

A Great Interview Gets The Job Done!

by Steve Blair

Interviewing can be a daunting task, nerve-racking and hard to get through, but it doesn't have to be. There are great tools that can dramatically change the process of an interview, and more importantly, the outcome. The best part? They're free! In fact, start off by equating your interview to a great speech, and you're already on your way.

The Susquehanna Valley's own, Dr. Dilip Abayasekara weighs in on the interviewing process and provides great insight into the two fundamental (and free) tools that every interviewee should be equipped with – preparation and performance. And rest assured that Dr. Abayasekara knows exactly what he's talking about, he's been coaching business executives and working professionals for more than 15 years.

In addition to being an executive speech coach, inspirational speaker, former chemist and past President of Toastmasters International, Dr. Abayasekara has also developed a method to ensure success when interviewing by way of preparation and performance. And let's be real, in this economy, any advice that promises success is well worth the time and consideration of anyone scheduled to showcase their talents in a one-on-one. Today's job market is competitive and saturated, and employers realize that they can have the cream of the crop when it comes to potential employees. But with the doc's advice, you'll be ready and employers will take notice.

Preparation

Always be prepared. That means clean up and update. You can Google the heck out of the company you're going to interview for, but technology works both ways. Make sure to update social networking sites like LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, to reflect you in the best possible manner. While there, check to ensure that your personal profile information is accurate.

The next may seem obvious but it's a great

reminder: research as much as you can about the company for which you'll be interviewing. Go over the job description and interview format, if available. Remember, a great way to stick out is by being confident. Review the company's mission, vision, core values, products, services, company culture and employees. A lot of that information is available directly on the company's website, but if not, look for the company's annual reports or brochures – try Google, or even call and speak to someone in the HR department.

A few days before the interview, try Dr. Abayasekara "Six R's" proven effective method for interviewing:

1. **wRite:** Create a Q & A script. Think of every imaginable question, easy and hard, write them down and answer each to the best of your ability. Study it carefully, and carry it with you for spare moments prior to the interview.
2. **Rehearse:** Read your handy Q & A script out loud.
3. **Record:** Record your rehearsals on audio – tape recorder, digital voice recorder and i-Pods all work.
4. **Review:** Play back the audio recording to determine the strengths and weaknesses within your presentation. Hearing yourself makes all the difference.
5. **Revise:** Make changes on your Q & A script that enhance the presentation of your abilities.
6. **Repeat:** Repeat steps 2 through 6 until you are satisfied.

After the Six R's have been completed, the next instrumental step is video feedback. Create a mock interview with you and an interviewer, and videotape it; this is essential to interview success. Ask friends, family members and colleagues for input. The opportunity to see yourself on video affords you a visual of how you appear to others and an opportunity to fine-tune your performance.

Performance

A great interview performance involves presenting a mental attitude that is attractive to a potential employer. Create a positive impression by paying attention to your appearance and body language. And don't forget, be confident; a firm handshake and eye contact will steer you in the right direction. Thereafter, have your abilities, qualifications and recommendations guide you the rest of the way.

Be prepared to ask questions that are valid and relevant. Be honest, open and humble. And if you start to get nervous, just remember, it's only a conversation and we're all human. Calm down and up-sell; you have all the tools to propel you to the end. And, when you get there, be ready to ask the proverbial question. Almost all interviews conclude with an opportunity to ask a question or tell something about your abilities or relevant qualifications that were not mentioned or stressed enough during the interview. Be personal, unique and sincere – those characteristics translate best when trying to appeal to any employer.

Preparation and performance is all it takes. In fact, law enforcement officers, high-level executives and specialized professionals all have Dr. Abayasekara to thank for their paychecks. Be the next success story, go out and get that job!