

Six Ways You Need to Sell Yourself in Every Job Interview

By Charles Purdy, Monster Senior Editor

Every job interview is different -- but some general principles can guide you in just about any interview, for any job. When you're talking about yourself and your experience, keep the following six points in mind.

1. Be the Solution

Companies fill or create positions because they have problems they want to solve -- for instance, ineffective advertising or long customer-service lines. So prepare for an interview by identifying the problems hinted at in the job ad. (If there's no job ad, research the company and industry.) Then, [prepare examples](#) detailing how you'll solve those problems -- and how you've solved similar problems in the past. Practice telling stories about specific results you've achieved.

And if you're [interviewing for a career change](#), keep in mind that many problems -- such as a lack of effective project management or a breakdown of teamwork -- are not industry-specific. Offering solutions to these problems is a great way to overcome a lack of directly applicable experience.

2. Be Specific

Avoid empty clichés. Be prepared to back up your claims about your [skills](#) or characteristics with relevant and specific stories. For example, don't just say you "work well with others" -- talk about the types of teams you've worked with and what you've learned from them. Or if you plan to say you're "detail-oriented," come to the interview prepared with a story about how your attention to detail saved a former employer money (or otherwise saved the day).

3. Prepare Sound Bites

Prepare three or four effective sound bites that highlight your skills and past successes. A sound bite is succinct and direct, so it's catchy and easy to remember -- for example, "I've designed logos for three Fortune 500 companies" or "My efficiency plan decreased product-delivery times by 15 percent without costing the company a cent."

When you're coming up with your sound bites, ask yourself, "What were my greatest [accomplishments](#) at my most recent job?" and "What sets me apart from other candidates?"

4. Prepare to Talk About Your Resume

Your resume and cover letter will likely form an outline for at least part of your interview. Because a resume has to be brief, it probably says many things that could be elaborated on or explained in more detail. Often a resume explains the "what" (for

instance, "supervised two people"). Use the interview to talk about the "how," as well as skills you gained, praise you received and so on.

5. Be Aware of Nonverbal Communication

You say a lot about yourself with **nonverbal language**: your posture and your facial expressions, for instance. Sit up straight -- leaning forward can make you seem closed off, as can holding a briefcase or purse in your lap. Maintain eye contact when answering **interview questions**, and smile frequently. Also, practice your **handshake** with a friend: An overly aggressive handshake can be as off-putting as a limp one.

6. Be Positive

Avoid complaining about a former employer or laying blame at a former manager's feet -- doing so will likely make you seem difficult to work with (or disloyal). Even if you quit your last job in a rage because you had an **incompetent manager**, saying something like "I felt I was ready for a more challenging position -- like this one seems to be" turns a potentially interview-killing situation into something that makes you look very attractive to a hiring manager.

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