



10 Things to Do Before and During Interviews with Employer Representatives at the *23rd Annual ACFE Fraud Conference & Exhibition*

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One of the great benefits of attending the *Annual ACFE Fraud Conference* is the opportunity to speak with career coaches, hiring managers, and employer representatives who are present in the Career Connection area. In a way, being able to interview with employer representatives gathered together in one location is sort of like speed dating: you want to show up prepared, be a great listener, and leave a positive first impression that begs the employer representative to want to know more about you — and even perhaps discuss a long-term relationship in the way of a job or career.

So how do you ensure you've done all you can with your prep work for interviews? Here's a short ten-item list — *from a veteran hiring manager's perspective* — that will help you present the best possible YOU in front of potential employers.

1. Visit www.encygnium.com and take the free Career Self-Assessments and download the tip sheets for résumés, cover letters, career strategy development, interviewing skills, salary and/or benefit negotiation, and more.
2. The entire screening/interview/hiring process is **not** about you: it's about the hiring manager's needs. That's why you need to be a great listener so your responses to questions address the hiring manager's requirements. Gauge all your responses and questions toward conveying *the image* that you are a problem solver, a solutions provider, and a game changer.
3. I suggest bringing a cover letter with you. The cover letter is your introductory brochure that is designed to get hiring managers to look at your résumé, but it also serves as another tool to promote your professional brand. In line with No. 2, ensure your cover letter has these important elements:
 - a. More instances of “you/your/yours” than “I/me/my/mine” — it's a ballpark indicator that your cover letter is more about the hiring manager's needs than your own.
 - b. Your cover letter is no longer than one page and is addressed to an individual, and never “To Whom It May Concern” or “Dear Hiring Manager.”
 - c. Pull your major accomplishments (**not** duties or responsibilities) from your résumé and place them in a bullet list in your cover letter. Even FAR better is if you can assign quantitative value (revenue generated, costs avoided, percent improvement, etc.) to those major accomplishments.
 - d. Never “hope to hear from you at your earliest convenience” — always state that you will be following up with a phone call in a few days to discuss how you can add value to the hiring



manager's efforts. If you want the job, you have to eliminate all other candidates from consideration; just ending your cover letter or interview with, "hoping to hear from you" places you at the mercy of other candidates who are more hungry.

4. Know your résumé inside and out...it is the script with which you launch your responses to many of the interview questions you will encounter. You should be able to elaborate on any bullet point and item on your résumé.
5. Besides an error-free, professional looking résumé, bring with you a list of references ***if you are asked for one***. If not, *resist the urge to leave it with the employer representative and any other documents and collateral you may have with you*. Folks don't want to be lugging reams of paper back on the plane with them. The right way to distribute supportive documentation is over time after the interview. *Confessions of a Hiring Manager Rev. 2.0* details the exact process that I call the "Continuous Promotion Approach" and uses a little Trojan Horse trick that keeps your name in front of hiring managers throughout the most important part of the hiring process--well after interviews have concluded.
6. The worst response to the inevitable question: "So, tell me about yourself..." is "What do you want to know?" With a response like that, you could no longer be considered for the position for which you are interviewing. You've just been given a golden opportunity to describe yourself in a way that will be memorable to the interviewer. Example response to the question: "I'm a cello player and kids' soccer coach who enjoys working on challenging projects always with an eye on the bottom line and the customer's success. I do that by...."
7. Ask questions of the interviewer(s) about the biggest challenges facing the team, department, or business unit, and take notes. Show you are interested in the position by actively participating in the *exchange* of information.
8. Study after study reveals that the first and largest hurdle to overcome with a hiring manager is to be likeable. If a hiring manager likes you, he or she will be more interested in *you* (they are hiring you, not your résumé). If you come across as arrogant and pompous, that may be too big a hurdle for them to get over, regardless of your expertise. Hiring managers don't need a squeaky wheel on the team or in the department who could disrupt an existing positive team dynamic.
9. Maintain good eye contact without making it seem like you are trying to hypnotize the interviewer. Good eye contact communicates interest and focus. Consider your surroundings: you're not a corporate office--you're at a conference, so things are a bit more informal. Let your personality come through but always frame it professionally.
10. At the end of the interview, ask for the follow-up, don't just treat the meeting as a one-shot affair. Think of it as the first of several meetings or communications with the individual or the company. Ask: "I'd very much enjoy discussing how I can be that value-add asset to the company...should I call you in a week or so?" Just like the close of your cover letter.

One last thing that should underlie all of these ten items: take the position that you are in business for yourself...it's amazing what it will do for your attitude--and how others will pick up on it.



Author and speaker Donn LeVie Jr. (www.encygnium.com) began his career as a research geological oceanographer with NOAA in Miami, Florida. He has held hiring manager positions for Phillips Petroleum (now Conoco-Phillips), Motorola SPS, and Intel Corporation. Donn was also a former adjunct faculty lecturer with the University of Houston Downtown College Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. He has reviewed thousands of résumés and cover letters, conducted hundreds of interviews, and managed teams of technical, marketing, and communications professionals throughout his 20-plus year career. He now speaks and teaches job and career strategies to members of associations, corporations, colleges and universities, business and trade schools, branches of the military, and government agencies.

*Donn is the author of **Confessions of a Hiring Manager: Sage Advice for Job Seekers and Career Chang-ers in a Confused Economy** (March 2010), **Confessions of a Hiring Manager Rev. 2.0: Getting to and Stay-ing at the Top of the Hiring Manager's Short List in a Confused Economy** (Second Edition, June 2012), which is a finalist for the 2012 International Book Award (Business/Careers) and the 2012 Global eBook Award (Careers/ Employment). He is also the author of **50 Things You Can Do NOW to Help Keep Your Job** (Second Edition, June 2012). Donn has been a presenter at the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd Annual ACFE Fraud Conference & Exhibitions where he has also conducted individual career consultations.*
