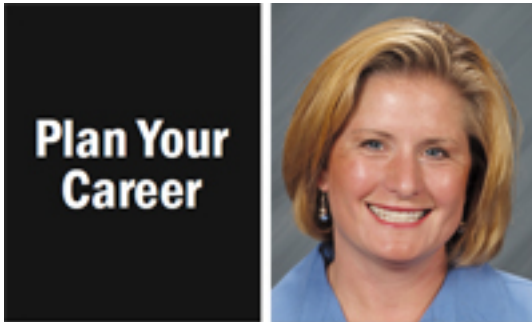


## How to prepare for almost anything

Written by Julie Desmond

Thursday, 03 February 2011 16:16

---



**By Julie Desmond**  
[julie@insightnews.com](mailto:julie@insightnews.com)

If tomorrow's calendar says job interview, sales meeting, big game or major presentation, giving a toast or initiating a tough conversation, then the cold sweats that wake you up tonight are not going to make tomorrow go more smoothly. It's just nerves. Nerves are a normal part of anticipating something important coming up. However, it should be only that – a part of what you are feeling – not a paralyzing, sleep-stealing obstacle that keeps you from succeeding on the big day. The antidote to nerves is the Three Point Strategy, a way to prepare by looking at your situation from three points of perspective.

Point One is knowing about the past. What happened leading up to this situation? Using a job interview as an example, prepare information about your job history. In addition, discover one thing about the company's history. Use a variety of research tools to gather details: blogs, phone calls to friends, newspaper articles. Find out where your interviewer worked before coming to this company and decide where all these pieces intersect. How did we get here?

The Past Point is also helpful when giving presentations. What makes you the best person to present this speech or teach this course? Look to the past, too, for some novel opening comments when giving a toast or introducing someone to a group.

Point Two is about the Present. Our current situation is what? When the Packers and the Steelers prepare for the biggest game of the season, they will look at film of past games, but will focus considerable attention on the current situation, as well. Who is hurt? What impact will that have on our game? On theirs? In a job interview, knowing what situation the company is in presently will drive the conversation; it will dictate what questions the job seeker should ask, and illuminate best ways to answer the questions an interviewer is likely to put on the table.

Point Three, you guessed it, is about the Future. Where do you want to go? What goals do you have for the outcome of this meeting, this game, this presentation, this toast? Imagine a variety of possible outcome scenarios and prepare for the ones that seem most viable. If you are working with a sales team, you might expect that today's training will increase sales. How will that play out for your salespeople, for the company and for your customers?

In an interview situation, you will want to be armed with insight about where the industry might be headed. Use that information when asked where you want to be in five years. Rather than saying you want to be running this company, refer to where the industry is headed, and how

## How to prepare for almost anything

Written by Julie Desmond

Thursday, 03 February 2011 16:16

---

that might impact your career goals and the future of the organization.

If you fully prepare, you will be able to sleep right through the night, and be refreshed and ready for (almost) anything you're facing.

Julie Desmond is a contract specialist with Specialized Recruiting Group in Minneapolis. Write to [julie@insightnews.com](mailto:julie@insightnews.com).