

Harvey Nash **IT Contractor** Newsletter

June 2005

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| Job Interviews II - Reasons People Fail Nine reasons why people fail in a job interview. | Profile of Success: Harvey Nash Contractor, Daniel Baker Meet one of Harvey Nash's talented IT contractors. | Sector Focus: Oil – Black Gold A look at why IT specialists should pay special attention to the thriving oil sector. | Harvey Nash Adds Job Search Tool Learn how to get Harvey Nash job alerts sent directly to your e-mail account. | Latest IT News Including an update on Steve Jobs' brain transplant and information on Microsoft's plans to squash BlackBerry. |
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Job interviews II - Reasons people fail in interviews:

It is essential that when you make it to the interview phase you are ready to perform at your best. Ultimately, once you leave the interview room, there is almost nothing you can do to rescue a bad interview.

Nine reasons why people fail in interviews

- **Lack of awareness of the company**
Your basic interview preparation should include finding out about the company and the role. The biggest interview killer is this question: "So what do you people do exactly?"
- **Appearance**
Conservative business attire is always the most reliable way to dress. Don't be misled by a company's casual dress code. Interviews are considered a formal business situation. You can dress down once you are hired.
- **Lack of preparation**
Anticipate the technical and personal questions that each interviewer will most likely ask. Specifically, relate experiences you have had to the skills and personality attributes in question. Be prepared to answer questions with specific examples of your strengths and accomplishments.
- **Failing the basics**
Turn up on time. If you fail to make the effort, you will fail to get the job. Recruiters will not put candidates forward who are not good ambassadors for the agency. If you anticipate being late or canceling the interview, call the interviewer or your consultant as early as possible. This conveys courtesy as well as demonstrating that you are in control of your schedule, even when a crisis arises. Few managers will reject you if they are given reasonable notice.



- **Lack of/over enthusiasm**
Even though companies say they hire candidates with particular skill sets, interviews depend significantly on the connection between interviewer and candidate. If you express and exhibit enthusiasm for your work, your career and the new company, you are much more likely to receive an offer. How you say something is just as important as what you say. You need to understand how your particular personality communicates during an interview. You only have one chance to make a first impression.

However, over-enthusiasm is an equal killer. This is especially hard on people who have been out of work for some time and are desperate to get a job — any job. The paradox is that the willingness to take any job is likely to mean ending up taking no job.
- **Negativity**
Never criticize a former company, position or boss. You can "re-frame" your job frustration by talking about your desire to contribute more, participate on a team or assume greater challenges. Almost everyone has worked for a difficult boss at some point in his or her career; this is one of the top reasons why people change jobs. Keep your comments and your attitude positive; negativity about your former or current company is an interview killer.
- **Failing to listen**
During the interview ask about the skills, experience and personality traits that are important to success on the job. You will then need to articulate these same qualities as they apply to you. If you are too busy formulating your next idea to listen carefully, you will miss this critical information. Without listening carefully to the interviewer, you are shooting at a target while blindfolded.
- **Lack of supporting evidence**
People remember stories far more than they remember facts and figures. Have the evidence to illustrate your skills, personality attributes and experience relevant to the job.
- **Lying or embellishing**
Don't even think of lying in an interview. It will bite you on the ankle at some point. Once you start to lie it is impossible to stop, and the lie will get more and more involved. If you are caught, not only will you not get the job, but you may be dropped by your recruitment agency.

Over embellishment is a more common interview failing. The line between it and lying is a fine one. Be proud of your achievements, talk them up, but never make them up.

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Thomas J. Dougherty & Associates, a U.S. recruitment company, interviewed 150 other recruitment consultants. They produced a list of the 30 most common mistakes candidates made in interviews: (in no particular order)

- Poor personal appearance.
- Lack of interest and enthusiasm: passive and indifferent.
- Over emphasis on money: interested only in best offer.
- Condemnation of past employers.
- Failure to look at the interviewer when conversing.
- Limp, fishy handshake.
- Unwillingness to go where sent.
- Late to interview.
- Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time.
- Asks no questions about job.
- Indefinite response to questions.
- Overbearing, over aggressive, conceited with superiority or "know it all complex."
- Inability to express self clearly: poor voice diction, grammar.
- Lack of planning for career: no purpose and goals.
- Lack of confidence and poise: nervous, ill at ease.
- Failure to participate in activities.
- Unwilling to start at the bottom: expects too much too soon.
- Makes excuses, evasive, hedges on unfavorable factors in record.
- Lack of tact.
- Lack of courtesy: ill mannered.



- Lack of maturity.
- Lack of vitality.
- Indecision.
- Sloppy application.
- Merely shopping around.
- Wants job for short time.
- No interest in company or industry.
- Low moral standards.
- Cynical.
- Lazy.

