

Closing an interview – Leave the cringe behind!

Many candidates have asked me what is the best way to close an interview. It's the no man's land at the end of the meeting when there is usually an awkward silence, because you're not sure what to say and the client has wrongly or rightly heard enough and so it's time to wrap things up!

In such a manufactured environment as is the interview, where you have been pretending to get along with a total stranger for an hour, let's face it, it's a rather weird concept! Who hasn't left an interview and thought, well that went well but you thought one of the interviewers (if there was 2) was a little odd at the end of the interview and closed in an awkward manner?

Back in the 1990's interview techniques were rather different then, in fact the whole recruitment industry was totally different! There was a boom in recruitment companies popping up all over the place and if you have watched the films Boiler Room or Wolf on Wall Street, well that gives you the kind of idea of the excitement and buzz that was in most recruitment offices across the globe and what came with that was some of the most cringe worthy career advice on how you should close an interview.

Back then the famous closing line at an interview was "So when do I start?" or "Have I got the job?" and the general feeling was if you don't ask one of those questions at the end of the interview then someone else will and that was needed to seal the deal!

I am afraid that this type of close now just says "Cringe" and that can have a negative effect on what positive thoughts they had about you throughout the whole interview.

So, I have taken the time to ask a number of my clients what has been the best line from a candidate when closing an interview, that may have stopped you in your tracks and not only built on the already positive interview they gave or even more so, that the candidate did turn the interview around at the end by asking the right closing question(s)?

And that is....." Mr Client please can you tell me what you are looking for in a Project Manager (using this as an example for now)?

At this point in the interview the client is very unlikely to have told that candidate what he is looking for, because if he had told them at the start of interview then the candidate would have just told the client exactly what they wanted to hear, unless you have a client interviewing that has never been trained to let the candidate do the talking!

So, with this question being asked at the end, it allows the client to proceed to tell you. By which you can retort with letting them know about other relevant experience you have that matched what they have just told you. You then do not miss out any crucial evidence in the interview and this is a much more effective way to close the interview. No, you are not asking them on of those cringe worthy questions, and you have just let them with an extremely nice taste in their mouth!

The final questions could and should be, "What are the next steps?", "How many other candidates are you interviewing for this role?" and "When can I expect to hear from you" and if you are going for gold the final thought is to compliment them by thanking them for the opportunity to meet them".

Boom you walk out with a close that was much more professional and you had a structure to the close with any awkward silences, and you have controlled the final part of the interview which will make you feel really good – leaving the cringe behind!

