession, and school.

Develop Yourself

To better understand exactly *the kind of person* employers are looking for, we asked them to describe some important personal traits. They told us:

- Commitment, work ethic and attention to detail are critical to most employers. Be prepared to demonstrate that you have these.
- On the job, you must have the ability to communicate with diverse audiences and comprehend what is asked of you. Hone your communication skills in all languages.
- Confidence is seen positively, but remember that there is a fine line between confident and over-confident.
- Don't take rejection personal. It is often easy to take it personal that you did not hear back from a company you contacted. Sometimes, this might have to do with your lack of skills, or that you did not interview well with them. But do not take rejection in the job search process personally. It is possible that you did not get the job for other reasons, such as a change in the company's needs. It does not help you in any way to take things personal or to be bitter about being rejected, so move on and keep looking.

How to increase your chances for employment

Finally, we asked employers what you can do to enhance your chances of getting a job. They had some very specific ideas – here they are:

- **Stay employed.** Take a job even if you think it's a bit under your level. You will learn something from it, meet new people, and expand your network, all of which may get you a better job in the future.
- **Be open to doing internships, even if they are unpaid.** This will help you get hired in that company or a similar one, and will develop your marketable skills. It also shows employers your sense of commitment.
- **Network, network, and then network some more**, you will not find a job by staying at home waiting for someone to help you out – get out there and make it happen!
- **Go out to places that professionals frequent and introduce yourself to them.** Talk to them a little bit about your qualifications and how eager you are to work. This is a part of networking.

- **Have a strong resume.** Try to get some practical experience, even if it is in another field. Recognize that earning a degree only demonstrates that you have the capacity to learn. Experience, even as a volunteer, is the strongest feature of your resume.
- **Be prepared to work hard.** The job market is competitive and you have to sell yourself! Employers don't owe you anything!

I hope that this video has given you better insight into the mind of a hiring manager. We would like to thank the following professionals for their contribution:

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The rest of the videos in this series expand on much of what you have heard today. As always, speak to your Career Center staff and network to get even more advice.

What are you waiting for? Your future starts now!