

### Let's talk straight - please!

Applicants often communicate best in job interview training when they don't think they are «on air». If they spoke to friends the way they normally do in a job interview, they would show a worried expression on their face. It's high time to start communicating like human beings again in job applications and not like application robots.

Peter Näf

«I restructured my division and made it very agile, carrying out many transformation projects and digitalising processes. It was important for me to create an environment that was diverse and... oh Mr Näf - it's so difficult to explain exactly what I did...!!!»

This was the desperate response of a customer to my question in the job interview training about what she had been doing professionally in recent years.

She managed a division in an international group with many subsidiaries. I asked her - outside of the job interview - what was so difficult about telling me about her job.

#### **Communicate as you would with a friend**

Her answer was: «Just imagine I took on this newly created role five years ago. The employees in my area at the subsidiaries had previously worked independently and didn't wait for someone from the head office to gain an insight into their work. The first task I set myself was to gain

the trust of my employees and then establish common procedures. This was difficult as they continued to be led by the local CEOs ...». Without realising it, she told me her story in passing while explaining what made the storytelling so difficult. In doing so, she answered my original question.

I often observe this phenomenon: when my customers tell me their stories as Peter Näf, I understand every word; when they tell me their stories as an interviewer, I don't understand a thing.

#### **Treating the interview with buzzwords**

The same thing happens in written application communication: applicants fall into «buzzwording», a language they would never use in an interpersonal exchange. This tendency has increased even more since many applicants assume that new employees are selected by AI.

Use the following trick to improve your communication in the application: Tell them what you have done so far in your professional life, what moves, interests and motivates you. And DON'T say what you think your interviewer would like to hear or think is currently «en vogue».

Believe it or not, interviewers want to talk to real, i.e. imperfect people and not perfect application avatars.

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