

Interviewers may not tell you why you didn't get the job

JOB SEARCH

Q: I was recently turned down for a job opening. The manager seemed unable to offer any clear reasons. Why won't companies give this kind of feedback?

A: Frequently, there really isn't a crisp, logical answer to the question, "Why wasn't I hired?" People are usually selected more for emotional or intuitive reasons rather than skill or experience. Sometimes, it's just the employer's lack of excitement and not anything you did "wrong."

Besides, most hiring authorities are human beings and don't want to say anything that could hurt someone's feelings. And they don't want to be sued. Imagine the reaction to honest feedback such as, "Well, pal, on a deeply personal level, we really didn't like you."

To get constructive criticism, ask the interviewer for an agreement to conduct mock interviews. Listen between the lines when they make their suggestions.

Here's a partial checklist of what most employers want in a job candidate:

- **Likability** — The employer is thinking, "Do I want to be around this person several hours a day until the year 2012?" Become likable by:
 - Listening seriously — more than you talk.
 - Asking about the interviewer's opinions and observations.
- **Demonstrating a little humility** (so many candidates are cocky or arrogant).
- **Stability** — The employer is thinking, "Will this person stay with us or am I going to have to go through this again soon?" Convey that you are solid by:
 - Showing how your career interests match the goals, processes or culture of the organization.
 - Stating simply that you dislike changing jobs and want a long run with one company.
 - Offering credible reasons for leaving past positions.
- **Mainstream Values** — The employer is thinking, "Will this person be considered relatively normal by customers and co-workers, or turn out to be a yoyo and make me look bad?" Disconnect the alarms by:
 - Looking professional. Ladies: one earring per job. Guys and noses: no earrings at all.
 - Avoiding anecdotes about your third wife beating up your boyfriend's mistress. Be wholesome. Talk nice.
 - Focusing on work, not play.
 - Also, avoid smoking cigarettes at least four hours prior to an interview.
- **I'm not making any judgments here, but more than one of our client companies will give an automatic thumbs down to someone who smells like a camel.**
- **Q:** I've been with a premier outplacement firm for 10 months and still haven't received an offer close to my former salary. Should I switch outplacement firms?
- **A:** You know darn well who is responsible for landing your next position. Outplacement is a support service, not a job finding service. My guess is that you were told this up front and almost weekly thereafter.
- **It's curious how some senior level people seem to linger in outplacement.**
- **Whopping severance packages can squish the urgency out of a job search.**
- **In some packages, palatial offices, full secretarial service, flavored coffee and today's Wall Street Journal feed the ego and promote the illusion of still going to work every day. Particularly for someone coming out of a stressful or unpleasant environment, these executive hospices can seem even better than work.**
- **Then there's the person who finds more status in being formerly employed at \$120,000 than currently employed at \$80,000.**
- **Where does it say you are entitled to the numbers on your last W-2? If the market insists, you might have to — gulp! — take a cut and work your way back up.**
- **I've always thought that the most effective outplacement program would take place in an unheated pot barn using second-hand picnic tables for desks.**
- **Of course, the counselors would be as warm and understanding as I am. Somehow, I think you'd land a new job within 10 months.**

Send questions to George Hayes, Job Search, P.O. Box 2497, Southfield, MI 48037. Mr. Hayes is president of Emplex Corporation, an outplacement, recruiting and pre-employment testing firm located in Southfield.

Big growth for Bank of Bloomfield Hills in '96

The Bank of Bloomfield Hills reported net income of \$961,000 for the year ended Dec. 31, 1996, a 21 percent increase over 1995's figure of \$781,000.

For the fourth quarter ended Dec. 31, 1996, net income was \$241,145, compared to \$254,560 for the fourth quarter of 1995.

Total assets as of year end stood at \$95.7 million, a total increase of 12.5 percent over total assets of \$84 million in 1995.

Total loans equaled \$71.2 million as of Dec. 31, 1996, compared with \$56.4 in 1995, a 26.2 percent increase.

Deposits totaled \$87.8 million, which is 13.9 percent more than the \$77 million figure for 1995. The bank's equity at the close of 1996 was \$6.9 million, a 13.2 percent increase from 1995.

The Bank of Bloomfield Hills operates as a private bank, the only bank of this type in South-east Michigan.

"We stand alone in the high-caliber quality of service that we offer our clients," said David Provost, president and CEO.

"Our customers trust that we are looking out for them and their individual finances. The bank does so by personally monitored accounts, individually catered service for clients with special financial needs.

"If a customer needs us to make a house call, we will do so with a smile on our face," Provost said.

The Bank of Bloomfield Hills has been in existence since 1989 and provides the highest level of banking service available anywhere.

The bank caters to clients that often require a high level of personal service and attention to meet their financial needs.

The Bank of Bloomfield Hills offers a complete line of financial services, including investment management, lending, residential mortgages, commercial real estate, transaction accounts, financing packaging and corporate mergers and acquisition counseling.

