



The Interview Series: (6) Interview Responses that WORK for You

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The last article in this Interview Series covered the ten most common interview questions and how you could better prepare yourself for answering them. Now, it is time to go one step further. It is time to learn how to make your interview responses work for you.

The purpose of the interview is to prove that you can do the job and add value to the organization. By learning how to carefully craft your interview responses, you will ace your interview and far outshine other candidates. Utilizing the following response tips will allow you to set your nervousness aside and present a much clearer picture of the intelligent, sharp, qualified professional you are.

- **Keep it brief.** Interviews make most people nervous, and when we are nervous, we tend to ramble. Make a mental note to keep your answers short. Though your purpose is to sell yourself, you also want to build rapport with the interviewer, and that is hard to do that when you don't let them get a word in.
- **Stop talking when you have said enough.** Answer the question – period. Only elaborate enough to get your point across. Concise, strong answers are a powerful tool. They demonstrate that you are well-spoken, quick thinker.
- **Make connections for the interviewer.** The interviewer has a list of criteria for the position you are interviewing for, and the purpose of the interview is to see if you fit their picture of the ideal candidate. Make this process as easy on the interviewer as possible. Do not leave it up to him/her to decide whether or not you are qualified. Make direct connections between your experience and the role you are interviewing for.
- **Listen carefully.** Listen to the interviewer. Ensure that you thoroughly understand the whole question. Avoid thinking of your answer while the interviewer is still talking. People can tell when you are not listening. Nod your head in agreement and make eye contact to demonstrate that you are really hearing what he/she is saying. After the interviewer is through talking, then take a moment to collect your thoughts before speaking. You would rather present a meaningful, complete answer to the whole question than a mediocre rambling one to only part of the question.
- **Don't be modest.** Most people feel uncomfortable talking about their accomplishments or strong skill sets – don't. This is your chance to show through your accomplishments and experiences that you are the best fit for the role and you can add value to the company. How is the interviewer supposed to know that you are a stellar candidate? Don't expect an interviewer to assume that you are qualified; tell them you are.
- **Don't exaggerate.** Never stretch the truth. You wouldn't want to put yourself in an awkward position later on down the line when you are asked to do something you supposedly know how to do. Also, you have most likely given the prospective employer a list of your references. They will check them, and these discrepancies may be uncovered.
- **Talk in concrete terms.** Give specific examples. Demonstrate that you can do the job by explaining how your past experience correlates with the position in question.
- **Never defend or argue a view.** Remember, interviews are highly subjective. The interviewer will not offer the job to the best candidate based on merit alone, but rather offers the position to



the most qualified person whom he/she likes best. If an interviewer disagrees with your opinion, don't let your ego get the best of you. Gracefully let it go and change the subject. Arguing with the interviewer could be your one-way ticket to the cut list.

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