What happens if you know you are botching the interview?

Correct it. Once you leave the room, your fate is sealed. If you know that things are going badly, you can try to put the interview straight. A willingness to admit mistakes is not going to harm the impression you make. If you know where you went wrong, then say so to the interviewer and tell them what you meant to say.

If it is a more nebulous feeling that the interview is running away from you, then ask the interviewer outright how the interview is going and if there are any issues you can address. Tell the interviewer that you don't feel you have made the right impression and provide the evidence of the impression you meant to make. It may not work, but if you really have blown the interview, what have you got to lose?

Profile of Success: Harvey Nash Contractor Daniel Baker

Every month, we will profile a U.S.-based Harvey Nash contractor so you can learn more about the fascinating, skilled professionals we employ and work with nationwide. This month we introduce you to senior technical writer Daniel Baker, who lives and works in Seattle, Washington.

Senior Tech Writer, Life-long Learner

Meet Daniel Baker, a dedicated and thoughtful technical writer who began working with Harvey Nash in 2004. In a stroke of online kismet, the Harvey Nash Seattle team found Baker's resume posted on the Web and matched it to a contract-based opportunity at a leading telecom company.

With more than 20 years of tech writing experience behind him, Baker offered the extensive experience, knowledge and competence Harvey Nash's client was seeking. Baker was put on assignment more than 10 months ago and during that time has successfully supported the client's educational services department in an effort to better understand and streamline process and work flow.

In addition to a long and successful career helping businesses improve how they communicate, learn and share information, Baker is also a rigorous recreational writer and researcher who enjoys putting together family histories. To date, he has traced various family lines as far back as the 15th century Great Britain and 12th century Germany. Generous with his technical skills, Baker has helped friends, family and his church community with various technology and Web projects.

Also generous with his time, Baker was willing to share with us some of his insights on project-based work, Harvey Nash and achieving success as a contractor. Here are some of his career and workplace reflections:

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Q: Why do you enjoy contract-based work?

Baker: One of the great things about contract work is the learning. You get the opportunity to work on different projects, learn new technologies and see new ways of doing things. Then, you can take what you have learned in one place or on one project, and apply it somewhere else.

In full-time work, it's easier to get comfortable in what you're doing and become stale. You forget the importance of learning and growing. In contract work, you are constantly encouraged to learn.

Q: What advice do you give to other contractors looking to find satisfaction and challenge in their work?

Baker: I think two things are important. First, you must keep learning wherever you go. Never miss a chance to pick up a new skill or hear a new idea.

Second, in contract work—and especially in technical writing—it's important to not get caught up in ownership issues or let your ego get in the way. You must work within the guidelines and with the approval of your client.

“ Keep learning wherever you go! ”

— Daniel Baker, Senior Technical Writer,
Harvey Nash

My advice to tech writers is to always consider what would be the most usable and also the most practical method of conveying information based on the audience's background and working environment. Traditional paper styles may not be the solution but flashy tech solutions may not be it either. In the end, conveying the information simply, accurately and quickly is the end goal. Flashy technology may be impressive but is it getting the information across? These are the critical issues tech writers must continually keep in mind.



Q: Why have you enjoyed working with Harvey Nash?

Baker: I like that the Harvey Nash team is regularly in touch with me. They check in on the project to see how it's going and how I am doing. They are also open to new ideas about development opportunities and are currently looking for ways to expand learning resources for contractors.

Q: If we could snap our fingers and give you ANY skill in the world today, what skill would you like to add to your resume?

Baker: ASP.Net. It's an outstanding technology! I've done a lot of very useful interactive (data-backed) Web work using combinations of ASP, VB Script, JavaScript, SQL, and DHTML. But ASP.Net is the thing now.

Q: What are your long-term career goals?

Baker: Retirement in the next several years! Continued learning and challenge in the meantime.

Thank you to Daniel Baker for his time and his continued dedication and hard work. We look forward to introducing you to another Harvey Nash contractor colleague next month.

Sector focus: Oil – Black Gold.

Increasingly clients are looking at candidates from the perspective of their industry experience. So, smart people are aligning their career development with the needs of business rather than the 'road maps' of technology vendors. In this article, we take a look at the oil sector and how its appearance on your resume could be value-enhancing for all concerned. To understand why IT specialists should pay any attention to the oil sector,

I asked Michael Jetson, senior account manager at IT recruitment consultancy Harvey Nash, for his view.

His response was enlightening: "The energy, and specifically the oil market, is booming at present. Oil prices are high and companies are taking advantage of the extra revenue to invest in IT so that systems and trading becomes more efficient and market share can be obtained.

