If you are currently in a job search chances are you've been asked that question already. Undoubtedly, it is the most feared interview question, but one of the most common. It pays to be ready to answer it. Helps to understand that the question is an invitation for you to sell yourself. This is a good thing. No one is going to hire you until they have been sold on you. This is your chance to state your value to the prospective employer. The best way to answer this question is to prepare for it like a sales person. There are three steps to selling yourself with confidence.

1. Know your product “YOU.”

Every successful salesperson knows their product inside and out. They understand the benefits of each product feature. In like manner, you must be able to articulate your transferable skills. First, take inventory of your skills. Make sure the skills you focus on are in demand for the position you seek. Next, take stock of the times of crisis when you've used those skills to solve problems. Finally, ask yourself what your employer got out of your successes on the job. Did you save time or money, increase revenue, improve service or increase productivity? Your success stories carry more weight when you can quantify the results. These success stories make up your selling points.

2. Know the challenges of the position.

Before you can tell them why they should hire you, you must understand their current challenges. After all, you couldn't sell a car unless you knew understood how it was to be used. Until you know what challenges go with the position you won't know which of your selling points to talk about. To learn about their challenges you must ask them.

In the beginning of the interview ask your interviewer, “What challenges do you see as most significant for this position in the first six months?” Take careful note of his/her response. You will learn the “hot button” issues that you must sell you.

3. Match your skills to their challenges.

Here is where you get to sell yourself. Once you understand the critical skills they need for the job you simply share with them your success stories of when you have faced similar problems and how you solved them. Be sure to include the all-important benefit your company received. Start off your value statements with phrases like:

“I found a significant savings opportunity when...”
“My team gained efficiency when I discovered how to...”

“My boss achieved his quarterly objective when I...”

Remember, even if you don't get asked “why should we hire you” it is the underlying question and the point of the whole interview. Job interviews are your chance to sell your skills, talents and expertise. Before your next interview practice good salesmanship and prepare to sell yourself like a pro.