



"Six Steps to Ace Your Next Interview"

By: Rita Balian Allen, Rita B. Allen Associates, August 2017

Executive Coach, Author, Trainer, Speaker, Leadership Development, Management Training and Career Development Consultant

=====

One of the important meetings we will all have to master throughout all stages of our career is the job interview. Whether it be for a role in a new company, consideration for a different position within our existing company, or a progressive promotional opportunity, we must be comfortable, prepared and able to ace this interview in order to be offered the role we aspire to win. How do we ensure we walk into that meeting with the right mix of skills, stories, presence and confidence to secure that role?

Six Steps to Ace Your Next Interview:

1. Preparation, Preparation, Preparation!

- Do your homework on the organization – visit their website, view news stories, look up their leadership team, talk to people, learn about industry trends, study company accomplishments, look up individuals on LinkedIn who work there; gain as much intel as possible so you are ready to ask and answer relevant questions; have questions to ask prepared and anticipate questions that may be posed to you
- Be knowledgeable of position, required skills and competencies, focus on your relevant experiences and abilities that display and illustrate a compelling reason to differentiate you as the ideal candidate to fill the role
- Conduct your personal due diligence; reflect on your values, strengths, development areas, goals, motivations, interests; know your 'must haves' as well as your 'must tells'; define your personal brand and be able to package it and articulate it; compile a running list of all your accomplishments, take inventory of everything achieved throughout your career, study it well so you are prepared to select the appropriate stories that will allow you to showcase your experiences

2. Tell Stories About Accomplishments, *How* You Will Add Value to Role/Organization

- Storytelling is the best way to showcase your accomplishments; turn your achievements into stories so that you stand out and are memorable; stories capture

the attention of your audience and they emphasize outcomes; clearly articulate what you have to offer and the value you add, ***remember it is not about you but how you can meet their needs***

- It is typically easier to tell a story about what we have done rather than talking about ourselves; most often when we tell a story, we tend to come alive, show enthusiasm and pride as we unfold the events; that enthusiasm comes through authentically
- Follow these three easy steps to tell a story - 1) briefly describe the situation or challenge - set the stage by identifying the issue at hand; 2) outline the specific actions you took to address the issue; 3) share the results achieved - explain the ultimate impact and outcomes achieved

3. Be Goal-Oriented

- Articulate your vision, mission and objectives for your career - be very clear about what you want, the purpose of your career and the things that matter most
- Create short and long term goals for yourself that align with your vision, mission and objectives - write them down and be able to share them; in addition, have a laid out execution plan and criteria for accountability; make a connection to the position
- Most importantly, maintain an openness and flexibility to unexpected opportunities that may present themselves; plan, plan, plan and then go with the flow and show an eagerness to welcome new possibilities and directions

4. Present Your Best Self

- Always be authentic, genuine and sincere; put your best foot forward while staying true to who you are, what you have achieved, and what you want
- Know your differentiators and be able to articulate clearly what they are, what you have to offer and the impact you can have in their organization
- Exude an appropriate level of confidence, positivity and humility; be honest with how you present yourself and let your true self shine through; remember that you are interviewing them just as much as they are interviewing you; finding the right fit within the right culture and team is an important factor to you and to the employer
- Don't hold back and allow yourself to be your best advocate; be proud of yourself and your career and make sure that pride comes through; smile and project eagerness, energy and enthusiasm; last but not least, put a lot of thought into your physical presence, your body language, your posture and eye contact

5. Practice, Practice, Practice!

- Take the time to do some mock interviews, practice your storytelling, listen to yourself ask and answer questions; present your answers in a way that is crisp, clear, concise and comfortable; ensure you highlight relevant experiences that will meet their needs and address areas of importance
- Ask others for feedback on how you are coming across, be open to hearing their suggestions and continue to improve upon your content and delivery; try recording yourself as well as videotaping yourself to assess areas you are strong as well as areas you want to improve upon
- Seek out informational meetings, networking discussions as well as attending business events, all of which allow you more opportunities to practice and hone your interviewing skills

6. Ask For The Job!!

- Be sure to end every interview with the ask - at the end of the interview, if you are interested in the position, let them know you want the job; confirm your level of interest in a simple yet direct manner
- You want to leave the impression that you are qualified and highly interested in the role; leaving it to chance and assuming that they know you are interested or not wanting to come across too strong with your interest are common mistakes that you don't want to make; ***let them know very clearly that you WANT the job!***
- Exude energy, enthusiasm and confidence in your final words with the prospective employer as you leave the meeting; follow up the same day with a written note to thank them for their time and consideration, once again restating your high level of interest in the role; stay connected and check in with them beyond the interview

The interview process can be intimidating and overwhelming, however, when we follow these steps, we empower ourselves to be equipped to do well and move forward with confidence to make a strong impression and land the job! Happy Interviewing!

Rita Balian Allen is the president of Rita B. Allen Associates, a national career management firm specializing in executive coaching, leadership development, management training and career development. She is a lecturer at Boston-area universities, a sought-after speaker and presenter, the author of numerous articles, blogs and the book, "Personal Branding and Marketing Yourself: The Three Ps Marketing Technique as a Guide to Career Empowerment". She is a regular Huffington Post blogger and writes a career management column for Leadership & Management Books. Rita was voted one of the top ten executive coaches by the Boston Women's Business Journal.