

EP. 23 - Navigating the Interview Process

Overview

This episode provides guidance on how to navigate the interview process effectively, especially when working with a third-party recruiter or recruitment agency. The presenter emphasizes the importance of communication, professionalism, and maintaining contact with both the recruiter and the company. Tips on sending thank-you emails, building rapport in person, and handling HR gatekeepers are shared, along with advice on preparing for case studies and dressing appropriately for interviews.

Key Points

1. Communication with Recruiters and Companies

- When working with a third-party recruiter or an external recruitment agency, it's essential to maintain communication with both your recruiter and the company you're interviewing with. Keep your recruiter informed at every step of the process, while ensuring that you're also engaging directly with the company.
- In some cases, the company may prefer to communicate exclusively through the recruitment agency. That's fine, but you should still send thank-you emails after every interview to the company representative and copy your recruiter. This keeps everyone on the same page and ensures you're perceived as professional and courteous.

2. Importance of Thank-You Emails

- Sending thank-you emails after each interview remains an essential part of the process. While it might seem outdated, it shows professionalism and gratitude. You don't need to write a long email—just a few sentences to express your appreciation and reinforce your interest in the role. An example could be:

- "Hey [Interviewer's Name], I really appreciate you taking the time to meet with me today. I learned a lot about the company and the role, and I am very interested in pursuing the next step. I look forward to working with you and [recruiter's name] to understand what's needed from me."

3. In-Person vs. Online Interviews

- Whenever possible, choose to meet in person rather than conducting an online interview. In-person interactions allow you to give off energy and excitement that often don't come through on a screen. Face-to-face meetings also offer opportunities to engage in small talk, build rapport, and leave a stronger impression.
- However, if an in-person interview isn't possible, treat virtual meetings with the same level of professionalism.

4. HR Gatekeepers

- HR professionals often act as gatekeepers during the hiring process. Their primary goal is to find the best talent at the lowest cost. They are less concerned with getting to know you personally and more focused on filling the role as quickly and economically as possible.
- Don't worry about trying to win over HR. Instead, focus on ensuring that they support your candidacy and move you forward in the process. The real decision-maker is typically the hiring manager, so HR's role is more procedural.

5. Dressing the Part

- Always dress the part, and it's better to overdress than underdress—especially in virtual interviews. Even on Zoom, maintaining a professional appearance is crucial. Your outfit can influence how you are perceived, and looking sharp reflects your seriousness and respect for the opportunity.

6. Staying in Touch with Both the Recruiter and Company

- Keeping in contact with both your recruiter and the company throughout the process benefits you in multiple ways. Your recruiter can provide guidance on how to approach the interview, but you also build a direct line of communication with the company, demonstrating initiative and professionalism.

7. Case Studies in Interviews

- Be aware if the interview process includes a case study and prepare accordingly. Case studies often require candidates to showcase their

problem-solving abilities, creativity, and understanding of the role and industry.

- Knowing when the case study will occur allows you to mentally prepare and gather any resources you might need to perform well.

Conclusion

Navigating the interview process successfully involves maintaining strong communication with both your recruiter and the company, showing professionalism through thank-you emails and personal interactions, and preparing for key stages like case studies. Whether interviewing in person or online, always present yourself well and build rapport when possible. Keep in mind that HR may serve as a gatekeeper but isn't the final decision-maker—focus on impressing the hiring manager and moving forward in the process with confidence.