

10 TRAITS MANAGERS/RECRUITERS LOOK FOR IN AN INTERN DURING AN INTERVIEW

- 1. LEARNER** – employers are not expecting you to know everything as an intern, but they are expecting you to be interested in learning. Throughout my three internships I've been asked "what did you learn" constantly. Managers are interested in your development and would like to see you expand on your academic knowledge by learning on the job. In your interview, the more you show you're willing to learn, the more likely you will be offered the job.
- 2. DRIVE/EFFORT** – managers are most excited about highly motivated interns and driven employees in general joining their team. Stories where you went above and beyond to execute at the highest level in projects, life scenarios, and past work experience is guaranteed to impress. I include "effort" in the bullet because most of the time managers are not expecting perfection out of an intern, they're looking to see that the intern did their best.
- 3. AMBITIOUS** – this trait is key to showing a manager that you're the type of intern that would be interested and a good fit for a full-time offer following your internship. For the manager, the internship is really just the hook to secure the talented student. The manager is almost always intending to hire the intern to eventually convert to a full-time employee. Demonstrating that you have big career goals following graduation is a cue to employers that you're not only looking to secure this internship but are also considering how you'd fit at their company down the road.
- 4. SOCIAL SKILLS** – an interview is inherently social so the employer will know within your first two minutes if you have social skills. Employers are considerate of these soft skills because as an intern you will spend much of your day interacting with coworkers to see what

their role is like and will be working with many different coworkers as your assigned tasks are generally spontaneous.

5. **INTERESTED** – probably the most underrated trait to demonstrate in the interview is an interest in the company and the work you'd be doing. Too many candidates show up to the interview not knowing much about the company and just knowing how to talk about themselves. To employers this reflects that the job and company will not be important to you and that you will not be interested in converting to a full-time employee.
6. **CURIOUS** – curiosity and interest go hand in hand. A way to show you're interested in the company and work you will be doing is by asking educated questions about the company and role. Before your interview, prepare a long list of questions you'd like to ask the interviewer. Make sure the list is 10+ questions. I've been in a spot interviewing for an internship where after each question I asked, the senior manager asked me for another and another to make sure I was curious enough. I wish I had prepared more questions; instead I came up with questions of the cuff. I got the job.
7. **ENTHUSIASTIC** - this is mainly a social skill, but I would like to create a separate bullet to emphasize the importance of enthusiasm in an interview. If you're generally a more reserved person I'm going to need you to practice turning your energy level up a few notches for your interview. Nobody likes talking to a bore and someone who is draining them of energy. They want to speak with someone who sounds energized and engaged in the conversation.
8. **CONFIDENT** – confidence is key. Henry Ford said, "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're right." Confidence in an interview can be created by knowing in your heart you are one of the best candidates possible for the job. This feeling can be created by achievements of various sizes as it relates to the field you're interviewing for. For example, if it's a technical sales job and you spent last summer at your previous job cold calling customers

selling air conditioning equipment, then you would know in your heart you are a great fit for the job. This confidence reflects into your interview. If on the other hand, you have less than perfect qualifications for the role, some tips to speak with confidence include: making sure you end each response to their questions as a declaratory statement instead of ending unsure sounding like your statement ends as a question, practicing the 50 most common interview questions, and talking to friends about their internship's interview.

9. **ADAPTABLE** – like previously mentioned, the work interns are assigned is inherently varied, so a candidate that demonstrates an ability to go from one situation to another with vigor and precision will catch an employer's attention.
10. **COACHABLE** – managers like to see an intern who is coachable for a few reasons: 1.) a coachable intern is flexible to take on various tasks as interns naturally do, 2.) will be open to indoctrination into company culture and full-time employment (the more coachable you are the more of the company proverbial Kool-Aid you will drink), 3.) coachability is important because you will be receiving much instruction since interns generally don't know much.

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