

Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association

Career Center Tips: Why Should **YOU** Be Hired?



"Why should I hire you?"

This is the classic question most of us hear during an interview. It's often preceded by the phrase, "I've already interviewed another person for this position who looks perfect." Then comes the killer question, "Why should I hire YOU?"

Sometimes the most innocent interview question can prove to be the key to the empire for some, while it can be the swan song for others.

The next time an employer asks, "Why should I hire you?" see the question in a new light -- as an opportunity to shine and pull ahead of your competitors.

Be careful to avoid clever retorts or comedic one-liners here. Your interview is serious business and a wrong answer will send you packing. This is the one question that interviewers like to ask because the answer can separate the contenders from the also-rans. Give a wrong answer and the large "game over" sign flashes above your head.

What hiring managers really want to know is, "What's special or different about you?" or "How are you different than all the other candidates who have applied for this position?" With this in mind, a good way to approach your answer here is to launch into your best "story" that answers this question: "Will you go the extra mile?"

Why is the employer asking why he or she should hire you? Because there are only five areas of interest he or she is concerned with:

1. Your skills
2. Your knowledge about the company
3. Your manageability
4. Your affordability
5. Whether you can go above and beyond your job description.

In this day of "lean and mean" operations philosophy, employers are looking for employees who can think bigger and perform duties beyond their jobs.

Realize that there will always be competing candidates with a higher skill level, more experience, more education and training or even a smoother interviewing style. The one equalizer though, is the ability to demonstrate how you have risen above and gone that extra mile to accomplish an important task, complete the job or realize an important goal.

Here, you recount that story of exactly how you worked 60-hour weeks, acquired new skills or did whatever it took to distinguish yourself and meet the challenge head on to successfully make the sale, save the project or rescue a client. If you can put a dollar value on the result, your story will only be that much more dramatic.

Knowing this ahead of time, it's wise to put in the time beforehand to work on your answer to this question. Pick your best example of how you went above and beyond in your job. Work on your story to perfect it. Set the scene, describe the challenge and describe your role and the successful conclusion. Use this as an example of how you use your particular set of skills in an extraordinary time to "give it your all" and produce a clear benefit to your employer.

Since no other candidate can duplicate your own personal story here, you'll make a memorable impression. Not only that, but quite possibly you'll pull yourself ahead of that "perfect" candidate who preceded you.