

# Come to the Interview *Working*, Not Looking for Work

By Jim Stroud

Okay, if you made it as far as the interview, you don't want to blow it. (Agreed?) In my many years in HR I have been a silent observer on several interviews. Let me tell you some subtle, but definite "no-no's" you may not be aware of.

**1.** Dressed up to the nines for an interview. Ask in advance what the attire is for the interview. If it is business casual and you arrive in a suit or vice-versa, you send a subconscious signal to the interviewer that you do not fit in with the culture of the company.

**2. Do not say** that I am ready to start immediately. Everybody says that! (Believe me I know.) You have to give the impression that you have already started and you just need them to acknowledge it. How do you do that?

- Research the company from top to bottom; know who the key players are and call out a few of their names in passing.
- Mention what the company is doing now and how you think they will succeed or fail in what they are doing.
- Suggest a strategy of how they could proceed and detail how you would facilitate that change.
- Listen carefully to what they want and be sure you can give it to them.

Want to go a step further and really impress them? **Create a plan detailing what you plan on accomplishing in the first 100 days of employment!** Make sure that you hit every immediate need that touches your position, forecast what will be required beyond that and address those issues in your strategy. Then, ask what additional milestones would have to be met to earn a promotion or performance bonus. The probable reaction? How soon can you start? (NOTE: This technique is used after you have completed a couple of interviews and the final decision is between you and the next guy. I recommend that it be you.)

**3.** Remember that until you land the job you want, looking for a job IS your job and you should treat it as such. Set your hours of operation, follow-up on your leads, maintain your contacts and be diligent in your pursuit. Create a mentality that you are not per se out of work, just operating in a new temporary position.

Good luck in your job search!