Odd Jobs from page E1

A. "Well, I was a teacher and I decided to return to school to become a dietitian because I had lost a lot of weight. I could pay for the classes but not the books so I took a job at Sydney Bogg."

Q. From a dietitian to a candy seller? A funny twist isn't it?

A. "Yes. Lots of people laugh when they hear that but really I use the dietitian in business. We talk about saturated fats and we have a great line of sugar-free candy, too."

Q. When did you move from the sales counter to actually making the chocolates?

A. "I started going to the factory in my second year on the job. The first candy I made was chocolate-covered jellies. They were thinking about dropping the cremes and jellies a while back but I said no way. The cremes are a third of our business today."

Q. Are most of your products still created at the Detroit location?

A. "Yes. There's no hard candy it's all chocolates and they are made at the factory. The building is almost as big as a city block. We make 80 different pieces of chocolate and employ 120 people during peak times."

Q. What are some of your unique or most popular candies?

A. "A unique thing we make is our St. Patrick's Day Irish potato. It's a vanilla fudge, brown sugar and cinnamon and it's shaped like a potato. Another unique thing is our big chocolate diamond ring."

We also have a magnum-size champagne bottle made out of chocolate and lots of people have put a ring inside it."

Q. Is it difficult to come up with new ideas for a long-standing business?

A. "Well, we of course had our Christmas, Valentine's and Easter business but I'm proud to say I brought in Peppermint and dipped in caramel and dark and white chocolate. McGuire got the idea from local business mogul Robert Taubman who sent her a similar product from Europe so she could try it out."

Q. What is your personal favorite?

A. "The rum butter cream and the apricot cream are a new favorite. The apricot is the first new cream chocolate we've had in 15 years."

Q. So what's the policy for employees and the merchandise? I'm afraid it would be one for the customer and two for me.

A. "We encourage them to eat our chocolates and I love candy. I eat candy everyday of my life but I have to exercise, a lot."

Q. Has the surge in health foods, dieting and fear of fat harmed your business?

A. "We are thriving anyway. I think people decided that they didn't want to eat junk candy. If they're going to spend the money and calories they want to eat something really good."

Q. Do you ever get sick of the candy and feel you can't look at one more piece of chocolate?

A. "No. The only time I ever got sick of the chocolate was when I was attending a convention and the distributors kept filling our rooms with sample candy every time we went out. I thought enough was enough."

Q. Are corporate sales and parties a large part of your business?

A. "Yes. Our parties are 25 percent of our annual business." McGuire said her company can provide everything from the mints bearing the names of the bride and groom to specialty chocolates shaped like sports balls.

The stores also carry prepared trays of candy for people dashing to last minute PTO meetings, family gatherings or business appointments.

Q. Have you considered changing the business' name since you took over?

A. "No because that's what I bought and I respect Mr. Bogg. I've had two people come to me so far wanting to buy me out, to rename the shop Judy's and take it nationwide but I'm not interested."

Q. What's the best thing about your job?

A. "Watching the people eating the candy and when they come in and see an item and say, Oh my God, I remember these."

Masters from page E1



Master: Noted economist and author Lester Thurow will speak at The Masters Forum sponsored by Southfield-based Plante & Moran.

economists and author of "The Future of Capitalism."

James Collins, a four-time winner of Stanford University's Distinguished Teaching Award, now a consultant and author of "Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies."

Richard Ross, an expert on systems thinking, the foundational skill necessary for building a learning organization.

Tom Morris, Notre Dame ethicist and professor, combines age-old philosophies with modern thinking to create a practical plan for contemporary success.

Michael Treacy, bestselling author and consultant, offers strategies to help companies who have fought to get to the top to stay there.

Adrian Slywotzky, today's most popular strategist, focuses growth and profit opportunities via value migration.

Judith Bardwick, University of Michigan Ph.D. and former associate dean, describes how to shift unproductive motives into positive ones, ridding organizations and individuals of an "entitlement mentality."

Dennis Prager, host of one of the highest-rated radio talk shows in Southern California, continues his obsession with what's right and what's wrong, addressing the subversion of basic values that were once unanimously accepted concepts of American life.

Full-year tuition, including all course materials, follow-up materials and audiotapes of each session, is \$2,400. Fees for one semester are \$1,000. For registration information, call Melanie Coo at (810) 827-0346.

Founded in 1924, Plante & Moran, LLP provides accounting, tax, consulting and financial planning services to closely held businesses, governmental, and not-for-profit organizations, and individuals.

BUSINESS MARKETPLACE

Marketplace features a glimpse of Oakland County business and finance news and notes. Write: Business Marketplace, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009. Our fax number is (810) 644-1314.

■ TRESS BUSTER
Message therapy helps you kick bad habits, relax and find new energy sources, says certified myomassologist Carole Master of Birmingham. The 14-year therapist says message is supportive therapy for people aiming to kick all sorts of addictive behaviors, including alcohol, tobacco and drug use, overeating, and shopping addiction.

