

Interviews

What Employers Are Looking For

One key thing to remember through the interviewing process is that the company seeking a new employee has a **need**. Interviewers are hoping that the “perfect” candidate is out there somewhere and that the company needs will quickly and relatively painlessly be filled by you—the applicant.

Of course employers are looking for someone who will do an excellent job. But they are also seeking someone with certain character and personality traits. Here are some specific traits that can help you get hired as an event planner:

“Employers are looking for people who are resourceful, dedicated to getting the lowest price, who can be creative, multi-task and find new ways to present events.”

– Dee Suess, Division Manager

Banner Professional, Schaumburg, IL

“Having passion, knowing about our company, and having some- thing to say. Tell me you’ve looked at our website and found it fascinating. Don’t say, ‘I looked at your website briefly.’ That makes me think you didn’t think it important enough to read. The best candidate came in with a list she’d made by looking at our competencies and then listing how she could add value! When you’re asked why you want to work for a company, don’t say (as one did), ‘I really need a change.’ No offense, but what you need (to do) is to convince me you’ve got something no one else can give this team.”

– Marcia Bradley, General Manager

PGI, San Diego

“In my position I negotiate contracts for the hotel with event planners. People who do this type of work—either the event planner or the hotel’s representative—must be extremely detail-oriented. They have to be good listeners, understand the needs of the group, follow up on all inquiries, and never, never, never wait for a client to call you back with missing details. If a person doesn’t have these qualities, it is a disaster waiting to happen because not knowing the precise details of an event is what causes catastrophes.”

– Sherri Brennan, Account Director

Sheraton Harbor Island, San Diego

“I’m impressed when someone shows excitement and enthusiasm for the position.”

– Wendy Spivak, principal and co-founder

The Castle Group, Boston, MA

Specific qualities that Lynn Simpson, an independent event planner, is looking for in potential employees include these:

- **an ability to think on your feet**
- **an outgoing personality and confident demeanor**
- **being adept at crisis management**
- **having good social skills**
- **having the ability to improvise**

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