

Questions You Need to NAIL!

I've had some feedback about delivering "canned" or "memorized" answers and I'd like to address that before we get into our next question. The simple answer is *under no circumstances should you ever give a "canned" answer*. Interviewers will pick that up in a heartbeat. What you do need to do though, is prepare for your interview and understand the concepts of what interviewers are looking for. The only difference between this and some other tests you have taken is that you will be judged instantly by your verbal answers, unlike in a written test where you may be able to think or make scratch notes before you come up with the right answer.

Personally, once I have completed an assignment, I store it away in my brain and wait for the next one. I will have full confidence that I can repeat the assignment but with so much going on in my life and my brain, my memory recall to respond to a question if asked, isn't always the best. Describing it without forethought could be a challenge for me so it's important for me that I prepare for every interview or presentation thoroughly. It's just the way my brain is hard wired.

Some of my clients are wired differently and can respond to any question instantly and have amazing memory recall. I am in awe of them when we are conducting mock interviews. If you are one of those people, you have a gift and I would say are in the minority. I envy you!

With business changing so rapidly, the need for talent is almost instantaneous. Finding the right skill set and fit for the organization is also critical. Interviewers have typically short turnaround times to fill a vacancy before it impacts the organization. Also, they are typically juggling multiple vacancies. They will ask questions you may not think of such as the ones we are covering here so I encourage you to use the information in these newsletters to find your style, think about the questions and develop your own questions as extensions of these. Not only will you gain confidence but you will also learn a lot more about yourself as well.

This week we are covering ***"What's the toughest decision you've ever had to make?"*** In last week's newsletter we covered the three part question of 1) setting the scene, 2) your actions and 3) what the outcome or result was. This statement is called a SAR statement – situation, action, result. Most questions you respond to should be in this format so an interviewer can clearly see how you contribute to an organization.

To answer this question you will have to be prepared for sure in your SAR format.

- S) To begin, explain the situation and why it was difficult for you
- A) The actions you took, the process you followed and the effective or courageous way you carried it out.
- R) Describe what the beneficial result was for you.

An example:

- S) I was let go from my job (after 20 years) in the printing industry during the recession. As the sole income earner in my family, I knew finding another job with a similar income would be next to impossible.
- A) I reviewed what I was good at and got some advice and career support on my options for moving forward. I have always been very good at home renovation and enjoy it very much. I decided to start my own business in home renovations and went back to school for my electricians license.
- R) I'm working through my apprenticeship and doing some subcontracting work in home renovations working with a master electrician while completing some jobs independently. Within 2 years my goal is to be fully licensed and be working on my own completely in my own business. It's been a very tough challenge but I'm doing something I love and am able to continue to support my family.

What's your toughest challenge? Spend some quiet time thinking about practice delivering it in the SAR format.

Next week we will cover "Why have you been out of work so long?"