"I studied addictions very closely with a substance abuse therapist and have developed a special place in my heart for those who struggle with addictions," says Master, who uses aromatherapy and "a nurturing nature" to help clients overcome addictions.

■ JOINT VENTURE
All Tech Management, Inc. in Flint has formed a joint venture with minority-owned American Technical Linkage. The two personnel placement firms will share an office in Grand Blanc and open a branch in

Rochester. Robert Ulrich, formerly of the Flint office, is the account manager for Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties.

■ TOP SUPPLIER
Federal Mogul Corp. based in Southfield earned the first-ever Platinum Award for supplier excellence from The Rover Group, a British automaker and exporter. The award went to Federal Mogul France, which produces engine bearings, bushings and thrust washers, for earning three consecutive Gold Awards. For the second year, Federal Mogul's Seal Technology Systems facility in Wales won Rover Group's Silver Award.

■ NEW AGENCY
Joseph Silvin has opened Virtual Interactive Agency in Farmington Hills, a full-service agency that helps businesses design and use interactive communications. The phone number is (810) 661-2552. The market for VTA's service is "exploding," says Silvin, a former executive for Ross Roy Communications in Bloomfield Hills.

"Interactive media provide powerful tools to help organizations of all sizes enhance their marketing and training efforts," adds Silvin, a Farmington Hills resident. Among VTA's services are systems and software design and development for the Internet and intranet, CD ROMs, kiosks, simulators, satellite broadcasts, distance learning, online training systems, video games and strategic planning.

■ CAREER WOMEN
The National Association of Career Women-Metro Detroit Chapter will present "How To Cook With Your Mate, and I Don't Mean In The Kitchen" to author Kathleen Kryza. The meeting runs 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Southfield Marriott, 27033 Northwestern Hwy. The fee is \$15 for members, \$18 nonmembers. For reservations, call (810) 851-8130.

■ COUNSEL GENERAL
Takekahi Kagami, Japan's counsel general, will address the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 14, at the Palace of Auburn Hills. Kagami will discuss the post-cold war impact on security relations between the U.S. and Japan, Asian countries' expectations of the U.S., the status of Japanese-U.S. trade relations, and the western perception of the Japanese market. The cost is \$20 for members, \$25 for nonmembers. For information, call (810) 853-7862. To pay by credit card, fax reservations to (810) 853-0763.

■ SUCCESS SEMINAR
Two business trainers with more than 40 years' experience will present "Dare Smart—Train Right." Dan Kirsinski, Partners for Success and Mary Scherle of Dynamic Disciplines will cover screening and hiring top performers; reducing turnover; improving service; business effects of customer service; recognizing opportunities; and increasing the bottom line. The seminar will run 9:11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, at the DoubleTree Guests Suites in Troy. Advanced tickets are \$25, or \$30 at the door. For reservations, call (888) 200-3028.

■ ARBOR EXPANDS
Troy-based Arbor Drugs, Inc. will open four new stores by month's end, bringing the number of metro Detroit locations to 194. Arbor's third West Bloomfield store will open Feb. 24 at 4901 Haggerty, at Pontiac Trail. Other new stores are in Pontiac, Sterling Heights and Detroit.

The new stores range in size from 10,880 square feet to 11,050 square feet. The chain's 200th store is scheduled to open by mid-summer, said Eugene Applebaum, Arbor's chairman and CEO.

■ BREAKFAST WORKSHOP
Oakland University's Center for Family Business will present "Preparing Successors for Leadership: Motivating and Training Successors" at a breakfast meeting, 8:10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19, at the Troy Marriott. Guest speakers are Gary Gabel and Mark Toth of Great Lakes Strategies, a human resource and leadership firm. The seminar is free to OU CFB members, or \$35 for nonmembers. To register, call (810) 370-4288.

■ JOB SEARCH
Southeast Michigan Career Service in Southfield is offering two-hour job search seminars. Company founder Boyd Baughman will discuss the current and future job market and discuss why traditional job seeking techniques are obsolete. The free sessions are at 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays and 8:30 a.m. Fridays at 29444 North-western Highway, Suite 500, Southfield. For reservations, call 1 (888) JOBOLOGY.

■ BIG WINNER
Southfield's Bozell Worldwide, Inc. picked up 49 awards at the International Automotive Advertising Awards show, more honors than any other advertising agency.

Bozell earned four golds, 14 silvers, nine bronzes and 22 merit certificates at the second annual ceremony. Gold awards went to a 30-second national television spot for Chrysler's Plymouth brand; a Jeep print ad, and two 30-second national television spots for Jeep.

■ PREPARING SUCCESSORS
The next Oakland University Center for Family Business breakfast seminar will run from 8 to 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19, at the Troy Marriott. The topic: "Preparing Successors for Leadership: Motivating and Training Successors." Gary Gabel and Mark Toth, of Great Lakes Strategies, a human resource and leadership training firm, will lead the discussion. The seminar is free to OUCFB member families. The registration fee for nonmembers is \$35 per person. Call Patricia Kish at (810) 370-4513.