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## Upbeat attitude key to getting hired

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Oana Jacobs, front-desk supervisor at the Hollywood Beach Marriott, greets guests with a big smile, and that's what her boss Joshua Morris likes to see.

"We can always teach you the job. We say, 'we can teach you how to make a cheeseburger, but I can't teach you to smile,' " says Morris, general manager of the hotel, which recently held a job fair.

When I talk with employers about why they hire certain people over others, it usually comes down to attitude. In a job market where there are hundreds of applicants with similar skills, a good attitude is often what makes one candidate stand out from another.

While it may be tough to act gung-ho when you've been out of work for months, but being enthusiastic and passionate about the business could make you the candidate of choice.

Morris puts it this way: "I work here, too. I want to surround myself with people I'd like to work with," he says.

Jacobs now trains new workers at the Marriott to create a warm and welcoming environment.

"A smile says a lot — your facial expression and your eyes, if you really mean what you're saying to the guests," she says.

Personality is what matters to manager Cathy Mitchell when hiring for Salon Oasis in [Boca Raton](#). A friend at the salon will get someone an interview, she says, but then Mitchell judges whether the job candidate will fit into the salon's culture of "service and fun."

Mitchell also likes to see persistence from a job seeker. "I love it when people call me two or three times," she says.

At Legal Group Solutions in Aventura, Chief Executive Marty Davis relies first on a personality test to determine whether the job candidate will be a good fit with co-workers and supervisors.

Davis, who hires lawyers and business consultants, also looks for people who will bring new ideas to his workplace. He also looks at how candidates talk about themselves — their strengths and accomplishments as well as weaknesses.

Most hiring managers point to "attitude" or "personality," but they often have different interpretations, which can be a challenge for job seekers, says Michael "Dr. Woody" Woodward, a South Florida organizational psychologist and author of "The You Plan." "You have to keep in mind it's your interview and take control," he says.

That takes knowing your personal brand — what you bring to the table that's going to be a solution for the employer. "It's a buyer's market right now," Woodward says. "You're selling yourself as a product that you want them to buy."

Be like a politician, Woodward says, by coming up with talking points to sell yourself and then weaving them throughout your answers during interviews. Confidence in an interview comes from feeling prepared, he says.

Research the employer, including its website, what's been written about it in blogs, and talking with current or former employees.

Make sure the opportunity aligns with your values, Woodward says. One way to gather that information is to ask for a tour. "Sometimes, you will get that weird vibe — this place isn't for me," he says.

Don't ever act desperate for the job. "You have to go into every interview fresh. You have to go in believing," he says.

Know what you've contributed at past employers and what you could contribute to a new one. "If you're giving the standard answers, you're not going to get the job. You have to show them how you are a better option than 100 other people," Woodward says.

Hiring people for their passion for the work can also translate into great customer service at the business.

Perhaps J.W. Marriott, who Woodward met as a child, knew that. "He put his hand on my shoulder and leaned over to remind me to work hard and always treat people well," he writes in his book.

If front-desk supervisor Oana Jacobs exemplifies the Marriott employee, then the hotel entrepreneur's philosophy stuck.