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How to Prepare For an Interview

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What to Prepare:

Your Elevator Pitch ~ The pitch is an introductory story that introduces you to an employer, highlights your interests, skills and strengths and tells an employer why you are the right candidate for the role you are interviewing for.

Three (3) strong facts about why you want to work for that company. Research the company on their website, Google and LinkedIn. Some of this research can be used to answer the question of why work for that company, but can also be information used to create powerful questions to ask at the end of your interview.

A reason that you are interested in that particular role and how you see it benefiting your long-term career goals.

Two (2) of your strengths and related short stories that explain how you successfully applied them in the past.

Two (2) of your 'weaknesses' or "challenges" and how you compensate or manage them.

Four (4) STAR stories. To effectively answer behavioral or situational based questions, always use the STAR method. **Situation, Task, Action and Result.** This will ensure you answer clearly, concisely and stay on point when there is often a tendency to ramble. Another trick is to circle back at the end of the question to re-iterate the point of the answer with something like '...and this is how I have demonstrated how I am able to manage deadlines with multiple competing priorities.'

- Choose 3 skills or attributes that they are looking for in the job posting and create STAR stories that highlight where you have applied those skills or attributes in the past. Think about an accomplishment you achieved, the skills you used, the actions you took and the positive result of your actions for the organization, your team, a customer or your professional development.
- Select one more skill or attribute and prepare a STAR story about a situation that did not turn out the way that you had hoped. To this story, add how you were accountable in the situation, what you learned and what you could have done differently.

Three (3) questions that you can ask the interviewers at the end of the interview. When they ask, dig deep and be insightful with your questions. The thoughtfulness of your question is a way of demonstrating the value you will bring to the organization in terms of critical thinking skills.

Remember

Make a great impression. First impressions are important. Ensure you greet each of the interviewers with a firm handshake, eye contact and a big 'ole smile.

Know why they should hire YOU. Spend time prior to the interview reviewing the job posting and reflecting on how *your* skills and competencies are aligned to the role *and* the company. Also think about what makes you unique. What are the things that separate you from the rest of the competition and how can you articulate those to an employer?

Consider academic, volunteer, professional and personal experience. Don't underestimate the value of all of your experience in your interviews. It speaks volumes about the skill sets you have acquired and your commitment to society and something bigger than you.

Understand your audience. When preparing for the interview spend time reflecting on the responsibilities of the job and identifying how your strengths and skills can serve the company. Be purposeful about this. It is the difference between a good interview and an exceptional one.

Take your time. It is okay to ask for time to consider your answer. If necessary, ask for clarification. Use your notebook to jot down 3 to 5 points before your start. This will ensure you are giving the most thoughtful, appropriate...and impactful answer.

Be authentic. Shine your light and let them experience it. If you don't know the answer, be honest. Tell them that you don't know but explain all the other ways you will add value to their organization.

Wrap it up. When the interview is over, look them in the eyes, thank them for the opportunity shake their hands and ask about the next steps. You can also ask if they have a business card, (important for thank you email), and if you can connect with them on LinkedIn.

Thank You email. Within 48 hours of the interview, send each of your interviewers a follow up email to thank them for their time. In the email, include the following:

- Your name in the subject line of the email
- Appreciation for their time
- Reiterate your sincere interest in the position and why.
- Something that you enjoyed learning or hearing about in relation to the company, their experiences or the industry.
- Include anything that you would like to add that you may have forgotten to state in the interview.
- Express your interest in hearing back from them