“ The oil companies are looking to compete with major blue chips and banks and are willing to compete on rates and salaries as well. ”

Companies in the energy sector are also seeing this as the ideal time to upgrade systems, applications and hardware. High-profile companies in the energy sector are reaping the rewards of a thriving sector and are aiming to challenge the leading investment banks in terms of new technologies and trading applications." This is good news for the best and brightest. The talent war looks set to ramp up a notch or two.

So what are the pressure points? Jetson responds: "Front office trading, in particular commodities, derivatives, swaps and futures. Risk, including market and credit. Back office, plus the usual infrastructure support and applications management."

The energy market appears to be forward thinking in terms of technology. According to Jetson, "Development skills in terms of C++/Java and C#.net combined with business knowledge is very much in demand. On the non-technical side, business analysts and project managers are also needed as companies look to invest more in IT."

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What are the benefits of redirecting one's career into this market? Jetson makes an interesting point for those whose end-game is financial services: "The oil companies are looking to compete with major blue chips and banks and are willing to compete on rates and salaries as well. They also offer exposure to the newest technologies. This sector can also be a good way to break into the banking world, which can be difficult to do without previous experience." The converse also applies, "The oil companies are looking to the banks as a source of good candidates."

Sounds good, but are there any risks in taking this career path? "If the oil price slumped dramatically then the investment in technology may stop. Some early stage project work may require travel to 'unusual locations,'" notes Jetson.

Oil is a global business. The world's major economies are dependent on it. Global reserves are not limitless, yet the demand is increasing. The major consumers are not the major producers. This not only creates a market, but one that needs increasingly exotic trading instruments to reduce oil price volatility.

Are you the type of person who might just get a kick out of playing a contributory role in maintaining global economic stability?

Harvey Nash Adds Job Search Tool – Online Job Alerts

To ensure our talented contractors are rapidly informed when a Harvey Nash job opens up that meets their interests and skills, we have just introduced job alert technology to our Web site. You can now register online to have new job postings that meet your specific professional goals and interests e-mailed to you daily.

To register for Harvey Nash Job Alerts, go to the **Careers** section of



www.harveynashusa.com and click on Job Alerts. Fill out your location and provide key words to indicate the types of positions you are interested in. Every day we will e-mail any jobs that match your location, skills and interests directly to your e-mail account. When great Harvey Nash job opportunities crop up, you can now be the first to know!

LATEST IT NEWS

Steve Jobs goes for brain transplant

Apple's CEO has surprised the market by announcing plans to drop Apple's use of IBM's PowerPC chip in favor of Intel. This has drawn mixed reactions from the Apple community, though the overall consensus is that Mr. Jobs can do no wrong, so it must be a good move.

This opens up some interesting possibilities: Apple's OS X operating system becoming available on standard PCs and/or OS X morphing into MS Windows. Most loathsome of all to the hip/funksters that are Apple users is that the 'industry' will embrace them. Though paying a premium for pastel shades may limit their use to reception areas and other customer contact spaces.

Microsoft to squash BlackBerry

Microsoft has enhanced its mobile operating system and Exchange software to wirelessly push e-mail to its users, having taken note of the success achieved in this field by RIM with its ubiquitous BlackBerry. Naturally Microsoft wants to obliterate the market creator from the IT landscape. RIM might consider making contact with Novell, Netscape and Lotus among others, who will all be very familiar with good market-loss bereavement counseling services.

Microsoft's fine according to European Commission

The European Commission (EC) had taken a firm stance in respect of Microsoft's alleged monopolistic practices. The 500m Euro fine was an irritation to the software giant. But, insisting that elements of Microsoft's intellectual property become 'open source' would have, I imagine, caused Bill Gates to become apoplectic.

The EC felt that Microsoft needed an incentive to overcome its inertia in respect to this sanction. So, it announced that from the start of June Microsoft would have to pay a fine of circa \$5m per day until it complied. Microsoft's lawyers, experts in brinkmanship, have made a proposal, which appears to broadly satisfy the EC. However, the thorny issue of open source appears to remain unaddressed.

Sun shadows StorageTek

Sun reinforced its 'under the hood' credentials by making an offer to buy 'tape to disk' vendor StorageTek. Sun is looking to buy what is a relatively well-kept secret in the IT industry. StorageTek is cash rich, has well engineered products and a mature path to market. Possibly with the storage market heating up, Sun is concerned that if a rival such as HP were to acquire StorageTek, then this would send Sun's lack-luster storage business into a tailspin.

IBM tops database table

The battle for the top slot in the database revenue rankings is usually a close run affair. IBM has eclipsed Oracle now for the third year running according to Gartner. Oracle is currently growing faster than IBM so next year might see a change at the top. Oracle dominates UNIX. Microsoft and NCR were the fastest growing database players. Sybase made the top five.