

FUMC ESL 11-11-2013 **Advanced Lesson**

Getting a Job in the U.S.

There are some subtle and some not-so-subtle differences in the way employment interviews are conducted in the United States compared to other countries.

Here are some tips for **acing** your U.S. job interview:

1. **Take credit** for your professional accomplishments. An employer expects you to “**toot your own horn**”. This can be **awkward** for persons from countries who value humility. Discussing your individual accomplishments won't be viewed as **arrogant** or **egotistical**. In fact, if you don't point out your **solo** successes, employers will assume you don't have **significant** contributions to talk about.

Notes:

If you “ace” something, you complete it easily. For example, you can “ace” the test or “ace” the job interview.

If you “take credit” for something you accept the responsibility as well as the rewards.

To “toot your own horn” is to talk about yourself. Sometimes this can be a bad thing. For example: No one liked Bill because he was always “tooting his own horn”.

Awkward can mean “clumsy”, but in this sentence means “embarrassing”.

Someone who is “arrogant” thinks they are better than others. Egotistical means very concerned with your own importance.

Solo means by yourself.

Significant means important.

2. Make **eye contact**. In the U.S. looking people in the eye shows confidence. **Failing to** look someone in the eye will not only make them uncomfortable, but it could be interpreted as a **sign** that you are **evasive** or untruthful.

Notes:

When you make “eye contact”, you look at someone's eyes. In other words, you look directly at them.

“Failing to” do something, is not doing it.

The definition of “sign” used here means an indication or a clue. For example: Dark clouds are a sign that it might rain.

Being evasive is deliberately avoiding someone or something. When someone asks you about something you don't want to tell, you can be evasive to avoid answering.

3. You should be **direct**. **Get to the point** quickly and focus only on the **relevant** facts. In some cultures, getting directly to the point is considered rude, but it won't to an American. People are busy. Time is short. You need to **shine** during the brief time you have in front of the interviewer.

Discussion:

Describe some social situations in which you feel “awkward”:

What kind of test do you usually “ace”?

What is the most “significant” thing that has happened to you in the last year.

Do you agree that Americans are more “direct”?

Have you ever been to a job interview in the U.S.? Would you agree with these “tips”?

What advice would you give me if I were being interviewed for a job in your country?

Are there other differences in how people get a job in your country?

Read the conversation below and replace the words in italics with a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Brian: How did Jay get a job so quickly in this poor economy? Most people I know have been looking for *ages*?

Toby: Jay is a good golfer and he was asked to play in a tournament by one of the local *big wigs*. He told the guy he was looking for a job and the big wig *hooked him up* with an ace *head hunter*. He got a job right away. Jay knows a lot of *wheeler dealers* because of his ability at golf. He's well connected with the *country club set*. That probably helped him get in the door. But he works hard once he gets the job. He *hustles* every day. He *works every angle*.

Brian: I don't think he's *underhanded*, though. Do you?

Toby: No, not at all. I think he's on the *up and up*. My boss thinks Jay is a real *hot-shot*. He says if you, Jay and I could work together it would be a real *dream team*.

Toby: I would prefer to work with Kabir, but he is going back home because he can make more working in his own country than he can here. Kabir has lived here since high school and feels like an American, but he says his lifestyle will be so much better in his native country.

Brian: I know several people who are returning to their native countries after working in jobs here. It's kind of a reverse *brain drain*. I think it's something this country should be worried about. We are losing some of our best and brightest foreign workers.