



## So You Didn't Get the Job – Dealing with Rejection

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**H**ave you ever applied for a position that you were sure you would get just to receive a letter of rejection in the mail? Well, if you are like hundreds of other job seekers, chances are you have. How do you deal with rejection letters? First, remember that if you got to the interview stage, chances are you presented a well written cover letter and resume and you used your networking skills effectively. That leaves the interview. Ask yourself...

### **Did I...**

- **Arrive on time?** On time means arrive 10 minutes *early* for the interview. This leaves you time to relax and gather yourself before the interview and review your resume. Some of the interviewer's questions may be inspired by it. Arriving early also gives you time to look over company literature that may be in the reception area as you wait. There may be something of interest that you were not able to get your hands on before the interview. In addition, make sure that you find the interview location in advance. You may want to drive the distance to see how long it will take you. Be aware of traffic conditions at the time of day that you are interviewing. And leave early in case of unexpected delays.

- **Dress appropriately?** Both men and women should dress conservatively in appropriate interview attire. In general this means a suit in a dark color, polished

shoes, no flashy jewelry or cuff links (keep it simple), and light cologne or perfume, if any. Check with your Career Center for additional information. If you are unsure, ask! Your career counselor will be happy to tell you whether what you are planning to wear is appropriate.

- **Display enthusiasm and confidence?**

It is okay to toot your own horn and speak about your accomplishments with confidence. Make sure, however, that you do not come across as cocky. A videotaped mock interview with your career counselor should let you know of your confidence level. Be enthusiastic. Put yourself in the interviewer's shoes for a moment. If you interviewed a candidate that was down beat and boring, would you want that person on your team?

- **Convey interest and knowledge of the position and company?** Homework is key. Not only should you learn everything about the company in advance, but also about the position for which you are interviewing. How? If you have developed your networking skills, then you should know someone in your network that holds a similar position. If not, check with the Career Center or your faculty advisor for your major for information on alumni who are working in the field. Also research the company's industry to determine what major challenges the company may be facing.

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• **Adequately communicate my qualifications?** Many employers ask behavioral based interview questions aimed at determining whether you possess the necessary skills and abilities to do the job. This is an excellent opportunity for you to convey how well you communicate both verbally and in writing; display your team work, problem solving and time management skills; and your leadership abilities. In order to answer behavioral questions sufficiently, you will need to provide a narrative about a situation or task, the action you took and what the result of that action was. For example, if asked “Describe a time when you had to take the lead on a project. How did you handle it?” This is an excellent time to describe how you used your leadership abilities to get your team to achieve a desired result. The questions asked by the employer should be connected to the types of situations you will encounter on the jobs and the skills that will be required. By the end of the interview, if you have achieved your goal of adequately communicating your qualifications, the employer should be well aware that you have the necessary skills to do the job.

**A**fter reviewing your interview, what if you determine that you did, indeed, perform to the best of your ability. Then, keep in mind two things: 1) That there was someone else the company felt was a better match for the position and 2)

This will happen. Don't be discouraged. Remember, the average job search can take three to six months. So dust yourself off and try again!

Harris-Stowe State University is located in St. Louis, Missouri. Employers interested in recruiting on campus may send an email to [careerservices@hssu.edu](mailto:careerservices@hssu.edu) Harris-Stowe offers degrees in Business Administration, Marketing, Management, Entrepreneurship, Accounting, Information Sciences & Computer Technology, MIS, Health Care Management, Criminal Justice, Urban Studies and Teacher Education.