

Bullet Points: A Painless, Positive Way to Prepare for Interviews

By Julie Desmond

As the economy picks up steam through 2011, so will the hiring. But all the open positions in the world matter very little to someone who goes into an interview unprepared. Improve your interviews and your offers by taking time to prepare prior to every conversation. The Bullet Points system is an easy way to prepare, and will ease those interview jitters, too.

Begin the Bullet Points exercise with a list of typical questions coming directly from your resume or application. Most interviewers will inquire about your reasons for leaving each company up through your last employer; write those down. Add a sentence about what you did in each job and a sentence about why the job on the table is of interest to you.

The next step is easiest if you have a computer, but can be done by hand as well. Copy the job description into a blank document, or use a blank sheet of paper to list the required qualifications of the position. Below each requirement, write a sentence or two about how your experience aligns with the posting. Maybe it asks for a high school diploma and you have your GED; great, write it down.

If the requirements include one or two items which you do not have experience or education in, write down how you expect to succeed without the mandatory skillset. Maybe the position requires excellent verbal communications skills, and you communicate using sign language. **Create an explanation of what resources you will tap into in order to be effective on the job.**

If you start down the bullet points and find you are missing three or more requirements, then you are likely looking at the wrong job description. What motivated you to

apply for this one? And what did a hiring manager see that spurred him or her to call you for an interview?

Spend time thinking through these questions. Do you have parallel experiences that provided good training for this role? Know what you have to offer the company; don't leave them guessing about how you will add value. It is okay in an interview to ask, **"What interested you about my resume or application?"** Expect a similar question from the interviewer, **"What interested you about this position?"**

Addressing each bullet point or requirement within a job description will help you develop a solid understanding of the job and how your skills align with it. You can have some confidence going in knowing, at least generally, what questions you will be asked, and exactly how you will answer.

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