



Ready Reference G-12

Reducing Employer Fears

As a student, you are well aware of the personal hesitations and unanswered questions that arise as you enter the job search process and prepare for interviews. You are not alone. What's more, your potential employer is just as afraid as you are! Any new hire represents some sort of risk from the employer's perspective. Consequently, if you are to sell your services, you must understand the potential employer's perspective, needs, and fears!

Employer Fears Concerning New Hires

1. That you will do only the minimum that you can get away with, rather than the maximum that they hired you for.
2. That you will always have to be told what to do next, rather than displaying initiative—always in a responding mode, rather than an initiating mode.
3. That you will have a work-disrupting character flaw, and turn out to be: dishonest, totally irresponsible, a spreader of dissention at work, lazy, an embezzler, a gossip, a sexual harasser, a drug-user or substance abuser, a drunk, a liar, incompetent, or—in a word—*bad news*.
4. If this is a large organization, and your would-be boss is not the top person: that you will bring discredit upon them, and upon their department/section/division, etc., forever hiring you in the first place—making them lose face, possibly also costing them a raise or a promotion.
5. That you will cost a lot of money, if they make a mistake by hiring you. Currently, in the U.S. the cost to an employer of a bad hire can far exceed \$50,000 including relocation costs, lost pay for the period for work not done or aborted, and severance pay—if they are the ones who decide to let you go.
6. That you won't be able to do the job, that you lack the necessary skills or experience, and the hiring-interview didn't uncover this.
7. That if hired, you won't put in a full working day, regularly.
8. That if hired, you'll be frequently "out sick," or otherwise absent whole days.
9. That if hired, you'll only stay around for a few weeks or at most a few months, and then quit without advance warning.
10. That it will take you too long to master the job, and thus it will be too long before you're profitable to that organization.
11. That you won't get along with the other workers there, or that you will develop a personality conflict with the boss himself (or herself).

Four Ways to Reduce Employers Fears

In the Cover Letter

Describe yourself by painting a "word picture" of your work ethic. Give examples of how you display those kinds of Characteristics.

Example: My earliest memories of growing up on our family farm are of working from sunrise to sunset for the purpose of accomplishing a common goal. We worked as a team and celebrated our collective success. You can be sure that, if hired, I would bring that same kind of commitment to your company.

Highlight your ability to learn quickly and take initiative.

Example: Worked from 40-50 hours per week troubleshooting and repairing automotive equipment.

On the Resume

Indicate any promotions you received in previous employment, especially if they were rapid. This reflects both an ability to learn rapidly as well as the employer's confidence to give you added responsibility.

Example: Hired as a technician and promoted to supervisor after three months.

Quantify your willingness to do manual labor or work long hours. It is much easier to understand "hard-working" when it is described in tangible terms.

Example: No matter the job assigned, I have made it my motto to do it efficiently and with zeal. In fact, I was recently hired as a technician but was quickly asked to assume managerial responsibilities. I assure you that I would bring that same kind of energy to your team.

During the Interview

Call attention to perseverance in accomplishing a task or doing a job. Show that you are someone that finishes projects and honors your commitments.

Example: Although my last job required long hours of verifying data with a partner to accomplish a project, it was worth it all when our supervisor presented the results to a very pleased client. The company gained a satisfied customer; our supervisor gained the respect of the President; and my partner and I learned the value of teamwork and the positive results it can bring.

On the Job

From the first day on the job, live out the work ethic you claimed to have on the resume. By your actions, prove to your employer that it was a good decision to hire you!

Example: Arrive at work early. Listen attentively to instructions. Whatever assignment you are given, do it thoroughly and efficiently. Find a role model in the organization and adopt a similar work pattern. Listen more than you talk. Work a full day, every day. Find out what your new employer values, and work toward that end. In short, earn your superior's trust!

Your goal is to find honest and creative ways to reduce an employer's perception of risk in hiring you by reaffirming a strong work ethic. Use every opportunity to speak the 'language' of the employer and illustrate your personal work ethic in vivid ways. Four of the most practical ways to reduce employer fears are listed above.