

Top Interviewing Tips Confirmed or Debunked

Interviews provide a unique opportunity to tell your career story, highlight what drives you, demonstrate your knowledge of an organization of interest, and share stories of times you put your relevant skills into action. So how can you do so effectively when there is so much (sometimes conflicting) advice out there about how to ace an interview? Let's walk through three common interviewing tips and talk about their utility.

An interview should be a two-way street: **TRUE**

It can be very easy for the process of interviewing to feel like a sales pitch with you as the product. You want to be seen as knowledgeable, possessing relevant skills, and even liked. But what's missing from that dynamic, is ***what you think about the opportunity, organization, and team culture***. They've decided you are a fit for them. But are they a fit for you? I've often met with students and alumni through career coaching who went into an interview and did a really effective job in pitching themselves, and when they ended up with an offer, felt no closer to understanding if they wanted to accept the position. This often happens ***when candidates don't ask enough questions in the interview to clarify key points that they are factoring into their decision*** about whether or not the opportunity is what they are looking for. While the rise of video interviewing through tools like HireVue don't always give candidates the chance to ask questions during a first round interview, second round interviews should take place with real people and typically end with the interviewer asking if you have any questions for them. Preparing ***at least 3 questions for the interviewer*** about the role, organization, or how current events in the field are impacting their work are a great place to start. In career coaching, I've sometimes heard people say that they felt not having any or only one question showed they felt certain about the role and that demonstrates interest. I'd say the opposite is true. ***Having thoughtful questions demonstrates curiosity, reflectiveness, and intentionality*** in considering if this is truly a match. Employers want candidates who will stick around, and doing your part to assess fit is a good sign that you are a partner in that assessment process.

When asked about a weakness, you should pick a strength and turn it into a weakness: **FALSE**

This is a common misconception, and something interviewers have their antennas on alert for. When asking about a weakness, ***it's not a trap***. I repeat - It is not a trap! Interviewers are not trying to trick you into admitting something terrible about yourself. What they are assessing with

this question is **self-awareness**. We ALL have weaknesses and growth areas. If we don't know what ours are, we can't begin to work on them. Responses to this question that interviewers hate to hear include "I'm a perfectionist, I care too much, I work too hard, etc." So how do you approach answering this question authentically and in a way that will set you up for interview success? First, **be truthful**. Take some time to **reflect and take stock on a genuine growth area** for you (as we all have them). Try not to pick something that is a primary skill you need to do the job, but do be truthful and **follow your answer with specific examples of how you have been working to develop in that area** and how you plan to continue that process as well in this potential role.

When talking about your skills, you should show, not tell: **Sort-Of**

In an interview, it is important to **BOTH show AND tell**. A common misstep I often see people make during interviews is to simply list their skills for the interviewer. But couldn't anyone say they are organized? That they have a keen attention to detail? That they are a good communicator? All of these messages become more powerful when **backed up with evidence** of your skills in action. **DO have a clear thesis statement of what skills/strengths you bring to the table**, and state them outright. But **ALSO, plan out what stories (your own personal "best of reel") you can share as examples** of times you put those skills into action. You don't have to (and shouldn't) list every role in which you utilized a skill to demonstrate it. Just pick your top couple of stories and share them. Your response will look something like, "*Through my past professional experiences, I've developed strong communications skills. For example...(tell ONE interesting story).*"

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