

An interview is like a first date—both sides want to get to know each other, make a good impression, and determine if they want to spend more time together. Let us help you *interview like a boss*, and *find your next long-term working relationship* with our practical guide for candidates and interviewers.

Get Clear on What You Want *Before* the Interview

Interviewers: Figure out what you expect from a successful candidate *before* you start interviewing potential employees. A quality job description* can really help you get crystal clear on the skills and key outcomes you expect for the role. Once you've recorded your *must-haves*, build your interview questions so you can uncover whether the candidate has the right mix of skills and experience for your team.

*Need help writing job descriptions? [Contact us](#) for a free consultation.

Candidates: Before you step foot in the interview room (or even apply for a job), take the time to define what is most important to you in your career. Much like creating a vision for your life, create a vision for your dream job. Consider how you want the workplace to feel:

What activities do you enjoy most?

How do you best communicate with leaders and colleagues?

What does your ideal office environment look like?

What do you value at work from a corporate culture perspective?

Research the companies you're applying to: do they fit this vision?

Keep these questions in the back of your mind when you meet with potential employers: they'll help you determine if the role is the right fit for you.

An Interview is a Conversation: Tell A Story!

Interviewers: In today's competitive job market, the best candidates will *also* interview *you*. To demonstrate why they should pick your company, you need to tell a compelling story. How will you support the candidate's career? What will they learn? What does your company offer that sets you apart? Open up and share your experience: tell the candidate know why *you* joined the company. Find out what they're looking for, and see if there's alignment on what they're seeking and what you can offer them.

Candidates: Prepare a fun, brief summary of your career so far. This way, when interviewers ask you the infamous, open-ended question: "*Tell us about yourself!*", you can captivate them with your career adventure story. Try to keep your story chronological, so your resume can function like a high-level map of your major accomplishments. Throw in some personal anecdotes. Talk about why you took the paths you did, and focus on how and why this position is the right fit for your future.

Be Candid, Stay Positive

Interviewers: No job is all sunshine and roses. You likely want the potential candidate to help resolve some challenges. For example, you're hiring a Front End Developer because your service design isn't meeting client expectations—share that challenge with the candidate. Don't sugarcoat any growing pains* you may be experiencing, but be sure to demonstrate the steps you're taking to address the issue.

*[Drop us a line](#) if you're hiring for a significant growth phase. We can help you create a solid people foundation to build on for years to come.

Candidates: Every interviewer wants to know the reasons why you left each position on your resume. Most of us have experienced a career misstep or a layoff/termination—what's important is how you frame it. No matter what led you to leave a role, there's always a way

to tell the truth while keeping it positive. Interviewers want to know they can trust you, so don't try hiding anything. Instead explain the situation in a fact-based, non-emotional way. Be mindful not to blame or criticize former colleagues or employers. Describe what you learned, and how it helped you find more clarity on what you're looking for going forward.

Interview Like A Boss: Focus on Outcomes

Interviewers: An interview is your chance to determine if a candidate has the right match of skills, behaviours, and culture fit for you. The best way to do this is through smart questions. Craft questions that require the candidate to describe specific times when he/she successfully completed a task, handled a situation, or achieved an outcome that is important to the position.

Beware of answers that only include hypotheticals or situations that are littered with buzzwords. These answers don't provide any data about what the candidate has *actually* done, or what they could do for you. If a candidate begins answering your question this way, guide them back on track by saying: "I'm looking for a specific example, could you please paint a picture of the situation for me? Feel free to take a few moments to recall a particular time." This prompts the candidate to describe their approach to the problem, the process they took, and the ultimate result.

Candidates: Carefully review the job description to identify the key result areas and outcomes called for by the position. (For example: building a team, growing revenue, coaching and mentoring, scaling an application) Interview like a boss—think of times you took on these responsibilities, and try to recall as much detail as possible. Then consider each role within your career, and develop some answers around:

- What's been your biggest challenge so far?
- What is the accomplishment you are most proud of?
- What responsibilities have you carried?

Interviewers want to hear about what you have actually done—not what you believe you can do, or things that you’ve read about doing. If there’s an area of a job that you haven’t had the opportunity to work on yet—that’s ok! State that you haven’t gained that specific experience yet. Tell them why you’re looking to work within that area, and be sure to mention a previous similar experience that has prepared you for this role.

Walk Away Happy, Gain A New Contact

An interview can be a smooth, informative, and (*gasp!*)—*fun* experience. In the end, even if it isn’t the right fit, a positive interview still allows both parties to walk away with a new contact. After all, you never know when your paths may cross again, or when the opportunity will arise for a perfect fit on both sides.