

Neuroscience Explains Why Experienced Professionals Struggle In Interviews

Ever wished you could skip right over the job interview? That you could simply show them how well you do the job instead. Because you know that you can deliver exactly what they need, if they hired you. But when it's time for that job interview, you can't find the words for all the skills, value and experience that's locked up inside your brain.

Instead, you feel nervous and on edge during the interview. Worried you might blow it on that unexpected question.

The truth is, you're not alone. I wanted to share with you a research study from the field of cognitive neuroscience that explains why this happens. This research should actually make you feel better about the gap between top performance on the job and struggles in the job search.

So why is it difficult to describe the work that you've been doing for years? Work where you may even consider yourself an expert? And what can I share with you today about next steps based on these results?

Here's what studies of the human brain reveal:

WHEN PEOPLE BECOME EXPERTS IN A GIVEN AREA, THEY PROCESS MULTIPLE STEPS AT THE SAME TIME AND IN VERY SPECIFIC PARTS OF THE BRAIN.

SO PUTTING THAT PROCESS INTO WORDS BECOMES HARD. JUST THINK ABOUT ASKING A GRANDMOTHER ABOUT HER RECIPE FOR THAT FAVORITE DISH. SHE COULDN'T TELL YOU HOW MUCH SALT GOES INTO IT – SHE JUST KNOWS. OR EVEN THINK ABOUT THE TECHNIQUE A MAN USES TO TIE A NECKTIE, OR THE EXACT WAY YOU TIE YOUR SHOELACES.

YOUR BRAIN KNOWS HOW TO DO THESE THINGS AUTOMATICALLY. AND IN 2003, NEUROSCIENTISTS AT UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, DR. JASON CHEIN AND DR. WALTER SCHNEIDER, FOUND THAT THIS WAS EXCEPTIONALLY VALUABLE ON THE JOB. AUTOMATIC BRAIN PROCESSING HELPS YOU DO YOUR WORK FASTER, MAKE FEWER ERRORS, AND EVEN TO PERFORM UNDER HIGH STRESS AND HEAVY WORKLOADS.

But, when you are on the job search, you must explain these thoughts that automatically flow through your brain, to describe what you do without any conscious awareness.

This creates a communication challenge, which we'll call the "Fish-in-Water Effect."

Many job seekers fail to overcome the Fish-in-Water effect. Unsure how to describe their automatic processes, some start to doubt themselves, even questioning whether they can do the job.

Others resort to memorizing books of canned interview answers packed with tired phrases like "attention to detail" and "good team player" that make them look like everyone else.

Sure, these standard answers do work... if you are after an entry-level job, with plenty of openings. Yet, if you already have a few years of work experience or face tough competition, you will need to do more. And according to the Wall Street Journal, in the 4th quarter of 2012, each job opening posted received an average of 118 applicants. With numbers like that, you have no choice but to stand out.

You must wake up your interviewers and show them the real value you bring by overcoming the Fish-in-Water Effect. Because when you are the real you and show the value of your story, you do the one thing that always decides who gets the job offer and who doesn't. It's as simple as one word.

See, today, hiring managers are terrified of making another costly mistake. In a June 2013 survey from Career Builder, 2 out of 3 US employers said they made a bad hire that hurt their organization big time. These hires have:

1. Damaged Relationships with clients
2. Made other employees unhappy (even causing some to quit)
3. Driven away customers and sales
4. Increased costs to find and train replacements

In fact, 27% of US employers admitted that a single bad hire had cost them more than \$50,000. That's why the one thing that always decides who gets the offer and who doesn't is the word trust. Hiring managers are desperate for someone they can count on, someone who won't become the next costly bad hire. And this is actually good news for you. When you know how to unlock all of your experience and uncover the right words to describe yourself, hiring managers will feel comfortable having you as part of their team.

And they will be hungry to hire you. Heck, they will likely pay you a little extra just so they can sleep easy, knowing someone trustworthy has got their back.

As you prepare for that next interview, recognize all the value that you bring to the table. Also realize that it's perfectly natural to have difficulty finding those words to describe yourself. But don't let that be a reason to underperform in your next interview. Instead put in the work to overcome the fish-in-water problem. Ask a friend to help you pull out the best of you who you are.

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