



ALA-NMRT President's Program Morial Convention Center New Orleans, La.

**Saturday, June 24, 2006
1:30-3:30 p.m.**

“Why Should I Hire You? Why Would I Want to Work Here?” A Guide for Both Sides of the Interview

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**“Choose a job you love and you will never have
to work a day in your life”Confucius**

Articles cited in today's presentation:

From *Working Knowledge*, *American Libraries*:

- “Strategies for a Successful Job Search,” January 2003
- “Judging Books by Their Covers,” May 2003
- “Helpful Hints for ALA Conferences,” June/July 2003
- “Test Careers with Informational Interviews,” October 2003
- “Putting Networks to Work,” December 2003
- “Knowing How to Say Thank You,” January 2004
- “Salary Negotiation 101,” February 2004
- “Manners Matter for Employers and Applicants,” August 2004
- “It's Not What You Say But How You Say It,” September 2004

From *Library Administration & Management*, Summer 2006 Vol 20 No. 3:

- “Inspired Hiring: Tools for Success in Interviewing and Hiring Library Staff.”

Topper's Top Ten Tips for a Successful Job Search (Including the Interview)

- 1.** **S**tart your search with a targeted approach in your area of interest, not a mass mailing of resumes. **K**now what you want! Use the informational interview to help you focus in on the type of librarianship you are interested in. Realize that the job search is a job in itself. Be prepared to allocate sufficient time for it.
- 2.** **U**nderstand your strengths and weaknesses and concentrate on what makes you stand out from the crowd. Prepare a portfolio of your work, i.e., bibliographies, web page design, brochures, flyers, etc. to show examples of the work you have done. If you are a student use examples of school projects.
- 3.** **C**orrespondence to a potential employer should always be error free. This represents you on paper. **S**elect a resume style that you feel comfortable with and make sure your cover letter is specific to the job you are applying for.
- 4.** **C**onstant updating of your skills even while employed should be part of your professional development plan. Set goals for yourself and evaluate your progress every few months. Take advantage of tuition reimbursement plans. When interviewing make sure to ask whether an organization will support your continuing education goals. This is a good question to ask at the end of the interview to show that you are interested in developing your skills.
- 5.** **E**mphasize “employer benefit”, not what the employer can do for you when interviewing and during the entire job search process from resume to final interview.
- 6.** **S**ocial skills in a job search situation should not be forgotten. Be sure to say “please” and “thank you” and avoid slang terms. This also carries over to dressing appropriately for the interview itself. Take the time to update your job search wardrobe. Dress should be less “casual” and more on the formal side until the job is obtained. Be aware of your body language during the interview and interviewers should be aware of cultural differences in candidates. **NEVER BE LATE FOR A JOB INTERVIEW**—do a trial drive to the location the day before.
- 7.** **S**end a thank you letter to every interviewer to underscore your enthusiasm for the position, emphasizing a key point about the job. Often when the job is narrowed down to a few candidates, a thank you letter may cinch the deal.
- 8.** **F**lexibility and willingness to be a team player are qualities employers seek. Never bad mouth an employer or former supervisor. Remember that you as an applicant should be interviewing the employer as well—how you are treated during the interview is a sampling of the work environment.
- 9.** **U**se your network of colleagues, published correspondence such as Board meeting minutes, library school faculty members, etc. to research the employer. A key question to ask the interviewer is what happened to the person that had the job before and how long were they in the position?
- 10.** **L**uck and happenstance often come into play in the job search—being at the right place at the right time. Do not take job search rejection personally—it all depends on the pool of candidates. And even once you land your position remember that you will need to manage your career for years to come. Be active in your profession whether on a local, state or national level and you will watch your career develop.

SUCCESSFUL! THAT IS WHAT YOU WILL BECOME BY USING THE TOP TEN TIPS!