

make them REMEMBER YOU

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IT'S AN EXCITING FEELING: finding the job posting of your dreams. You know you're perfect for it and it's perfect for you. But there's just one problem: getting it. Standing out from the other dozens if not hundreds of applicants, all equally or even more qualified than you, gunning for your dream position.

Standing out, however, requires some tact, creativity, and maybe even a little money. It requires going the extra mile to prove that you are more than capable to accomplish the tasks at hand, that you are able to grow within the position and add something valuable to the organization, and showing your passion and enthusiasm for what you could be doing as their next employee.

If you know you've got some stiff competition, follow these tips for going above and beyond to win the position you know that you want and can excel in:

1. DEMONSTRATE YOUR SKILLS:

Your resume only tells your potential employer what skills you have. *Showing* your skills takes you a step above your resume. A great way to do this is to highlight past experiences and projects from internships, competitions, coursework and more, and it can be done in a variety of ways.

Portfolios & Websites

Traditionally, job seekers might bring in a portfolio detailing their work. Depending on your area of expertise and what the position calls for, this can include sales pitches, graphic design or writing samples, reports or studies

you've conducted, and more. Physical portfolios are handy to have along at any job interview as backup if your interviewer wants to know more about a project or an experience you've had.

Digital portfolios are also becoming increasingly common in the form of personal websites. Consider creating one of your own. Sites like Weebly.com, Wix.com, and Wordpress.com offer web portfolio services free of charge. Most job seekers include similar materials that they would in their physical portfolio but in downloadable formats. Include the

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link to your online portfolio along with the physical resume and cover letter you submit to your prospective employer.

Leave-Behinds

A leave-behind is literally something you leave behind for your employer to help remember you by. It's like a miniature portfolio but creatively and concisely assembled. A leave-behind can be left before or after an interview: you can deliver your leave-behind to your employer to quietly reinforce your resume and help you secure that interview, or you can leave it in their possession following your interview to leave a lasting impression.

Some ideas? Make a video of yourself doing a sales pitch or explaining why you are perfect for the job and leave

it on a flash drive for your interviewer. Showcase IT or software work you've done by leaving a disk behind. Create a “pamphlet” detailing your agronomic or crop knowledge. If you have a background in marketing, make a brochure or magazine detailing your experience and your desire to work for the organization you interview with. Take some time to think about your skills and experience and what your employer would be impressed by. Then highlight it with a leave-behind.

During the Interview

If the kind of work you do isn't as easily shown in a leave-behind or portfolio, you might consider showing your skills during the interview. Demonstrate how you might explain a product to a customer. If the position you're interviewing for requests that you speak another language and they ask you about it, answer in that language. During a field visit, showcase your crop knowledge by pointing out defects or damage to a plant. While a demonstration or speech might impress your employer, be respectful of their time and space as well. It might be best to ask beforehand.

2. FOLLOW UP, BEFORE AND AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

Getting personally in touch with your potential employer can help sift out your name from their pile of resumes. Do some research and find out the contact information of the person who will be reviewing your materials and possibly



interviewing you. However, if you're unable to locate the information, it's better to send no correspondence than to send it to the wrong contact.

Greeting & Thank You Cards

In the digital age, tangible mail is an exciting thing to receive, and hand-written notes are even more exciting. Consider sending your interviewer a hand-written note thanking them for taking a look at your application materials. Here's an example (But don't copy verbatim. Use your own flair and make it specific to the position and organization): "Thank you so much for taking time to review my resume and cover letter. I wanted to again express my interest in this position. I feel that I am an excellent fit for both the job and the company, and I would love to discuss my experiences and skills with you when you begin scheduling interviews. Best of luck with your search."

Time permitting, it's also memorable to receive a hand-written thank you note following an interview. Some job seekers who have paid close attention to their interviewer might pick up on other reasons to send a card: if your interviewer was ill and had to reschedule the interview, send a get-well-soon card.

E-mails

Keep in mind that e-mails take less effort and can be less personable, so they are less likely to impress than a hand-written note, but at times it is more appropriate than a phone call to get an employer's attention. Follow up after submitting

your application materials by saying what you would include in a hand-written note. Also follow up with an e-mail after the interview if you are unable to send a thank you card in time.

Phone Calls

A phone call can make a memorable impression if there's not a specific job listing you are interested in and have applied to. Job seekers sometimes make cold calls to companies of interest just to see if they have any job openings or if they can take a tour of their facility. It's a way to get your foot in the door and help that company remember you.

However, if there is indeed a position you're interested in and you have applied to it, the opposite now applies. It's better to be patient unless a substantial amount of time has gone by since you submitted your application. Employers are busy and would rather not be pestered with calls that require immediate attention.

3. BRAND YOURSELF

Business Cards

Consider making a business card with your contact information to leave following an interview. Sites like Vistaprint.com and Zazzle.com as well as local print stores like Staples allow you to create your own at low costs. Some professionals include links or QR codes on them that take interviewers to their online portfolio. Also, be sure to ask for their business card in return—it will make writing thank you notes easier!

Social Media

Your interviewer is bound to check out your social media accounts. Why not take it as another opportunity to grab their attention? Clean up your accounts to appear professional but consider going a step further to brand yourself. Change your profile picture to a professional headshot. If you have a cover photo on Facebook or Twitter, change it to a photo of yourself working in your field or create a simple graphic with your name and title (example: John Doe, Aspiring Agronomist).

SOME WORDS OF CAUTION:

While all of these methods can help you secure that dream job, remember moderation. You've probably heard of whacky albeit clever things other job seekers have done to get an employer's attention. Just don't do anything to scare them away from hiring you. It can be a good thing to appear persistent, but don't take it to the level of pestering your potential employer or even stalking them. There's also a line between flattery and kissing up. It's considerate to send a card following an interview but don't send flowers and chocolate.

Bottom line: Emphasize your skills and past experiences. Express your interest. Get creative. But remember that you are also there to learn about the organization and what they need from you as a potential employee.

Consider these tips to help enhance your big interview and job application. With some creativity and thought, you are sure to be remembered.