

Workshop « Corporate Presentation » to help PhD's find a position in the nonacademic sector

Animation: Jean-Paul HERMANN

Jean-Paul HERMANN is 72. He graduated from Ecole Normale Supérieure (Paris), he holds the so-called agrégation de physique (a recruitment competition), also a PhD for which he received a bronze medal from CNRS.

He is trilingual (French, American English, German).

He was a teacher in universities (Paris Orsay, Ecole Polytechnique), made a post-doc in the US before joining Renault at 35 where he worked on R&D and finally in the recruitment department.

He retired in 2005 and helps as a volunteer to educate teenagers in his city, but also to help people with all kind of qualifications finding a job.

This workshop was given over 100 times in various universities in France and Belgium.

The constitution of the workshops: In no way is this a lecture with PowerPoint, etc.. much more a workshop where everyone participates, gives his/her experiences and opinions. That's why the number of participants should be around 8 or 10. Heterogeneity is an advantage. Some documents are distributed (few).

Looking for a job in a company is very different from what it is in academia. Personal values, the presentation, the ease of expression, the team spirit; the management capabilities are much more appreciated than pure knowledge and publications.

A recruitment process is in no way an exam, it has its own rules and training is required. That's the purpose of the workshop.

A workshop in English: more and more often, the first contact takes place over the phone in English, with or without an appointment. If English is not your mother tongue, it's thus better to train in English. French accepted during breaks.

A workshop with the appropriate dress: As everywhere, a dress code exists and the presentation being essential during an interview, all participants are kindly asked to dress as they would do for a real interview. This creates a good opportunity to discuss the dress code, which may be subtle.

A one day/ 8 hours formula: schematically, we address 3 aspects:

- the list of competencies and the resume
- the interview
- traps and nasty questions.

Breaks take place: one in the morning, lunch on the premises, break in the afternoon. Phones to be switched off.

No interview simulations: these are treachery, it's much better to analyze various simulations during role games. People holding a PhD are perfectly able to understand the motivations and the game played by a recruiter.

Emphasis put on the list of competencies: a difficult exercise, especially for doctors in Social Sciences, but also for everyone who was deeply involved in a specialty for 3 + years and unconsciously believes everyone knows what he/she knows.

Importance of being able to explain one's thesis to a layman, with a presentation of the SPRI method which brings a great help in building a talk or a paper.

An evaluation at the end of the workshop : Previous experience showed that English is never a problem and that all participants are satisfied, even when their problems are not the same.

Requirements are very simple : Jean-Paul HERMANN does not ask for a salary but the organizers take in charge the convocations, the room (a board, a paper clip), the breaks and the accommodation of the speaker.

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