Preparing for interviews – 3 top tips

How do you differentiate yourself from all the other competent candidates you are competing with for limited promotion opportunities?

The **bad** news is that very capable people often don’t do themselves justice. That includes on CVs and job applications as well as in interviews.

The **good** news is that there are some practical things you can do in advance to greatly increase your chances of making a positive impact on an interview panel…

1) Inhabit the role you aspire to

1. Imagine yourself in the role and describe what you see from the inside looking out rather than from the outside looking over/up. If you can see yourself in the role it is more likely that the interviewers will be able to as well.
2. Use declarative rather than tentative language. Be able to describe your vision for what you would want to achieve in this role, and what you see as the key challenges.
3. This positive frame of mind will convey a level of confidence which is reassuring to interviewers.

2) Take responsibility for getting your story across

1. Don’t leave it to the panel to draw out your story - have a clear and coherent narrative about why you are the right person for this role. Convey your strengths and attributes (your ‘brand’) in a matter-of-fact way.
2. You know what the questions are going to be about - use each one to build up a coherent picture of your fitness that differentiates you from others. Practise your answers with a mentor or colleague, and use their feedback to hone your story.
3. Have strong, relevant examples and back up every assertion with evidence. Don’t just talk about what you did – talk about the result/outcome and the difference you made.

3) Hand it to them on a plate!

1. Make the implicit explicit! Rather than simply giving an example (however good) tell your audience what this illustrates about your skills and abilities.
2. Demonstrate how transferable these skills and experiences are to the role you are interviewing for. Show how the past relates to the future and translate the specific examples into generic qualities, insights and behaviours: “This example demonstrates my ability to…” “From this I learned…”
3. Help your audience to join the dots - make everything you say relevant to the role you are interviewing for.