

The truth about interviewing

Part one of this article runs today. See part two in the April 9 issue of The Rebel Yell.

"But it seemed to go so well! We talked about everything... campus life... the weather... the football season. I just don't understand why I got a rejection letter..."

Beware the interview that gets too chummy. It may be that the interviewer has already decided to take a pass and in simple politeness passes the remaining time talking about everything but you.

The truth about interviewing is that most initial interviews only last about five minutes. Oh, sure, the actual interview always takes longer than that. Thirty minutes. Forty-five minutes. Sometimes even an hour. But the interview is typically over in just five minutes.

If you have not impressed the interviewer by the five minute point that you are the right person for the job (or at least a contender that should be taken to the next level), it will be next to impossible to recover. Recoveries do happen. But they are also very rare.

In that first five minutes of the interview, I will have noted many critical aspects of your background. Your dress. Your grooming. Your handshake. Your personal presence. Your eye contact. Your articulation. And, most importantly, your personality.

Notice that I didn't mention anything about your coursework, your GPA, or your work experience. That's what got you to the interview in the first place. But it's all of the "soft factors" that will take you to the next level.

Don't get me wrong. Having taken the right courses, having good grades (critical!), and having related work experience are all important selection criteria. But they don't matter one iota if you're not a strong personal fit for our company.



The truth is that most interviewers are seeking individuals who are able to personally present themselves well in a face-to-face interview. They are seeking to recommend those who will be a good reflection upon themselves and their selectivity.

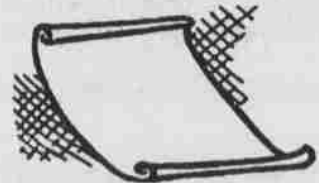
So most interviewers naturally gravitate to specific "success factors" that have worked for them consistently. Although they may vary somewhat from company to company, there are threads common to all employees:

Dress and grooming — The interview is not the time to make a personal fashion statement. The best interview dress is that which is least noticed. Conservative dress will allow the interviewer to focus on you, not what you're wearing. And remember that campus fashion is usually quite different from the work world. Keep it neat and simple.

Personal presence — How you present yourself by your personal presence is critical to interview success. This includes all of the "non-verbals" and other body language cues we give during the course of the interview. This is an especially difficult area for self-assessment, since we are typically unaware of our own quirks.

The sure cure for upgrading your personal presence is to conduct a mock interview (either with a counselor at your campus career placement center or with a trusted friend) in which you ask them to focus on your non-verbal body language. But be prepared for some shockers to be brought to light. Always better to hear from them (who will tell you as it is) than from me (who will only send you a rejection letter).

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PASTAFARIAN: MCCOOL SERVES SPAGHETTI AND FUN SLICE OF LIFE

BY KAREEN HALE

CONTRIBUTING FEATURES WRITER

He once served eggnog to General Norman Schwarzkopf while wearing a Santa Claus suit. Today he serves a mean fettucine Alfredo to UNLV students in the Union Cafe while he wears an apron with a logo that says "The Love of Food."

Barry McCool definitely stands out — or more appropriately, up — at a lofty 6-foot-5-inches. But once he begins to talk, McCool's height is the least of his stand-out qualities.

McCool left high school, joined the Marine Corps and served two tours in Vietnam as a sergeant. He returned in 1969 and began college, first at San Diego State University and then at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minn., where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in microbiology/bacteriology.

While working on a post-graduate degree in ecology, McCool was sought out by the Navy to become a pilot.

"They were taking a lot of hits in Vietnam in the early 70s and they needed replacements," McCool recalls, "so I had to make a decision: Did I want to go to medical school or did I want to immediately start earning a living as a Naval officer? I chose to be a Naval officer and it was a great career."

That career spanned 16 years with assignments that included the USS Kittyhawk and the USS Enterprise, amongst other aircraft carriers from coast to coast.

In his final tour of duty he was J-1 personnel officer under "Norm" Schwarzkopf, as McCool refers to the general, at U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla.

As personnel officer, an administrative position in nature, his duties included coordinating the change of command between Gen. George Christ, the Marine's four-star general, and Schwarzkopf. McCool retired in 1990, shortly before the Persian gulf conflict began.

So what's McCool's connection to UNLV?

You'll find her at the College of Hotel Administration. McCool's wife, Dr. Audrey McCool, is a professor in food and beverage management.

Shortly after his retirement Audrey McCool was offered

the position at the hotel college. "That portion of my career (military) had ended and now I could support her career. She'd supported mine for 22 years. So we came out here," McCool said.

