

The First 60 Seconds: Win the Interview Before It Even Begins

Dan Burns

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Many job seekers agonize over their resumé and spend a lot of time making sure it effectively presents their background and experience. But how many spend sufficient time truly preparing for a job interview? Dan Burns book helps readers do just that, and it offers some strategies that are especially relevant in tough economic times.

Burns indeed discusses “the first 60 seconds”—the period of time when the interviewer “will make a decisive qualification” of the interviewee. Burns says three things are critical: the “first look” (the interviewees appearance), the greeting, and the personal connection the prospective employee develops with the interviewer.

Burns goes much further than sixty seconds, however; he counsels the job seeker on a sixty-day plan that should precede the interview. In a practical and methodical approach, Burns leads the reader through the process of assessing the job market, preparing a company profile, creating a job profile, and structuring a personal profile and credentials. He also offers advice on communicating with a prospective company before and after an interview, and preparing for the interview itself.

*The First 60 Seconds** has a hidden benefit as well. While the books primary objective is to prepare the reader for an interview, Burns offers a bonus section: “Your 60-Month Career Plan.” This section goes a considerable step further than conventional job-seeking books; the author makes the point that no one should get too comfortable in any position, and that establishing a long-term career goal is as important as securing a job.

The overall message of the book is that resumé and job interviews are only part of the process—the real challenge is for the job seeker to use these tools, along with other techniques, to achieve differentiation, or as Burns says, “[to make] a focused and concerted effort to surpass what is normally expected.” In addition to well-written text, the book offers a wealth of forms, checklists, and worksheets, including templates for rsums, submission tracking, pre- and post-interview letters, and acceptance letters. In short, Burns covers all the bases. The reader who uses *The First 60 Seconds** as a step-by-step guidebook is likely to successfully differentiate him- or herself from the competition and, as a result, stand out as the best candidate for an appropriate position.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (July / August 2009)

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