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Winter, Wyman's Dos and Don'ts

If it seems like we continually stress the importance of your overall presentation in the job search process, you're right. It's been our repeated experience that any deal, *no matter how solid it may seem*, can fall apart due to oversights. Take heed.

DON'T ever fall into the trap of getting too comfortable in an interview!

Even if the interviewer has a casual presentation and interviewing style, you should stay sharp and on the edge of your seat. The interview is your only opportunity to put your best foot forward. If you sit back and relax, you won't seem as sharp or as eager...and you probably won't get another chance to present yourself. (*Recently, one candidate felt so comfortable in a final interview that the candidate yawned – twice! That was the end of that story.*) Keep your intensity level up with every interviewer. Frequently, candidates ace the interview with their prospective boss, then slack off when meeting their boss-to-be's boss. Needless to say, the big boss is less than impressed.

DO have a professional (polite and brief) message on your home answering machine. Cutesy messages are a real turn off to companies calling to conduct business.

DON'T be caught with an outdated resume. Every time you've received a promotion, completed a project under budget/on time or learned a new technology or skill, spend a few minutes adding this accomplishment to your resume. Make sure your resume is always available to you by storing it online or external hard drive. If an interview for the job of your dreams pops up out of nowhere, this important document will be already prepared, allowing you to focus your energy on your presentation skills and acing the interview!

DON'T wear sunglasses or eyeglasses with dark lenses to an interview. If your lenses are photosensitive, make sure you allow enough time for them to adjust to indoor lighting and become more transparent. Dark glasses during an interview are a big no-no. When people can't see your eyes, they immediately get a feeling of discomfort or even mistrust.

DON'T give out your references without first notifying the reference giver.

Not only is it a professional courtesy to let your references know beforehand that they may be getting a call, but it's also in your best interest. A quick call to each of your references gives you a brief opportunity to reconnect on a personal level, reconfirm that they are willing to vouch for your abilities and verify that they will be available during the next week or so. Most importantly, if it's done right, your call will prepare them for the actual reference check. Be sure to tell them a little about the job for which you're interviewing...express your interest in the job and why you think it's a good match...and ask for their support. If you don't call first, you run the risk of your references being caught off-guard and all of your virtues

may not immediately come to mind. Make the call; the return on your time investment is immeasurable.

DO develop and maintain a relationship with a recruiter in your area of expertise. We know this sounds self-serving, but it's true...and you have nothing to lose and potentially everything to gain. The most important qualities you'll want to look for: a good reputation in the industry, strong market knowledge and a large network of contacts. Of course, you'll want to work with someone you're comfortable with and who you have confidence and respect in. Once you have found the "right" recruiter, spend a few minutes a couple of times a year maintaining this relationship. Increase your visibility with your recruiter: when you refer friends and colleagues, make sure they use your name. Your recruiter will be your watchdog and keep an eye open for new opportunities that would fit your background and be of interest to you.

If you're a smoker, make sure your clothes DON'T have any lingering smoke smells. Air out your coat...have your suit freshly dry-cleaned and don't take it out of the plastic wrap until interview day...don't smoke on the way to the meeting...brush your teeth right before you leave or in the restroom when you arrive (good advice for non-smokers, as well).

If you're a pet owner, DO de-fur your interviewing outfit at the last possible minute. Keep some masking tape in your car so you can give yourself a quick once-over right before you get out of the car. You may even want to consider giving your car seat a quick cleaning with the masking tape to prevent any errant hairs from finding their way onto your winning image.