

Top 8 Reasons You Weren't Hired

by Stephen Bajza

No matter who you are or what your profession is, getting rejected on a job application is always a bit disheartening. It takes a lot of time and energy to build your resume, search for listings, and develop connections. If all that work falls flat, it can be all too easy to overlook the real reasons why you weren't hired. Check out this list from U.S. News of the top eight possible reasons you didn't get a job, and our solutions to them.

1. **Someone else was more qualified.** You might think that, because you were rejected, you were simply underqualified for the job. However, it's important to remember that you're usually competing against hundreds of other applicants. All it takes is a little bit more job experience to push someone ahead, but that doesn't mean you couldn't do the job just as well if you had been accepted.

What to do: Aside from education and getting more job experience (which is most likely part of the problem), enthusiasm can go a long way. While it's not okay to be abrasive or oversell yourself, showing genuine excitement for the position and the company through knowledge, exuberance, and asking questions might give you the push you need. While building work experience and getting necessary education are integral to landing a job, passion should not be overlooked.

2. **You weren't fully qualified for the job.** Sometimes employers misrepresent what qualifications they're actually looking for, and sometimes job seekers misidentify what they're capable of. Regardless, despite thinking that you were just good enough to get in, your qualifications were just shy of what they were looking for.

What to do: The best answer is to figure out what skills and qualifications the employer is looking for and start developing them. You may not have landed this job, but spending time building up what failed last time will only help. However, there are a few tricks to circumvent the issue. Focusing on your skills rather than your work history might convince employers that you can do the job, but this is tricky to pull off. Another tactic is to mention in your cover letter that you'd like to be considered for another position; by applying for something a tad out of your reach first, employers might be more likely to consider you for a job with less rigorous qualifications.

3. **You flubbed the interview.** No matter how well qualified you are for a position, sharp interview skills are a must. Little mistakes such as not making eye contact or not asking any questions can put a serious damper on how a hiring manager perceives you. Being qualified for a job is the sum of years of work and skill-building, but interview skills are easy to develop.

What to do: While building a resume is more of an art than a science, good interview skills are fairly ubiquitous. Always start with a firm handshake, eye contact, and a thank you. Build a rapport with your personality: be yourself, but be professional and attentive. If you're overbearing by cracking too many jokes or assuming you know more than you do, you've gone too far. Being nervous is natural, but learn to work through your nerves and use the adrenaline to stay alert rather than drown in anxiety. Walk into an interview with plenty of research in tow -- you want to know as much about the company, the job, and the business as possible so you can speak as a professional. Be genuine and interested so the hiring manager knows you really want the job and you'd be excited to work there. Lastly, always follow up with a thank-you letter.

4. **You didn't fit the culture.** You may have every single qualification an employer is looking for, but fitting the office culture is very important. Sometimes this can be difficult to identify, but employers need people who will get along with themselves and everyone else in the office. It's not always about something drastic like fashion choice -- it can be as simple as not clicking together or having conflicting personalities.

What to do: It's very difficult to know what a workplace culture is like without actually working there, but the best things to do are research and network. Researching a company can give you insight into how it functions. By knowing what they produce and where they fit within their industry, you can get a broad idea on what the culture might be. Knowing people who have experience with the company is invaluable to figuring out the culture. They may have worked there themselves, know someone who did, or know the general reputation of its employees. Of course, even if you know everything about the office culture, sometimes it's best to accept that you might not fit well; it's good to push your boundaries, but breaking them on a daily basis is unhealthy.

5. **You didn't sell yourself well enough.** Whether you were choked by nerves or forgot to mention a big accomplishment in a previous job, not making it clear to employers the reasons you would be great at the job can damage your application.

What to do: You are your best and only advocate when applying for a job. It's not okay to lie or brag, but you need to prove to employers that you have what they need. If you have genuine accomplishments under your belt, you need to talk about them when the opportunity presents itself. Let employers know you have the proper skills by telling them what you can do and providing examples of how well you've done it.

6. **You annoyed them.** While it's a good thing to consider what the company can do for you, it's not okay to act like a prima donna. Employers won't be interested in you if you check in too often about an application, focus more on what benefits you'll be getting, or act entitled or needy.

What to do: Keep your attitude in check. Be flexible and pleasant, not rigid and demanding. Think in terms of being charming, not bombastic. There are tons of little things that can annoy employers, but they usually come down to certain actions that break what's considered to be professional behavior. Keep a professional mindset at all times, and that should mitigate the vast majority of annoying quirks.

7. **You didn't demonstrate passion for the job.** Whether you were a little nervous or felt a bit off that day, not showing enthusiasm can be a deal breaker for employers. No matter how well qualified you are, if you don't show that you're genuinely interested in the company and that you have passion for what you'll be doing, no one is going to want you working for them.

What to do: Be enthused. This doesn't mean exaggerating everything and sucking up -- it means knowing as much as possible and telling employers directly that you'd be excited to work for the company. Make sure that on the day of your interview you're prepared to be engaged.

8. **You were too interested in what you could get, not what you could give.** While you need to assess the company just as much as the company assesses you, coming across as crass or needy about compensation and benefits is a bad move. Employers want a savvy individual who's willing to work hard, not a person who's most interested in the bottom line.

What to do: Treat the interview like a first date: you're not there to figure out what kind of treats you'll be getting, you're sussing out whether or not you want to embark on a mutually beneficial relationship. Check in about your application about every two weeks if you don't hear anything. Don't ask too many questions about what you'll be getting -- let that information present itself when the employer approaches you.

<http://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/career-advice/job-hunting/8-reasons-you-dont-get-a-job.html>