

# How to Stand Out in a Job Interview



After spending time perfecting your resume, carefully crafting cover letters, and sending off job applications, the email you've been waiting for has arrived: an invitation for an interview. First of all, congrats! You worked hard to get to this moment, and you should enjoy it.

Despite this great news, however, you may feel your excitement quickly give way to nervousness. But before you start worrying too much, remember that getting an interview means you've already shown the company that you're a top candidate for the role. Now's your chance to impress them even more.

Here, we share all the tips you need to ace a meeting with a hiring manager and stand out from the crowd—whether it's a video call or in person. Use this advice, and the next email you receive may very well be a job offer.

## Before the Interview

You should have a firm understanding of the company's founders, history, mission, and latest projects in case they come up in the interview (or so you can slip them into the conversation naturally). In addition to doing a deep dive of the organization's website, DJ Cervantes—the Director of Talent Management for TalentED Advisors—also recommends looking at the latest headlines about the company and social media (both their own channels and what others are posting about them). Doing research will not only inform you about the company, but also help you identify things you may want to learn more about—which brings us to the next step.

In my 15-plus years of hiring and managing employees, the interviews I still remember are those where the candidate asked great questions. And the more specific you can be, the better. “Don't ask anything vague such as, ‘What is the culture like?’” says Cervantes. “This can send the message that you're asking questions for the sake of asking, and very few companies are going to respond with anything other than a glowing review of how incredible they are.”

Instead, try something like, “I saw on your website that collaboration is one of your company values. How is that value reflected in your day-to-day work?” You can also ask about specific projects or initiatives you read about, and how they are being achieved.

Finally, inquire about the recruitment process and timeline, as well as any next steps (though steer clear of asking about salary and benefits—that comes later). Their response will give you clarity on the company's priority for hiring and if you should expect other interviews. Most importantly, it will help manage your expectations if you don't hear back right away.

The more you read and recite the information that you're trying to learn, the easier it will be to recall it in your mind. In addition to practicing your questions, familiarize yourself with popular interview questions and rehearse answers to them with a friend or family member (or even in the mirror!). And be able to confidently talk about any information that appears on your resume.

## During the Interview

That even goes for “yes” or “no” questions. For example, when asked something like, “Are you comfortable working in a fast-paced environment?” think about what they really want to learn about you. In this case, you should follow up your enthusiastic “Yes!” with specific examples about your experience juggling deadlines, prioritizing tasks, and working on several projects at once.

“A recruiter or hiring manager is always looking for clear examples that show the transferable strengths and the expertise you will bring to the job and the company,” says Ilhiana Rojas Saldana, an executive and career transformation coach at BeLive Coaching and Consulting.

About those specific examples: The last thing you want to do is give a long-winded response to an interview question and then forget the point you were trying to make in the first place.

So whenever you’re sharing an example about your work experience, there’s a simple framework you can use to craft detailed but succinct stories. The method is called STAR; each letter stands for an aspect you should touch on in your answer:

- **Situation you faced in the past**
- **Task and specific challenges you had to address**
- **Action(s) you took and how you did it**
- **Result and outcomes of your actions**

Following this framework ensures you don’t leave out any important details—and you’ll impress the hiring manager with how you’re able to drive results.

## After the Interview

I recommend sending a note within 24 hours of the interview. This is your opportunity to mention anything you forgot to say, and remind them why you are the best person for the role. You should also include a sentence or two about why you want to work at the company—even better if you can mention something specific you talked about in the interview. “Close by letting them know you are open to providing any additional information they may require,” says Rojas Saldana. (Not sure what to say? Check out our thank you email template [here](#).)

If you met with more than one person at the same time, you can include all of their names in the greeting. However, if you spoke to more than one person, it’s best to send individual notes.

Mark the hiring timeline dates on your calendar to have a clear picture of when you should be receiving a call back. If the hiring manager said that they would be calling candidates for a next round of interviews in one week, always wait a few extra days before reaching out. Hiring an employee requires managing different calendars, last-minute budget restrictions, and a lot of negotiation, so timelines shift very often.

And when following up, “make sure your email is short, clear, and to the point,” says Rojas Saldana. “If it takes you more than 30 seconds to read, it’s probably too long.”

# HOW TO STAND OUT In a Job Interview

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1



### Research the Company

You should have a firm understanding of the company's founders, history, mission, and latest projects, in case they come up in the interview. That means looking at:

- The company's website
- Their social media
- Latest headlines

2



### Prepare Questions

The interviewer asks you, but can you ask the interviewer?

- "What's the company culture?"
- "I saw on your website that collaboration is one of your core values. How's that value reflected in your day-to-day work?"

3



### Practice, Practice, Practice

Reference answers to possible interview questions with a friend or family member (or even in the mirror). Make sure you can confidently talk about everything that appears on your resume.

## DURING THE INTERVIEW

4



### Avoid "Yes" or "No" Answers

Even for "yes" or "no" questions. Always include a specific example from your experience that shows what you're bringing to the job and the company.

5



### Tell Stronger Stories

Whenever you're sharing an example about your work experience, craft a narrative that detailed story using the STAR method:

- **S**ituation you faced in the past
- **T**ask and specific challenge you had to address
- **A**ction you took and how you did it
- **R**esult and outcomes of your actions

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW

6



### Send a Thank You Email

Do it within 24 hours, and include:

- Something specific you talked about in the interview
- A sentence or two about why you want to work at the company
- Anything you forgot to say in the interview

7



### Follow Up Properly

Wait for the hiring decision dates on your calendar to form a clear picture of when you should be reaching out. Always wait a few extra days before reaching out – and when you do, keep your email short and to the point.