

CAREER CONNECTION BY RUTH LEVITSKY

Be prepared for any question in a job interview

It is really possible to be prepared for any question in a job interview? Yes.

How can you prepare if you don't know the question? Most job interview questions follow a pattern. For you, the most important thing is to think about what interests your interviewer. The job is a good fit when there is a meeting of the minds - when the interviewer's interests and yours coincide.

Many books will advise you to memorize answers to the typical interview questions. The interviewer has an agenda: interests; can you do the job; will you do the job; and will you stay? And you have an agenda: interests; can you do the job; and will it be challenging enough to stay?

Category One: Can You Do the Job?

Look over the job description and write down which of the qualifications you have and how you could attain the qualifications you don't have. Write

some sample questions for yourself, along with the answers.

Category Two: Will You Do the Job?

How is your work history? This can be a concern for employers. Your key to doing well on the "will you do the job" type of questions again comes down to thinking about what motivated and inspired you in the past. Write down some of your own questions. If you didn't have such a great work history, be prepared to discuss why you are now motivated and inspired and how your past has provided a foundation for a more solid work future.

Category Three: Will You Stay?

This question is not just about how long you will work for the employer, but whether you have staying power. Kristin Cronin of the Center Speakers Toastmasters club recently did a presentation on customer service, in which she described the "bulldog"

technique. A bulldog is someone who makes sure things happen when they should happen. Bulldogs are rare employees and very valuable.

When you take the time to answer these questions, you will be prepared for the questions your future employers will ask you. Also, by answering these questions, you'll have a better idea of the types of jobs you should apply for in the first place.

Now practice saying your answers out loud. Practicing out loud is important! The ideal you are reaching for is your best, relaxed self. Team up with a partner to ask you the questions and then you answer them. The more relaxed and conversational you are, the more relaxed and conversational your interviewer will be.

Practice listening, too. Don't jump right in to answer the question. Pause and think about it. Never interrupt the interviewer. Good communication skills

involve both speaking and listening. For tips on being a more effective communicator, check out www.toastmasters.org. For tips on being a better listener, check out www.listen.org.

Remember what your goal is: to obtain the job that is right for you. Carefully consider what you want, what jobs you should apply for and then be prepared.

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