

AAPM New Member Symposium, 2007: Applying for a Job

Abstract

This talk is targeted for the first time/younger job seeker. No matter how well you've done in school and/or training getting that first job can be tough, and it's going to take work to get it! The most frequent mistake young job seekers make is assuming that applying and interviewing for a job is about themselves. Nothing could be further from the truth! The whole process is about the people and institution you are applying to. It's about why they should want to hire you and how hiring you will help them. It has nothing to do with why this job might be good for you, or how this job will help you pass your boards, or anything like that. Remember, if I hire you it means I'm going pay you a salary, not vice versa, so make me want to hire you.

Begin the process by not wasting my time and not taking me for granted. For example, don't send cover letters addressed to 'Dear Sir' or 'To Whom it may concern'. Don't pad your resume and don't call people on the phone unless the advertisement clearly invites it. Busy people are going to decide whether or not you get hired, and wasting their time is not going to help you! Do Google and Pubmed searches on the people and institution you're applying to. Don't be effusive but do show that you know something about who and what you're applying to.

If you make it through 'round one' and are invited for an interview show up on time, well prepared, and neatly dressed. An interview is not the place to express radical political opinions or to make fashion statements (dress conservatively and keep facial jewelry to a minimum). An interview is also the wrong place to complain about your current boss, teachers, school, and/or place of employment. If you're a student you love your school. If you're currently employed you're looking for new opportunities, or some family matter requires relocation rather than because you're current boss is mean to you. Nobody wants to hire a chronic malcontent!

Be truthful in your correspondence and during your interview. Medical Physics is a small community and people interviewing you will likely know your teachers, bosses, and references. Things you write or say are easily checked. Sometimes you may not want to tell the whole truth (for example, if your current boss really is mean do not say so), but definitely do not lie. Get caught in a lie and you have no chance of getting the job. Get caught after you've been hired and you'll be fired.

When you're lucky enough to get that first job, unless there are unusually horrific circumstances **stay there for at least 3 years**. As hard as it is to get that first job, it will be even more difficult to find a job later in your career if you've made a reputation for yourself as a frequent job changer or trouble maker.