

## Why Did You Even Call Me Here in the First Place?!?

Contributed by Sam Kline

You're sitting in a waiting room with eight other professionally clad applicants who, in spite of the banal chitchat they engage you in, are essentially your enemy. Finally, your name is called, and you shuffle into a room with someone holding a copy of your resume that contains some unfamiliar-looking notations. Before you thank them for taking the meeting for this job you need in the worst way, you notice that your interviewer seems pre-occupied. The first thing your interviewer says before he/she begins firing off questions about your personal history, work background, and motivation for taking the position is an apology followed by something to the effect of "We still have a bunch of applicants to get through, so we'll need to keep the interview somewhat brief." Although this statement brings modest discouragement, you're still confident that you can make the most with the limited available interview time.

However, before your butt even has a chance to warm your seat, Mr./Ms. Interviewer stands up, extends their hand and says, "Thanks for coming out. We've still got many other applicants to get through, but we should get back to you in the next week or two." Flabbergasted, you're at a loss for words except for some feeble attempt at extending the conversation, "I know I can be a valuable asset to XYZ Company, and am confident I will flourish if I'm just given the opportunity." This last statement seems to fall on deaf ears, and your interviewer is already walking toward the hallway to call the next applicant who was chatting you up prior to your four-minute interview.

If this sounds like a familiar scenario you have encountered in your quest to return to the job market, don't get down on yourself. There are some very valid reasons your interview played more like a drive-through inspection at the US/Mexico border, and most likely, it's not because you suck or said something wrong.

1. They already formed their shortlist of candidates, and you're not on it. In other words, you never had a chance. You could have shown up to your interview in a Borat-inspired mankini as opposed to the suit you just paid \$10 to pick up from the dry cleaners, and would have had just as good a shot at landing a second interview, let alone the job.
2. Your interviewer hates their job. XYZ company has probably downsized, and this means the interviewer's plate is overloaded with menial responsibilities that once belonged to the recently laid off. They're not thrilled they have to interview 50+ people when they have a boatload of emails waiting for them that pertain to their normal responsibilities. Furthermore, the powers that be are probably applying increased levels of pressure to said interviewer with each day the position isn't filled.
3. Employers these days can afford to be picky. Even if you're a great match for the position you're interviewing for, there is probably a candidate whose credentials match or exceed yours. This is but one of the challenges we deal with when unemployment is at or around 10%. Your resume might shine, but if someone else worked at a company your prospective boss has a relationship with, then this is the kind of tiebreaker that can decide who gets the job.
4. You don't have a personal reference that knows your prospective boss. As an addendum to #3, this industry is built on relationships. Before you go in for an interview, it might help to send an email blast to your network asking if anyone has a relationship with XYZ Company. If you don't have an email network, take the necessary steps to get involved with one, as many exist in Cyberspace. Some examples of entertainment email networks are "TheFray" (A Google group), LAConFab (another Google Group), and "NextGenFemmes" (another email network that caters to females). Once the network administrator grants you permission to join the group, send an email with the subject saying something to the effect of, "ISO: Contact at XYZ Company." Last, but certainly not least, we have our own established network here at Industry Nexus! Once you get a response from someone who has that relationship, then you're one degree of separation away from someone whose name you can drop with a certain degree of confidence. Then you should try and set up a lunch/drinks/coffee with this person who can make the desired connection for you. These networking groups have occasional mixers, so I would recommend attending these to put faces to the names that frequently pop up in your email inbox.

As someone who went almost ten months between legitimate, full-time entertainment jobs, I know as well as anyone how frustrating and depressing the current job market is. Don't underestimate the power of these aforementioned email networks: They were designed so that everyone who feels like they are alone on a proverbial island can feel connected to the industry, even when they're out of work. Everyone in these networks has either needed a script, a job, or simply information about a project at some point, and most network members are happy to help if they are in a position to do so.

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