

Career Line

By WILLA STEVENSON

Last week, we began a discussion on INTERVIEW PRESENTATION, critical to the student ready to embark on a job-hunting expedition. Charles Ramsey, Director Of Planning Coordination for New Brunswick's Department of Community Colleges says that a clear pattern of similarities in successful applicants becomes apparent after only a few interviews: "There is a concrete process which, when discovered and used, is extremely effective."

This process has been broken down into five steps, the first two being discussed in the last issue of the Bruns.

Step 1: APPLICATION

Step 2: DRESS

Step 3: An interview is a performance in which you are the star, so act accordingly. Contrary to popular opinion, "just being yourself" is not the appropriate line of action; rather, IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT can begin to put the odds in your favour.

Quite simply, impression management is a matter of controlling the performance and those qualities you wish to exhibit - or the impression you intend to give - during an interview. "Appear to be in control of yourself and the situation without being pushy," advises Mr. Ramsey. "It doesn't pay to be modest when you're in the spotlight. But also remember being aggressive is a plus - being pushy is a definite minus." Put your best foot forward, establish eye contact, and try to appear relaxed - all factors involved in good impression management. Most of all, BE BRIEF: "Don't get your mouth going before your brain - think first when confronted with a tough question," says Mr. Ramsey. "Don't be so brief that you become abrupt, but remember that any interviewer can recognize "B.S." when he hears it!"

Step 4: All aspects of your interview presentation must be geared towards the organization to which you are applying. This is a crucial step, as it indicates not only your interest but also your shrewdness, and can be the turning point on which your interview is hinged.

To begin with, check out the corporate image so that your interview dress will be correspondingly appropriate. Next, find out all you can about the organization and, if possible, the specific job for which you are applying. This knowledge is invaluable, and should be used from the completion of application forms right through to the final interview. Slant your answers according to what you have discovered, and use your knowledge about the corporation to appear informed, ambitious and enthusiastic. Mr. Ramsey adds, "Be prepared to ask some questions yourself based on your discoveries; show you're interested in what you can do for them and not what they can do for you."

Step 5: An interviewer himself, Mr. Ramsey notes that students (along with housewives) often short change themselves when it comes to specifying their skills. "This tendency is unfortunate and misplaced, and is by no means contributory to job hunting success. Be proud of any interests or skills you have, and know how to translate what you know in terms of what you can do." Focus on what you have achieved, no matter how trivial or unspectacular it may seem to you, and relate it to the job you seek. Answer questions by using examples of the experiences you have had, the accomplishments you have made. "Don't philosophize as to what you think the interviewer wants to hear, what the answer should be," proclaims Mr. Ramsey. "Be proud of everything you've done and recognize the importance and usefulness of every skill you possess."

Well there you have it, the five steps to a successful interview. One last tip: BE PREPARED for this stressful situation and practice with a friend. Becoming accustomed to tough questions and quick answers can be just the edge you need. GOOD LUCK!...

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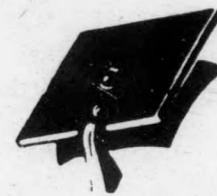
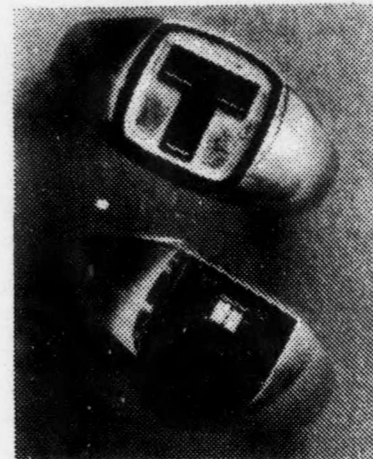
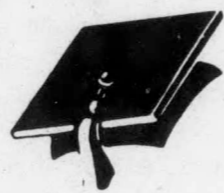
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