

Job Search Strategies and Resources: When to Disclose

PERSONAL BRANDING

Seeing oneself as a commodity, not in a crass or crude commercial way, but in terms of *branding*.

If the world can come to know . . .



Surely, the professional persona which must be fashioned to replace the student persona, on which so much money and time is spent, can be valued as much as a running shoe!

Dr. Faisal Saeed, Senior Manager in Enterprise Analytics at BMO Financial Group, says, "What people say about you when you are not there: that is your *brand*."

WHEN TO DISCLOSE

- Federally regulated employers are audited to ascertain that they are proactively seeking to fulfill minority hiring needs. In such cases, it may be in your best interest to disclose.
- Complex issue. You may, for instance, self-accommodate, and therefore not wish to disclose.
- Disclosure, if you need accommodation at the application (for instance, some employers may require some sort of testing) or interview stage, may be appropriate.
- Disclosure on an application may be premature; confer with your medical provider; if you do not need accommodation there may be no reason the company needs to know of your disability.
- Be mindful that companies are legally obligated to accommodate to the edge of "undue hardship," defined: unless the accommodation required is financially debilitating to the enterprise, there is an obligation to accommodate. (Trevor Snow and Michelle Pandith, WESP; and Nirav Patel, Manager, Human Resources, Ontario Power Generation)

THE APPLICATION AND THE INTERVIEW

- Read the job description carefully, research the company, have your cover letters and résumés mirror their requirements.
- Key-Word software, by the by, is old school; companies are now using a filter questioning approach. These generally come some time before the actual on-line application:
- E.g. – Do you have a BFA? Have you exhibited work?
- Those, by now, ubiquitous behaviour questions reflect employers' belief that past behaviour predicts how prospective employees will react to current challenges. When responding to such questions, you should take a deep breath, relax, and try to convey to your audience:
 - An example that is applicable to the context of the interview . . .
 - What the outcome was . . .

- What you learned from the outcome.
- E.g. –
 - Tell us about a time you had to tell someone something that they didn't really want to hear. (Trying to get at how you handle conflict.)
 - How you handled having to tell someone who was not proficient in your language some complex information. (Getting at how well you communicate, listen.)
 - Tell us about a project you were involved in that hit a real stumbling block. (How you approach planning.)
- Take a pad and pencil with you, particularly if you are shy or nervous. Let your audience know that you are a visual person and, if it is okay with them, you would like to take some notes during the interview. You might add that you'd be happy to leave the notes with them at the end of the interview.
- Employers asking for names of references before an interview should be questioned. Why would they want those names prior to speaking with you? This would not be normal protocol. You might want to take the names of your references (having gotten prior permission from them), as well as extra copies of your résumé, with you to the interview.
(Nirav Patel (Manager, Human Resources, Ontario Power Generation))