



The Career Center

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VAULTING OVER OBSTACLES

One of the easiest ways to screen out a job seeker is when you discover that they have a liability. Liabilities are like quicksand. When someone steps in quicksand, at first they do not recognize it for what it is, they just think that they have stepped into thick mud and believe they will be able to plow through and reach dry land. However, by the time they have realized that in fact they have stepped into quicksand and their life (or their job) is in danger, it is too late. They are being held against their will and will be sucked down, farther and father into the marsh bringing to an end every hope of employment with that company. The best way to get out of quicksand is to avoid it all together. Look ahead, recognize the quicksand for what it is, and use a strong pole to "vault" your way over the quicksand and continue on your path to certain employment.

The vaulting pole by which you will avoid the quicksand has three parts:

1. **ACKNOWLEDGE THE REAL ISSUE** (i.e., They express concern that you lack experience. You respond with, "I can see why you would want to hire someone who will be productive and effective in this position.")
2. **TURN THE NEGATIVE INTO A POSITIVE OR COUNTER THE NEGATIVE WITH A POSITIVE** whenever possible (i.e., "Let me assure you that I have always been an extremely effective worker. In fact, I offer you sixteen years of experience. I've been going to school for sixteen years and am an expert at learning whatever you will need to teach me").
3. **DISTRACT THEM WITH A PROBING QUESTION ABOUT ANOTHER SPECIFIC ISSUE** (i.e., "Tell me, how is your company handling the current demand for extended service hours?") Your objective is to **redirect their attention from the negative issue to your strong points**. Do not attempt to argue or explain your viewpoint--**THAT IS THE QUICKSAND**. Get off that liability onto another topic about which you **DO** want to talk as soon as possible.

THEY ASK YOU ABOUT:

Youthfulness/Age
Lacks experience in field/industry
Number of jobs held
Degree unrelated to position
Poor grades
Fired/Laid off
Lack of extra-curricular activities

WHAT THEY WANT/NEED:

They want maturity and professionalism
They want someone who will be productive
They want someone who will stay and be effective
They want someone knowledgeable about the field
They want someone intelligent/creative/dynamic
They want a team player
They want someone who can handle multiple tasks

YOUR TURN:

1. What is the question they might ask you? _____
2. What is the real issue behind that question? _____
3. What would you say to focus in on what they really want/need? _____
4. What SAC can you give to demonstrate your ability in this area? _____
5. What question can you use to distract them onto a topic you want them to talk about? _____