Once in Las Vegas, McCool began his second career as a general manager for the Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises. During his six-year tenure, he managed stores on East Tropicana Avenue, South Rainbow Boulevard and North Las Vegas Boulevard.

When KFC down-sized, McCool's duties expanded. Along with running his restaurants he served as chief of security for KFC stores citywide, taking charge of all safes and security accesses. With his added responsibilities McCool says 100-hour, high-stress work weeks became common.

He began looking for other opportunities when the Veterans Administration notified him of 36 educational credits he had accrued. He was told they would expire if he didn't use them soon. "So I made another career decision to go back to school and get another degree," he said.

McCool began working on a second bachelor's degree at UNLV, this time in business management. "I would like to graduate in two years and immediately start in on a master's program — either an MBA or a master's in recreation," he said. From there he looks forward to a career in the "multi-million dollar business" of sports concessions.

Still don't get the connection between McCool's journey and making pasta in the Union Cafe? That's okay, because there is none — he just likes doing it. When students requested that pasta be served in the cafe, McCool volunteered for the job.

On any Tuesday or Thursday, and an occasional Wednesday, from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m., students can choose from a variety of pastas and sauces, creating combinations that put Chef Boyardee to

shame. McCool has added gourmet pastas to the menu, which he hopes to feature each week. One might try his tangy marinara ladeled over tomato-basil mostaccioli. For those with more mellow tastes, sample his lemon-pepper linguine topped with creamy alfredo.

Any good pasta chef has his own sauce, and McCool is no exception. About once a month the cafe features "Barry's Sauce," a base marinara to which McCool adds Italian sausage, bell peppers, mushrooms, Bermuda onions and garlic, and then simmers it all morning prior to the 11:30 a.m. opening. Hungry yet?

"I like the fact that we make things fresh, it's really good quality and it's a good value for your dollar," McCool said. The meal, including a breadstick, costs about \$3.50. McCool likes more than making good food — he makes good friends in his interaction with the students. "I'm doing this for fun," McCool said. "This is recreation for me. I like working with the students."

And they like him. As students stand in line to place their orders, they chat with McCool about school and life in general. At times he's even served a side of advice with his Italian entrees. For example, students who know his background have asked his opinion on careers in the military.

"I am...well, I hate to say 'over the hill' because I don't consider myself as over the hill, but I think I'm a father figure to them," McCool said. "But I'm a student, too, so I'm also one of them."

"It's not like me vs. them; it's like, 'Hey this guy's okay.'"

Barry McCool has led a rich, flavorful life and shares it generously with the students at UNLV — just like his spaghetti sauces.

After all, you are what you eat.

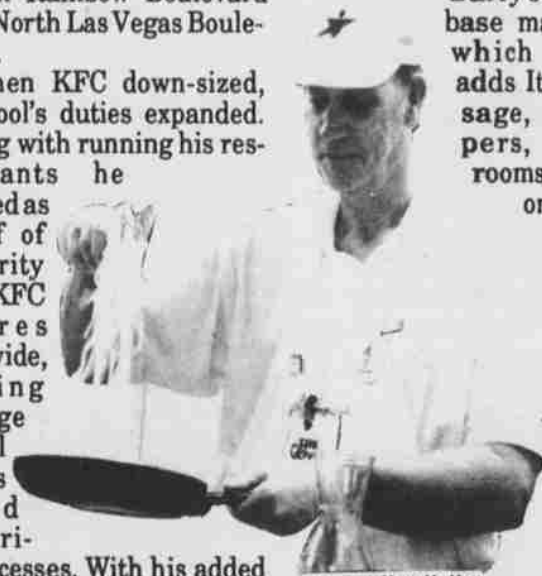
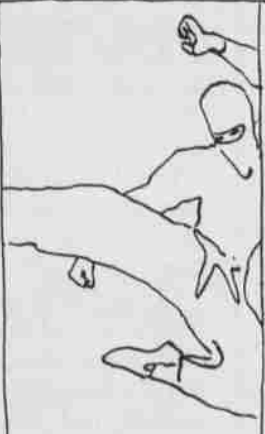


PHOTO BY HYUN-HO HAN

Fabulous Sputnik Man

artist's note: I've been getting some complaints from certain viewers saying that for a Super-hero comic Strip I sure do make a lot of my cartoons 'talkies'. According to some people 'talkies' just are dull and boring and too much like French films. Therefore, I present to you this ninja-happy action-packed update of...

the fabulous sputnik
episode 13
for your enjoyment



well... that was kind of pointless.

fin

BY NICK TIMINSKAS