

Tip of the Month

Top 5 Interviewing Tips for Experienced Employees:

How senior professionals can show their worth

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Interviewing can be nerve-wracking – even for veteran employees. What’s more, if you’ve been in your job, company, industry or career for a long time and haven’t needed to do a job search in a while, you may feel pretty rusty when it comes to preparing for and navigating the interview process.

As an experienced employee, your track record (if it’s strong) can certainly help pave the way to your next position. Yet even as a seasoned professional, wowing the hiring committee is still a key step to getting the job you want. Even the most qualified candidate must nail a series of interviews to be considered the best person for the job.

If you’re not up to date with interview protocol, don’t leave your interview performance to chance. Brush up with these five advanced tips for seasoned careerists:

Open the door. The first step to a successful interview is landing one in the first place. With plenty of experience under your belt, you can outshine your competitors before the interview even starts by crafting an effective résumé. This is not a "nice-to-do" – it’s a must-do. If your résumé does not reflect your professionalism and your level in the industry, then past successful initiatives can’t help you get the job.

As an industry veteran, you no doubt have data to draw on that can help support the results you achieved. Cristin Sturchio, global head of talent at Cognolink Limited, suggests getting as specific as possible to showcase your achievements with numbers, percentages or dollar amounts. “Made outbound calls to generate donations from alumni” tells what you did,” she says. “Made 150 outbound calls to alumni that resulted in \$12,500 in donations” tells what you achieved.”

Once you have these data points nailed down in your résumé, you'll be able to speak to them in your interview as well.

Make the link. Another essential component of today's pre-interview process is to utilize LinkedIn to full advantage. If you've been off of the job market for a while, it's vital to catch up on the current expectation of most recruiters and hiring managers, which is to have a professional, updated LinkedIn profile.

Marketing and branding strategist Karen Leland says that while it's estimated that up to 60 percent of the Fortune 100 companies use LinkedIn to check out candidates, the vast majority of job seekers have poor or insufficient LinkedIn profiles. To rectify this problem, Leland suggests drawing on information from the first point during your actual interview and having the following items in place beforehand:

- A fully fleshed out summary section that shows rather than tells your value
- An up-to-date and professional photo
- At least 10 recommendations
- Keyword-optimized headlines

Demonstrate executive presence. A 2012 Forbes article describes "executive presence" as "the ability to project gravitas – confidence, poise under pressure and decisiveness." Communication skills comprise another area of executive presence – how you speak, how assertive you are and how well you understand others. Job seekers with ample on-the-job experience may trip themselves up in the communication department by trying to convey too much about their background.

Executive coach Beth VanStory believes that to demonstrate executive presence, it's important to answer questions concisely by creating an outline of your key messages. "Experienced executives usually have a lot to say," she says. "However, sometimes less is more. It's tempting to want to show everything you know and tell about all of your successes. But that approach can be a recipe for interviewer fatigue."

Think ahead. If you've been committed to one role or organization for a while, your self-concept as a professional may be based solely on this role. But to move up and ahead in your career, it's important to mentally prepare yourself for your next position. Michele Gorman, managing

principal of Leveraged Potential, suggests that many interviewees don't think about where they are headed and thus make the mistake of marketing themselves with their current title and role versus branding themselves for the next move.

"It is important to define the next career move that you want and brand yourself appropriately," she says. "Your answer to 'Tell me about yourself' should reflect this new role versus your current role." To make this work, Gorman recommends thinking through the following questions prior to the interview and crafting your answers into a "quick pitch" that will resonate with hiring managers for the new role:

- What kind of professional are you?
- What level are you aiming for?
- What are your three or four key areas of expertise that you bring to the new roles?
- What is something personally unique about you that you bring to the workplace?

Understand your past. While your future is about the position to come, it's still important to properly analyze and put into context key points from past positions. The longer you've been in the industry, the more possibilities you have about which type of information to showcase during an interview. A good way to narrow your focus is to understand your own strengths and weaknesses so that you can match those against a new job's particular requirements.

Halogen Software's senior talent attraction manager John Fleischauer advises reflecting on past successes and past performance reviews as part of your interview prep. "What kind of feedback have you received from your managers and peers?" he asks. "Look for trends – for example, repeat feedback that you're a great team player or very proactive. Take note of feedback you've received around both job-specific skills and soft skills."

Interviews can cause stress and nervousness for even the most experienced candidates. Yet taking the time to get up to speed with advanced interview skills can help ensure that you shine like the industry expert you are.

Robin Madell has spent over two decades as a corporate writer, journalist, and communications consultant on business, leadership and career issues. She serves as a copywriter, speechwriter and ghostwriter for executives and entrepreneurs across diverse industries, including finance, technology, healthcare, law, real estate, advertising and



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