

«Tick the boxes» in the interviewer's head!

The challenge for recruiters in a job interview is to clarify many questions in a short period of time in order to be able to decide whether they want to invite applicants to the next round of interviews. You can think of it as a list of checkboxes that need to be ticked. Sometimes applicants manage to tick a box without the interviewer noticing.

Peter Näf

A client in outplacement was facing an important job interview for which I was training him. He was highly qualified and ideally suited to the position in question. He also had an impeccable appearance and was a good communicator.

Nevertheless, the interview was a headache for him as he had been dismissed from his last job. The reason was a difference in opinion between his line manager and him about the strategic direction of his department.

Security is contagious

I found this reason for dismissal understandable and easy to communicate. Moreover, he answered my question in the positive as to whether he would have resigned of his own accord sooner or later due to the differences in opinion.

If recruiters had noticed his insecurity during the interview, they would certainly have asked him persistently and looked for alternative reasons for dismissal. Since the reason given is understandable in terms of content, the candidate's uncertainty can only mean that he is covering up the real reasons for termination or that something else compromising had happened.

My client therefore had to come to terms with himself to successfully communicate the reason for termination. We were able to clarify this in

coaching. I also advised him to practise his argument out loud so that he wouldn't be frightened by his own words the first time he listened to himself in a job interview.

Successful communication is prepared

Since I thought he was rhetorically skilled, I suggested another communication trick to him: As mentioned, you can imagine the recruiter's questions to be clarified as a task list with checkboxes in their brain. I therefore suggested to my client that when answering the expected first question (e.g.: «Please introduce yourself briefly»), he should also check the «Reason for termination» box.

This worked as follows: My client prepared himself well and described his career to date in reverse chronological order and then briefly mentioned the termination but went over the reasons with a general formulation. He then drew the interviewer's attention to the red thread of his previous professional experience and explained the motivation for the new position.

He formulated this so elegantly that the interviewees didn't come back to the reason for his dismissal - apparently the box was ticked for the relevant question.

Professional recruitment is different. I think that in-depth clarification of the reasons for the termination is essential in a situation like this. But my client didn't need to worry about it - he got the job and was very happy and successful in his new position.

#job-interview #application #outplacement

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