

Which organization should you join? Who will hire you? Should your focus be on the social sector or the private sector? These might be the questions you are asking at the moment! To start with, I would urge you to find a job on merit alone. I know 'sifarish' is the routine way people find jobs in Pakistan. But please do not fall into this trap. Your degree and contacts may get you into a job, but it is your attitude and competence that will keep you there! I would pose the job search questions another way. Who should I work for? And why?

To answer these questions, you need to prepare yourself, by getting to know yourself better. Who are you? What makes you unique? Why should a company select you from a choice of 50 others? What are your key strengths? What are your weaknesses? What are your goals for personal development? Why do you live? What is your mission in life? Do you have a personal vision and have you set goals for the next five years? What motivates you? What has been your personal best leadership experience in school, college and career so far? Can you work well with people? Are you a team player? What proof, in the form of concrete examples, can you offer from your past experiences, that support your credentials as a potential manager and leader.

Good companies would always want to know of your technical competence. However, they give greater weightage to managerial and leadership skills which include: confidence, communication - both oral and written, interpersonal skills, ability to resolve conflicts, negotiating skills, creativity and problem solving skills, maturity, integrity, attitude and initiative. Reflect on your past to discover examples, which will support some or all of these skills and competencies in you.

Prepare for a job interview. Turn up on time and suitably dressed for the occasion. Have a clear goal in mind. Listen to the questions carefully. If you are not clear about what is being asked, request the interviewer to repeat his or her question. Paraphrase, if necessary. Listen more than you speak. Try to keep the ratio 60:40.

When offered the opportunity, ask intelligent questions. Your questions reveal your personality and character. Try to learn about the organization, its history, its culture, its customers, its priorities and its past business performance. Try also to learn about the challenges the company is facing at present. See if you can contribute to the organization's profitability and growth in any way.

If asked about what package you would like, simply state that you would like to be compensated on the basis of value you add to the company. Leave the decision to the company. If you find their offer is ridiculous, it may be an indicator, that the company is not fair - or that they are testing you to see how you respond! Never look discouraged.

Remember that Allah is 'Raaziq' and not the employer. People who seek Allah's pleasure in all that they do, never starve. He provides for all His people. Have faith that you will get a job. But you must make consistent and make high quality efforts.

Good companies want to discover the following:

- 1) Will this candidate maintain and/or enhance the reputation and image of our business?
- 2) Will this candidate contribute, directly, or indirectly, to greater profitability through cost savings, better productivity and/or greater revenue?
- 3) Will this candidate improve the culture of teamwork and performance in the company?

If after the interview, the management feels that you can satisfy them on the above three points, you are very likely to get placed - Insha Allah!

I hope this article has helped you to start thinking about the fundamentals of life. At this stage, you may find reading the following books helpful:

- a) How to Win Friends and Influence People - by Dale Carnegie
- b) Seven Habits of Highly Effective People - by Stephen Covey

What you seek - seeks you! Think deeply.

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