



## Cathy Alfandre's E-Letter

*Create greater joy and fulfillment in your working life.*

March 2006

### **Greetings!**

"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find that the harder I work, the more I have of it."  
-- Thomas Jefferson

### ***Taking Time to Prepare***

Years ago, when I was on the New York State Lt. Governor's staff, two of my responsibilities were "briefings" and "advance" work. Prior to a scheduled meeting or speech, I often had to prepare a briefing for the Lt. Governor with key information about the event, the host, the audience, the issues they were concerned about, and so on. My advance work also required me to scope out the location, the entry and exit, the podium, the seating arrangements, and anything else I could find out ahead of time.

Later in life, I realized: What's good for the Lt. Governor is good for the rest of us! Whether it's a personal or work-related matter, there are so many situations where advance research and preparation can be invaluable — such as prior to conversations with health care professionals, before traveling, ahead of important client meetings, before entering a new business partnership, and (as I've seen so much in my current role) before interviews. Even with preparation, of course, things can go wrong, and unexpected surprises can still — and often do — happen. But how much of any given meeting is truly unexpected stuff? 20%? 30%? Meanwhile, advance thinking and preparation give you a leg up on the other 70-80%.

Good preparation — for an interview, for example — involves pushing the limits a little bit in the way that you do your research. It helps to ask questions like: How would a detective get more information? Where might I go to dig beneath the surface, probe beyond common knowledge? Who might be able to give me "insider" information? Who can connect me with current employees or customers of the organization? Rich understanding and insight emerge from a positive, even joyful, spirit of inquiry and curiosity.

Whatever the situation, the biggest challenge is usually setting aside the time to do the research. But that investment of time converts to great payoff later. The ultimate benefits are tangible things like successful projects, productive meetings, and job offers, made possible by intangibles like a greater ease in connecting with people, greater capacity to respond flexibly to circumstances, less nervousness about the unknown, and more confidence in what you know and how you present yourself.

So, here's a question for you this spring: What do you have coming up that would benefit from spending some focused time on preparation?

All the best until next time,

Cathy

### ***Recommended Reading***

For a common-sense, yet out-of-the-ordinary take on interviewing, check out [Ask the Headhunter](#), by Nick A. Corcodilos (1997). Building on his many years of advising candidates as an executive recruiter, Corcodilos presents a clear and simple message demonstrate to the hiring manager that you can do the job — right there in the interview. Everything in the book — from how you prepare, to how you handle the interview, to how you negotiate your salary — flows from this basic premise. While it is oriented toward those seeking corporate positions, the book will be useful to anyone who seeks to broaden his/her perspective on how to interview successfully.

### ***"Acing the Interview" Seminars Next Week***

If you're interested in interview preparation, there's still time to enroll in an upcoming session. The two-hour seminar focuses on specific techniques you can use before, during, and after the interview to boost your confidence and your results!

Trumbull, CT: **Thursday, March 30**, 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Greenwich, CT: **Saturday, April 1**, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon

Please visit [Current Happenings](#) for more information about location, price, and registration.

This bi-monthly e-letter is intended to offer ideas, tips, resources, and questions to ponder on careers, fulfilling work, and career-life decisions. I welcome your reactions and your suggestions for future topics.

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