

Success in a job interview: Speak out clearly!

Unambiguous communication is a challenge that should not be underestimated, especially in job interviews. Many applicants think they have agreed on important aspects of a job with future employers, only to realise after starting the job that this was not the case.

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I advised a client on her professional reorientation and job search. She had been working in a front-line position for many years. At the time we were working together, she was negotiating a position in the management of a friend's company. She was very interested in the position, but on one condition: she no longer wanted to acquire customers. As customer acquisition is a high priority in her industry and members of the management are normally involved in this in comparable companies, I was alarmed.

I kept asking her whether she had made it very clear in the discussions that she no longer wanted to acquire. She was convinced that she had agreed this with her future employer.

We often think we have understood each other

There was no HR department in the company, which made me even more suspicious. My client and her future line manager had discussed the job together and there was no written job description. I therefore advised her to write one. At the risk of annoying her, I insisted that there was no consensus on the acquisition. Unfortunately, I was unable to convince her. In the end, she signed the employment contract.

Why did I insist that my client and her dialogue partner hadn't really reached an agreement?

Writing brings clarity

I remembered my experience of taking minutes of meetings in a previous role. Everyone seemed to agree and when I wanted to record the agreements on paper, questions arose, and we were back in the middle of the discussion. And the following situation is probably familiar to you: You think you have understood something and when you try to explain it or write it down, you realise that you haven't quite grasped the point after all.

Therefore, in similar situations, which are common in job applications, make sure that everything is in writing. After each meeting, write a protocol with the points discussed, agreements made and open questions. This will make your meetings more focussed and targeted. New questions will also arise, because: Topics do not develop in our heads, but on paper, which serves as an extension of our small working memory in the brain.

I then didn't hear from my client for a long time. A few weeks after starting her job, she called me and told me disappointedly that she was expected to acquire customers.

Eventually, after another job change, she was happy in her next role. She made sure of this by communicating her needs clearly and unambiguously in the job interviews.

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