

Tip of the Month

4 Things You Absolutely Must Convey by the End of an Interview

There's a lot you can do to prepare for an interview. You can [research the company](#), [try to figure out what questions the hiring manager will ask](#), and—of course—practice. But, in the end, you still might be completely blindsided by how the interview progresses.

Yes, it can be frustrating, but here's the good news: No matter what form your interview takes or how crazy the questions get, you only have to get four key points across by the time you shake hands and head out the door.

1. You'll Start Making an Impact on Day One

If you're able to get the hiring manager to imagine you contributing meaningful work on your first day, you've done well. This is goal number one. To do this, lean on your relevant experience and make a clear connection to the position you're interviewing for.

Good interviewees will talk about how good they were at their most recent job, but an exceptional one will paint a picture of how he or she can be great at this position because of the skills and knowledge acquired at the last one. Connecting the dots makes all the difference.

2. You'll Fit in With the Team (and Not Just Socially)

Fitting in with the team isn't just about being getting along with everyone. So, while you definitely want to be likable, you also don't want to forget to indicate that you know what you're getting into in terms of the actual job—a.k.a, what role you'll play within the current team structure. By making an effort to clearly articulate your understanding of the job, you'll stand out among all the other charming and friendly candidates.

3. You're Enthusiastic About the Job

It's common sense that an excited candidate is almost always better received than one who seems, well, bored. That said, it can be a fine line between enthusiasm and desperation.

Asking questions about every shiny thing that catches your eye in the office will make you seem overeager (and distracted), while [asking thoughtful questions](#) that simultaneously show off your

company research is impressive. Know the difference. Being able to talk about the company, whether in the format of a question or not, will make an impression.

4. You Sparkle

Finally, don't let your attempt to be professional hide too much of your personality. After all, interviewers are looking for candidates who "sparkle" ([more on that here](#)). While you don't want to get so carried away talking about how you biked across Europe that you forget to bring up your more relevant experience, you also don't want to avoid discussing it if the opportunity presents itself.

Chatting about things you're interested isn't just a confidence booster, it makes you a more compelling candidate as well. Everyone loves a little quirkiness.

I recognize this is all easier said than done. You can make it feel more manageable by trying to address at least one of these four points in all of your responses. Everything you say should be helping the hiring manager tick off each of these boxes. And, if one box gets checked more than once, then all the better.

About The Author

Lily Zhang serves as a Career Development Specialist at MIT where she works with a range of students from undergraduates to PhDs on how to reach their career aspirations. When she's not indulging in a new book or video game, she's thinking about, talking about, or writing about careers. Follow her musings on Twitter @lzhng.