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Your Line ONLINE

This week's unscientific poll: How do you prepare for job interviews?

There were no incorrect answers among this week's poll choices. After all, every jobseeker should be preparing for an interview by researching the company, doing mock interviews with family and friends, making sure résumés are updated and reviewing personal appearance.

Once those basics have been mastered, it's time to think about preparation that might not seem so routine.

Ann Kelleher, owner and president of Integrity Staffing in Omaha, offered several suggestions for enhancing yourself as a quality job candidate.

“Be ready to describe your character strengths and give specific examples,” Kelleher says. “Character strengths can include words and phrases such as hard worker, task driven, conscientious and detail-focused.”

Also, she says, try to use the pronoun “I” rather than saying “we” when you describe your past accomplishments at work.

“Midwesterners have a tendency to feel like they are bragging when they focus on themselves. Stop and think about it; you want to be remembered after the interview is over.”

Another of Kelleher's essential tips: When the interviewer asks you to describe your interactions in a previous job, avoid downgrading another person or a company.

“Talk about any negative past work experiences in a positive light,” she says. “Emphasize how the experience taught you an important lesson or was constructive in your professional development.”

And, she notes, the jobseeker's work is not done once the interview is over. It's very important to immediately send a handwritten thank-you note (if it's a position in information technology, an e-mail may be more appropriate).

“In addition to being polite,” she says, “this gives you an opportunity to touch on something you forgot to say in the interview or expand on a topic you discussed.”