

Eight Signs You Are a "Red Flag" Candidate

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A red flag is a warning signal, something that provokes an irritated reaction or demands attention. Hiring managers everywhere look for certain red flags on an application, in responses given during the initial telephone interview, and on site interviews to potentially screen out a candidate in the early stages of the hiring process.

To be certain that you will get past the initial screen, be aware of the following common candidate red flags:

1. No Home Address Telephone Number or E-mail Address

If they can't find you, they can't hire you. Without basic information and an easy way to contact you once interest is established, your chances virtually disappear.

2. Time Lapses Between Jobs

If the time between past positions is wide, you will have some explaining to do. Be certain you're honest and provide all necessary information on gaps in employment up front. It is certain the new company will want to know.

3. Negative or Vague Reasons for Leaving Past Employment

Immediately, the worst case scenario comes to the mind of the hiring manager when you are negative or vague with information about past departures. There is no room for sour grapes. Instead, keep a positive outlook and give details around leaving your previous positions.

4. Inconsistent Answers

You may be asked the same question in a hundred different ways, so your responses to similar questions must be consistent at every step of the hiring process. Inconsistent answers or waffling leave a negative impression in the mind of the interviewer and will most likely eliminate you.

5. Unrealistic Expectations

Whether you want a certain percentage of travel, desire a particular commuting distance, have compensation issues, or long for relocation, unrealistic expectations on your part can lead to disaster and a quick exit. Know what you are willing to do and what your bottom line compensation number is before you get involved with an interviewing process.

6. Lack of Preparedness

Do your homework. Research the company online and develop intelligent questions prior to any interview. Prepare and impress the hiring managers. Take it seriously, and they will take you seriously.

7. No Career or Personal Goals

Where do you see yourself in two years? How about five years? Have a clear direction around both business and personal goals before entering an interview. Include action plans and rewards along the way. Share this information where appropriate. This shows the hiring manager you are focused, prepared and have a specific direction for your career. Share your plan.

8. Negative or Reactionary Attitude

It's all about P.M.A., baby! Possess a "positive mental attitude." Smile, provide a firm handshake and use eye contact. When you react to information in a negative way, you won't get far. Don't dictate what must be done; simply gather information and insight to keep the process moving in a positive direction. If negative information is shared with you, don't react, simply write it down to discuss at a later date.

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