The 3 “Musts” Before Every Interview

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The top three things you should do before an interview are:

Anticipate
Prepare
Practice

As a recruiter and career coach, I cannot emphasize this enough. You got the interview, which means the hiring manager has obviously agreed that you appear to be a fit for the role on paper, and now the interview requires that you back it up in person. If you don’t prepare, you might just negate all the hard work you’ve done on this job search by blowing this opportunity.

I always tell candidates to go into an interview as if the job is the only role you want. Then, it’s ultimately your decision whether to take the job or not. If you seem ambiguous or lack enthusiasm, it will be their decision and their answer will most likely be no. One of the best ways to show your interest and enthusiasm for the position is to prepare: Know the role, the company, and be ready to explain how hiring you is a smart “return on investment” for your prospective employer.

We all know that no one can possibly anticipate every possible interview question. Case in point: I have a client who likes to ask prospective salespeople to “name 10 things you can do with a pencil that doesn’t involve writing or erasing” in under a minute. Obviously, this is not the norm – but there are more standard interview questions that are frequently asked. You should practice concise answers to those common questions, and wherever possible, quantify your achievements.

Some examples might include: “Tell me about yourself,” “Walk me though your resume,” “Why did you leave your last position?” and “Why should we hire you?” Also, “What are your greatest strengths?” “Weaknesses?” “Work accomplishments?” And so on.

You can be sure they will ask you for specific examples of where and when you had the experience they require for the role in question. Since you have the job description, the “role-specific” questions can be anticipated and your answers practiced.

As a recruiter, I look for “strong-fit” resumes and conduct a thorough screening process to confirm the match before presenting them to my client companies. If the company is interested and schedules an interview, I
supply my candidates with a “prep packet” and conduct a mock interview with them before their interview with my client.

It is always disappointing when it is obvious that the candidate has not done the necessary practice and preparation and it is something you simply can’t fake. You only have one chance to make a first impression, so make it count. Prepare and practice. Give yourself the best chance for getting that job offer!