

What to Do When You Are Over-Qualified for the Job

by Peak Performance Coach, Stephanie Graham



After leaving the Midwest, I was experiencing a tough time. I decided to apply for an entry-level job at a large financial institution. I knew that getting the job should be easy since my qualifications exceeded those required *by far*. I had previously held management positions at large banks and even operated my own company in the financial services industry. Since I was recently divorced and caring for an extended family, I no longer desired a position that required long hours and managing a staff. Yep! I had this job thing all figured out and was ready to move forward (*or so I thought*).

I breezed through the interview process like a college student repeating grade school. My joyful confidence was abruptly shattered when the interview team pulled me aside to interrogate me. One interviewer looked at me and said, “So, what’s your STORY?!?” With a look of confusion on my face, I asked him to clarify his question. He proudly informed me that he could easily spot *people like me*; people who are over-qualified yet plagued by addictions, emotional issues and sometimes prone to



drifting. I assured him that I had none of those issues but was simply realigning my life and wanted to do so without the stress of a management position. He informed me that I was now “safe” but that without our little chat, I would have automatically been removed from the pool of eligible candidates. He further noted that the bank’s interviewers choose not to deal with my kind because the bank would have to work too hard to keep me happy. Then I would quit thereby officially wasting everyone’s time. I left the interview stunned and replayed the bizarre incident in my mind all the way home.

This institution’s hiring approach has been adopted by more and more companies. They simply overlook the fact that there are many candidates that choose a new career field or choose to return to a former job after being away for years. If you are facing the challenge of obtaining a position that you may be considered over-qualified for, here are a few tips that just may help you land the job.

1. **Consider the pros and cons of taking the job.** Are you open to learning and being supervised by someone with much less experience than you? Is there some aspect of the job (*other than money*) that will be fulfilling to you? Will this job have a purpose in your life beyond being a cure for boredom?



2. **Update your resume.** Be sure to remove old or irrelevant experience (including extra degrees, certifications or career achievements). Find common ground by highlighting your skills and accomplishments that are important to the position you are interviewing for and are aligned with the company’s mission.

3. **Carefully choose your words during the interview.** Keep the conversation centered around how perfect you are for the job rather than on over-qualification factors. Instead of answering a question by stating what you did as a supervisor or executive during the last 20 years, simply comment on the value you delivered that can be translated to value for this employer. Refrain from talking about extensive skills that are not required for the job you are being considered for.

4. Last and certainly not least, **update your appearance with a well-groomed hair style and clothing that is appropriate for the position.** I’ll

admit that I love the 80's but I don't make that obvious during an interview or business meeting. It is not the 70's, 80's or 90's, so you may wish to refrain from dressing like it still is when preparing for your interview. Also, forget about pretending to be young and fashionable. Be your authentic self and be proud of who you have become.

When you know what to expect, you can navigate your way through the interview successfully. For tips and tools on re-entering the workforce as a mortgage loan processor, join us for our next Loan Processing Solutions class.

P.S.

Back to my job interview story....



They offered me the entry level job and I accepted. However, the day before I was scheduled to start, my ex-husband called and said, "Please don't take that job! If you do, you will be miserable and I won't stand a chance! You won't be able to see that I have changed." After thinking long and hard, I called and turned the job down. My ex and I began dating again and remarried on a beautiful private beach in Kona, Hawaii a year later. True story!