

## US Interview & Resume Tips from Diane Asitimbay,

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There is a strong self-promotion factor in U.S. resumes and interviews and knowing what kinds of "guerrilla-type" questions we ask of applicants such as: "Why should I hire you?" "What makes you stand out from other applicants?" "What can you contribute to the company?" "Where do you see yourself in 2 years? 5 years? 10 years?"

I regularly role-play job interviews with American UCSD students and my international students who plan to get a job here. My US students are the HR reps and ask the above direct questions to international students and then I observe and see where their problems are.

I have noticed, besides the self-promotion aspect, that many international students have these problems:

1. "Quick answers" to the kinds of questions listed above. The speed and confidence factor when answering these questions, more than the actual specific answers to these questions are often highly valued in an interview with U.S. hiring reps. I try to develop this skill of "thinking on your feet" in my classroom with various exercises.
2. I also make my students get rid of the personal data such as height, weight, age and a photo that many countries have as a standard for a resume.
3. The U.S. emphasis on skills and experience versus what university you graduate from is stressed as well, since many of us in the U.S. are unaware of how much prestige goes along with graduating from such and such a university and international applicants have a hard time giving that up to adjust to a "skills-based" resume where what you have done is more highly valued than perhaps the university they graduated from.
4. Many internationals, as well as Americans, have no idea of how they can contribute to the company years from now. I tell them that the idea is that you want to grow and have more responsibility, etc.
5. The MONEY question also is often misunderstood. Many international students ask about the salary rather fast and direct in the interview and often the U.S. practice is to wait until the end of the interview until we are pretty sure we are hired. Second, the interviewer usually initiates this salary discussion, we give a range of what we expect to be paid or we wait at least until the second interview before we discuss how much we actually want unlike many internationals who may want to discuss this money issue earlier in the interview.

