

# Six Ways You Need to Sell Yourself in Every Job Interview

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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.