

Developing Targeted Statements.

Load Your C-Drive.

Before you make contact, there's a lot you can do to improve your odds and be more successful in the interview. Remember the parachute story from page six? If you haven't thought about the questions and come up with some answers then you are likely to be under-prepared! You need to:

- Develop your C-Drive.
- Use the 5P system.
- The 4W's.
- The 4R's.
- The 40/40 principle.

Developing your C-Drive

This plus a positive attitude and "prove it" are the most important things to remember. The C Drive on your computer has labelled folders and files enabling you to find things with ease. Your mind needs to be loaded up in the same way with all the positives about you, before you make a two minute telephone call, write a résumé or go for an interview. If it's not in there - you can't retrieve it!

It's too late if you remember the good stuff when you hang up the phone or are in the car on the way home, thinking, "I wish I had said that or told them about...."

If you think they are going to ask you 20 different questions, you need to have three different examples or answers for each. This means 60 bits of information in your C-Drive (brain), before you make contact. By doing this you'll avoid the "I've never done that" or "My mind's gone blank" reactions.

You can pause

Don't feel that you have to answer every question in a nanosecond. You are entitled to pause, draw breath and think. You can say "I'm unsure what it is you're asking for" or "Can you please rephrase the question" or "That's an interesting question. Give me a second to think about that." Any of these will buy you extra seconds to kick-start the brain and retrieve the information.

If you haven't got a clue what they're asking, say so. Sometimes just a simple rephrasing or clarification of the question will enable you to come up with the right answer. Don't be afraid to take control.

N.B. They are not looking for the perfect candidate. What they are looking for is the candidate that shows the greatest potential to add value and grow in the future.

The great thing about Behavioural Based Interviews is that by asking for examples of past performance as an indicator of future potential, they have the opportunity to understand the real you. This is what they are interested in, so it's important you know what you're talking about. If you lie, or they think that you are lying or exaggerating, you'll be asked variations on the question from a number of different directions to ensure that they are getting accurate information. See the following examples:

Q1 – Are you comfortable speaking in public?

A – Yes.

Q2 – Give me an example of when you have spoken to a large group?

A – I delivered the key note speech at this year's conference.

Q3 – Describe the message you were trying to get across and what was the reaction to your speech?

A – Well actually, when I said I delivered the speech, my boss wrote it and I delivered it to him on the day.

Corny, but people sometimes claim ownership of activities or achievements by association. In the telling they elevate themselves to total ownership, whereas they might have played a minor part.

In a basic interview, if they just accept your first answer, you could get away with Q1 & Q2. But as soon as they sense a weakness or lack of ability to substantiate your answers, that's when Behavioural Based Questioning can undo you! Q3 cuts to the heart of the question and answer. Give all the information, or redefine your answer.

N.B. Behavioural Based Interviews are not an interrogation. They give you and the interviewer the opportunity to bring the right information to the surface, making you a more appealing candidate.

Remember the **T.D.G.** that most behavioural based questions revolve around, **T**ell me about – **D**escribe a – **G**ive me an example. Think about this when developing answers and you will be on the right track.

Fact – There's no need to lie in an interview, just load your C-Drive and put value on your activities and achievements. Identify their needs and look for the things you have done that can be translated into meaningful Behavioural Based Statements that meet those needs. You are there to promote yourself in a positive way.

Do I have any skills? Absolutely! What are they?

Work related – Leadership – Time management – Multi task – Negotiation skills.

School – Captain - school/house/sport/debating – No.1 in – Represented in sport/music.

Social work – Community projects – Church – Fund raising.

Extra-curricular – Sport – Music – Drama – Guides – Cadets – Duke of Edinburgh.

Work experience – Via school/university – Part-time work – working in family business.

Personal – Hard working – Reliable – Enthusiastic – Empathetic.

OK, now these can be broken up into two sections being:

Personal Competencies

- Commitment
- Responsibility
- Learn new skills
- Dealing with pressure
- Experience and life skills
- Future direction

Work-Place Competencies

- Information management flow
- Communication skills
- Organisational skills
- Team player/leader
- Problem solving
- Technology savvy

Personal competencies

It's important to create statements and sentences about yourself using positive words and descriptive terms. Words are great little things, so think of them like a pizza. You can have standard pizza or one with the lot that is totally awesome. Remember use descriptive and action words. (Refer to page 56)

Work place competencies

No big deal, you have them. Someone has identified these headings as things that are desirable in an employee and put them into a list called workplace competencies. Here's how to identify them?

Don't limit yourself. Find activities that you can put value on, create transferable skills. There are no rules, but what you choose must describe you in a positive way and be relevant.

Remember that words like **leader, motivated, passionate, communication skills** are just buzz words which everyone uses. It's important that you put these words into context by incorporating them into statements that demonstrate you have these skills.

Remember – Good Behavioural-Based answers are just "Prove It" statements!

Good luck in your next interview, James E Lynch