



BUSINESS NEWS

52 Interviews At Goldman Sachs - One Job Offer

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We've all heard those stories about the number of interviews it takes to get on the payroll over at Goldman Sachs, but many of those stories are received second or third hand, and lots of us wonder whether most are apocryphal. It's interesting, then, when a former Goldman Sacher comes out of the woodwork and lifts the lid on the firm a little bit.

Spears ran an interview just before the Christmas break with Nicolas Sarkis, the founder of AlphaOne Partners, a privately owned investment firm, who once worked at Goldman.

Sarkis, 38, claims that he had to attend 52 interviews before landing a job at Goldman in 1992, and kept hearing the same words throughout the recruitment process - 'team player', 'dedication' and 'client focus'. He also says that, during his fifth round of interviews, a trader suffered a heart attack on a trading floor, slap-bang in front of a number of interviewees. It would make good reading, of course, to report that the trader carried on regardless, and ended up having his best trading day ever, but alas, he was apparently taken out on a stretcher. It's good to see that Goldman traders are human, after all (or at least some of them were in 1992).

AlphaOne's founder also claims that the Goldman training course for new hires was 'like a military training camp', and that many new recruits left the firm soon after joining because they thought it was 'a madman's house'. Sarkis also says that he was threatened with the boot twice during his first week on the training program, and was once chased into the toilet by the head of the program, who demanded to know where gold had closed the day before.

Other Goldman interview 'legends' (urban or otherwise) that have popped up in the past include the one about the young female professional who, having successfully made it through over 30 interviews, was at the last hurdle. 'If you get through this interview', the senior Goldman employee is alleged to have said, 'You'll get the job. The problem is', he is said to have continued, 'I don't like women who wear green jackets'. The woman, of course, was wearing a green jacket. She is said to have come away without a job offer.

And then there's the story about the nervous interviewee who entered another senior Goldman executive's office, only to find him with his feet on the desk, watching Bloomberg TV. Not wanting to disturb the Goldman God while he was clearly deep in thought, the interviewee remained by the door and said nothing. After about 10 minutes, the interviewer looked up and said: 'Well, if you can't distract me from the TV screen after all this time, you'll not be much good to Goldman Sachs. Shut the door on your way out'.

But individuals who get declined by Goldman can take heart; the firm once famously turned down Lloyd Blankfein, and Blankfein, of course, ended up CEO of the firm, after joining another company which was later taken over by Goldman.