



WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 2007

Confidence brings interview success

“Knowing how to interpret and respond to non-verbal cues is just as important as your verbal answer.”
— **BONNIE GROSS**

It's that time of the year when young hopeful grads pound the pavement looking for the perfect job. While the enthusiasm is refreshing, there is always a few mistakes that are made along the way. One of the most common is overestimating how prepared you are for an interview.

While you may have all the right skills on paper, the interview process fills in the blanks for an employer. Bonnie Gross demystifies the job interview process by teaching professional speaking skills and showing people how to project confidence not only in an interview but also in presentations and meetings.

“Your voice is one of your most powerful assets,” says Gross. “Just as your appearance reveals the type of person you are, the way you use your voice can be instrumental in making that critical connection with a potential employer.”

Jessica Shearer graduated in April with a masters of health science from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health from the international health program at the University in Baltimore. She is a Greater Toronto Area native who is looking for work with a non-government organization or aid organization in Toronto, in Canada, or abroad. However, upon completing her education Shearer found it was not enough to land her the ideal job.

“When I finished my masters in April I thought that I would have the specialized training that I needed to get a job in my field right away,” Shearer says.

She has realized that education alone isn't enough to get the job. It requires more selling to show potential employers what she can contribute to their organization.

Gross says the most important factor in a job interview is getting across to the employer that you have all the skills they require.

“Above all else, you must communicate that you have the skills, competencies and work ethic that the interviewer is looking for. You must project confidence with your voice, enthusiasm for the job and the company, and have a pleasant personality. The job interview is about selling yourself.”

Interviews not only requires verbal skills but many non-verbal skills which the employers are equally interested in gauging as Shearer recently discovered.

“I do think that I am a good communicator, especially in person. I recently did an over-the-phone interviewer which I found difficult,” admits Shearer. “Getting my message and my personality across without the use of non-verbal communication was harder than I expected, but more than that, I found it was really difficult to gauge the reaction of the interviewer without being able to feed off of her body (language.)”

Gross agrees that non-verbal cues are vital to your overall performance.

“Knowing how to interpret and respond to non-verbal cues is just as important as your verbal answer,” she says. “Smiling at the interviewer and making eye contact shows that you are interested and engaged during the interview. Be sure to sit back in your seat, hold your head high and lean forward slightly — this will ensure you look professional and give the appearance that you are interested in what the interviewer has to say.”

Next week, Gross tells us which four questions you should be prepared to answer in every interview are and the most common mistakes interviewees make.