

ACING THE JOB INTERVIEW – POWERFUL NEW STRATEGIES

You have heard that getting a job means marketing yourself effectively. So, what do sales & marketing experts do that a job seeker could emulate? How do they make the sale or land the contract?

The best of them use a consultative approach with prospective clients. In other words, they assess the client's needs or problems and then interact collaboratively with them around developing solutions. As a job seeker, you can approach a potential employer using a similar kind method.

State or Ask?

Effective salespeople know that asking focused questions engages 100% of the decision maker's attention. Giving a speech or monologue is significantly less effective. Be ready with questions that demonstrate your knowledge of the company, the function (Sales & Marketing, Finance, Operations, IT etc.) and industry trends. Integrate your knowledge, experience and concrete examples of achievements into your questions and brief comments.

During the job search, you are the "product" and the hiring authority is the potential "buyer." And, as successful management consultants know, the first contact with a prospective client is critical. The senior executive of the company is in the driver's seat. She can retain the consultant for a large-dollar amount of work, pare the contract down to just a small fraction of the amount approved, or award the contract to someone else. To land the highest-dollar contract, the consultant must establish rapport and convince the decision maker of the value they have to offer.

Similarly, in order to make the sale, a good consultative salesperson must establish rapport within the first few minutes, show interest in the challenges facing both company and the executive, and create a collaborative environment for problem-solving.

If you follow the following two steps before your job interview, you will be better able to engage the hiring authority in a discussion about the value you could bring to the company:

1. **Write and memorize a 60-second self-introduction:** State your area of expertise, give 1-3 examples of your greatest achievements, convey the value you bring to an organization and communicate your "candidate differentiators." Position yourself as someone with the abilities and experience to create solutions to one or more of an organization's problems or challenges.
2. **Be ready with talking points:** Growing out of the thorough research you have done on the target company, develop two to five specific proposals about ways in which you could add value to the company. To do this, you need to:

Uncover the "pain"

What is the "gap" between where the decision-maker is and where he wants to be? Within the larger picture of the corporation's situation, can you tell where the self-interest of the individual lies? Is productivity in his function down? Is shareholder value down and a report to the board due shortly? Is a new merger threatening his job unless innovation and value can be demonstrated? Address the "pain" and the "gap" the decision-maker might be experiencing. Position yourself as someone with solutions. The following exercise will help you clarify your message:

<p>Do a SWOT Analysis. What are the company's...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Strengths? — Weaknesses? — Opportunities? — Threats? 	<p>Ask yourself: how can I help...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — increase revenues? — cut costs? — innovate? — streamline operations? — create efficiencies? — solve problems? — mitigate risk?
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Note on TONE

So much of successful relationship building in an interview is based on your ability to express your thoughts and your credentials while maintaining a delicate balance between humility and arrogance. Be prepared to pay close attention to the hiring authority's needs and verbal or nonverbal cues as to how he/she is reacting to you. Adjust your approach mid-stream if necessary to respond to the real concerns and interests of your contact. By maintaining a focus on getting results for the company, you can present your ideas and credentials in a way that is less about you and more about benefits to the organization. Keep the focus on what you believe are the concerns of the executive (high turnover, declining profitability, etc.). Successful consultants and consultative salespeople are alert to the shifting dynamics of a sales meeting and handle them with finesse. Adapt as necessary to reach your goal!

If you are able to successfully communicate what you bring to the table while positioning yourself as someone who can "ease the pain," you will be making it easy for a hiring authority to offer you the job!

JEAN CUMMINGS, M.A.T., CPRW, CEIP
 President, A RESUME FOR TODAY

~~~~~  
 Leading-Edge Strategies for Tomorrow's Tech Careers  
 ~~~~~

www.AResumeForToday.com
careers@AResumeForToday.com

Concord, MA: 978-371-9266

Toll-Free: 800-324-1699

E-fax: 978-964-0529

99.99% client satisfaction rate for more than 10 years