



# OVER QUALIFIED

BY CONNIE BLAINE

## How do you get the job without being rejected for being overqualified?

WHEN IT'S AN EMPLOYER'S JOB MARKET, like it is now with so many people competing for available jobs, you may need to take a job that requires less training or experience than you have, because you have to eat, after all. And, you may be willing to settle for less money than you used to make. So how do you get the job without being rejected for being "overqualified"?

When interviewers say you are "overqualified," they really mean:

- You'll be bored in this job;
- You won't be satisfied with the wages it offers;
- You'll leave as soon as you get a better opportunity;
- They'll have to go through the expensive process of hiring and training someone all over again.

If you are trying to get a job you know you are overqualified for, you might be tempted to change your resume to reflect less responsibility, lower pay or in some way make yourself seem less than you are. Don't do this. It's never a good idea to falsify a resume. Instead, prepare for being told you're overqualified and tackle it head on, even before the interview brings it up. And, do some legwork prior to approaching the company to set the stage for a productive interview. In addition to the "usual" preparation for a job interview (see other articles in this publication), try to:

1. Have someone in the organization who knows you and can recommend you, if possible. Let that person first talk to the interviewer and sing your praises.
2. Focus on your accomplishments and skills, not job titles. Use the language straight out of the job description written by the employer to show how your skills match the employer's needs. Don't mention other, unrelated skills you may have.
3. Be clear from the start that you are totally flexible about salary and your previous earnings don't enter into your decision that you want this job.
4. Sell yourself as a good investment for the employer using specific examples from your previous jobs of how you cut costs or brought in revenue.
5. Highlight current or cutting-edge knowledge to show you are up-to-date and adaptable.
6. Stress teamwork. Demonstrate with specific examples how you are a team player and you value success of the team more than personal recognition.
7. Say you are looking for a change and you're willing to start a little lower than you were on a salary schedule and work your way up.

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8. If you have a record of staying years in a previous job, use that to emphasize that you are loyal and won't be looking for something else. You might even offer to sign a 12-month contract (or more) to prove you'll stick around.
9. Don't overwhelm while you are trying to impress. Keep your ego out of it and just focus on how you are the perfect, value-added, candidate for the job.

As in any job interview, focus on what the employer wants and what you can offer. After explaining how you will be a great asset for their company, tell them why you are applying for a lower-level position. Do not say, "I can't find anything else and I really need a job." That will definitely make them think you'll leave at the first opportunity. Here are some responses that may help you convince the interviewer you do want this job and you will not be leaving for something else, but only say them if they ring true:

- "This position is attractive to me because it will allow me to use my skills while gaining experience in a new field."
- "I've always wanted to work for this company (or in this industry) and I'm willing to take a lower-level job to get that chance."
- "This job has the long-term growth potential I want, and the stability other jobs don't."
- "Money is not my top priority in making this decision. I'm fine with earning less than I have in the past."
- "I'm looking for something more flexible so I can spend time with my family (or less stressful, with fewer responsibilities—whatever fits for you).

If you anticipate the "overqualified" issue and address it up front, it will not be a drawback to your success! ☞

## FACTS About Occupations

- In 1980, one-fourth of Utah women worked in an occupation where at least 90 percent of the profession was held by women. By 2000, the comparable share had dropped to 10 percent.
- Roughly 84 percent of Utah healthcare support occupations are held by women. Healthcare support occupations include lower-skilled healthcare positions such as aides, orderlies, assistants, and massage therapists.
- Utah women hold only 2 percent of construction and mining positions. In addition, women constitute only 3 percent of installation/maintenance/repair workers.
- A higher percentage of computer/mathematical jobs, healthcare practitioners, business/financial operation occupations, life/physical/social scientists, and architecture/engineering occupations are held by U.S. women than by Utah women.
- Some female-dominated occupations have become even more concentrated with women. For example, in 1980, roughly 66 percent of all elementary school teachers in Utah were female. By 2000, Utah women had increased their share of this occupation to 78 percent. Female cosmetologists increased their occupation share from 89 percent in 1980 to 95 percent in 2000.
- During 2002, women owned one-fourth of all Utah businesses. They owned 13 percent of all firms with employees.

