

HOW TO HIT THE RIGHT NOTES IN YOUR JOB INTERVIEW PRESENTATION

Nail your next job interview presentation with these tips.

Mark made an excellent first impression at his initial interview with a Hong Kong based direct sales consumer goods company. He was then notified that he would have to present a pitch deck at his next interview. The instructions were specific– he was to pitch a sale over \$1M that he'd led over the past two years.

Mark panicked, as he did not have a great example, nor had he ever reached that revenue number in the past. He asked himself, “how can I position my presentation in a way that’s relevant and answers the question head on?”

Asking job candidates to make presentations as part of the interview process is becoming more common and more common. The presentation serves as a way to filter candidates and gauge if they are a good fit for the company. A person may make an excellent first impression and seem savvy and strategic, but interviewers can't be sure on a candidate until they see them do the actual work.

Have an interview presentation soon and no idea how to prep? Here are six tips you'll need to know to ace it.

Follow the directions

This may seem obvious, but follow the instructions for the presentation exactly as they are given. If the instructions state that you have only 30 minutes to present, do not go over or under. If they give you formatting restrictions (such as font size, spacing, etc.), adhere to their rules. Often they are just also looking to see if you can follow simple instructions.

Choose the best example

Take a look at the job description and make sure the example you chose highlights the skills they are seeking. For example, if the job is for an analytical role, include a financial model. If the position description includes “a curious person,” be sure to ask questions. This can also help you showcase certain skills that are not obvious from your prior jobs. For example, I was working with an aspiring sourcing and procurement professional who needed to show that he understood S&P, so he included an ecosystem within the appendix.

Omit any proprietary data

It's in your best interest not to offer any proprietary data in your presentation. Instead, indicate that the numbers you are using are estimates. You can also use percentages to demonstrate the magnitude of your impact.

Know your points

When presenting, pick one core message, present your three supporting points, and then conclude with your core message. Sticking to this model will help you develop your presentation concisely and help it flow more smoothly.

Engage your audience

Research your audience beforehand. Look up the participants on LinkedIn or on their company site to gauge their interests. Make eye contact with each person and engage him/her in between main ideas by asking questions or personally connecting him/her to one of those main ideas. One client knew that an interviewer was an entrepreneur and would likely appreciate the learnings garnered while working in a start-up, so he included a question that tapped into those insights in an elegant manner. A specific interest connection shows you did your homework. Always conclude by opening the floor to the audience for questions.

Prepare for the stress test

Presenting to more than one person can be highly intimidating; many of my clients have confessed being nervous as they prepare. The attendees typically piggy-back off one another's questions and probe deeper than if only one person had been conducting the interview. It's important to prepare in a way that helps ease the stress. Doing a mock interview with someone(s) can help prepare you for answering questions on the spot.

As with Mark's case, there are ways to deliver excellent presentations when your work history and experience don't exactly fit what's being asked. He was able to pitch a \$1M sale even though he had not yet met that number in revenue before. Instead, he determined what percentage of his previous company's overall revenue was represented by his biggest sale to present a relevant example of his past sales success.

Preparing for an interview presentation takes time. But by taking necessary steps to rehearse your answers, research your audience and study your main points, you'll be one step closer to landing the job.

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