

## The Likeability Factor - Do You Have It?

Growing up, we all had a mental picture of the perfect life partner - the person we thought would be our happily ever after - a person with a perfect smile, beautiful eyes, and an adorable button nose. Fast forward to reality and who did you wind up with?

Chances are that if your partner of choice happens to be male, you ended up with a guy who is shorter than you expected, has less hair than you anticipated, but overall is a pretty neat fellow. And if you're interested in women, chances are that the woman you ended up with isn't as curvaceous as you dreamed, but overall is a very special person.

The truth is that no matter what you envisioned, you bought into what your partner was offering. Although he or she didn't meet all of your set criteria, they met the most important one - they are good people - and that is why you chose their companionship.

When it comes to hiring decisions, recruiters aren't any different. Realizing that one candidate isn't going to meet all the criteria in the job description, the recruiter buys into the person as a whole - not one characteristic, accomplishment, or degree. After all is said and done, hiring decisions, for the most part, are based on whether or not the candidate is likeable.

What most don't understand is that likeability is more than the knack for getting others to hang out with you after work and share a couple of beers. This is why most interviews are challenging. Not only do you have to demonstrate that you are technically capable of doing the job, you must go a step further and impress the recruiter with your professional makeup - that is, your ability to be assertive, focused, and versatile.

### Assertiveness

When done right, assertive behavior is a nice balance between self-assurance and cockiness. This attribute can be a driving force during an interview because the person sitting across from you can't help but be drawn to you, and therefore begins to respond to your ideas, thoughts, and words. Coming across as assertive leaves the listener the impression that you are confident in who you are as a professional; and that attribute wins job offers.

### Focus

Believe it or not, most interviewers dislike going through the motions of hiring, just as much as candidates dislike going on interview after interview. For this reason, a huge part of a successful interview is based on your ability to focus your responses on results. In doing so, you bring clarity to the conversation and help connect the dots for the interviewer. This is an important point because there are times when interviewers don't fully understand how your marketable skills can easily transfer to the open position.

When the interviewer begins to buy into your experience, you automatically become more appealing, and - in the eyes of the interviewer - the most qualified candidate.

## Versatility

Interviewers seek candidates who have a broad perspective and aren't stuck in their way of doing things. Individuals who are versatile are natural-born achievers and are recognized for being forward thinking, flexible, and resourceful. These attributes interest organizations since the candidates who are adaptable will more than likely flourish in any circumstance.

Too often, job seekers overlook the likeability factor. The reason? It's always easier to lay the blame on a hiring manager than to take a personal inventory of how you are affecting your job search. Though it is true that sometimes hiring decisions are based on factors beyond your control, there are occasions when it comes down to whether or not you made a positive first impression.