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WHITE PAPER

Best Interview Presentation Practices

As you begin building a presentation, it's important for you to gather as many details as possible and to determine what the hiring committee is looking for. Ensure that you have clarity on the presentation prompt, the expected length, and who your intended target audience will be (colleagues, senior leaders, potential clients). Each type of audience can require a different type and amount of information. Ask follow-up questions as needed to make certain your content will be on target.

Build a Structure

- Use a professionally-designed template to set your brand apart.
- Tell a captivating story that includes the required key information. Support with figures and results whenever possible.
- Include a captivating introduction, a compelling argument in the body, and a memorable conclusion.
- Weave in examples of your skills and abilities, recommendations of how you would tackle a project for the company, or some other way of connecting your experience with what the employer needs.

REAL INTERVIEWER FEEDBACK

“One of the best presentations I’ve seen tied all the above together. The candidate’s presentation was so well-organized that it felt like a story, and the hiring committee was along for the ride. The story included how she got started in her line of work and what her interest in the company was. It ended with the candidate sharing her vision for the department she was hoping to lead, complete with ideas for new programs and innovative ways to reach new clients.”

> Presentation Do's and Don'ts

DO keep it simple.

Use minimal content on each slide to get your point across and use visuals like charts and graphics only if it enhances the message. A good rule of thumb is to cut paragraphs down to sentences, sentences into phrases, and phrases into keywords. Make sure that each slide has just enough information to catch someone's attention, but not so much that you distract people.

DO make it impactful.

Make every word and image count, supporting your message as clearly and efficiently as possible. Establish the problem early and then move on to how you solve it, maintaining a cohesive train of thought and message flow. End with a summary slide of your key takeaways and volunteer to take additional questions.

DO enhance readability.

Use a legible font type and size. Titles should be at least 36 to 40 points, with bulleted text or body copy at least 24 points. Don't crowd your slides. Use normal case (not all caps) and punctuate sparingly. Remember that not everyone has your eyesight, so design your slides appropriately.

DON'T overdo it.

Don't use too many words or include non-essential information. Avoid overusing color, special effects, and animations. Use sound, animation, and other effects to emphasize major points, but don't let them become distracting. Remember, slide decks are a tool to enhance your presentation. Don't let it overwhelm you and your message.

DON'T share confidential information.

Any data or information that could be perceived as confidential is a red flag to employers. Therefore, while it is highly recommended that you use data to support your story, you may need to tweak some of those KPIs, names, or results. “Scrub” the data so that it presents as false but is still meaningful to how you would use it in your role. Be sure your audience knows that you've changed some of the details to avoid confidentiality concerns.

Review and Prepare

- After you've created your slides, go back and edit them. Stick to keywords and phrases instead of sentences. You don't need to include ending punctuation on the bullet points of your slides.
- Bring backups. You should always have a backup plan to present your material. Save your deck to a thumb drive, store it in the cloud, and have a few copies (or abridged versions) printed that you can use in case of emergencies.
- Practice! It is imperative that you refine your presentation by practicing in front of a trusted friend, family member, or peer. Try to emulate the presentation environment as much as possible so you can improve your delivery, message, and timing.

REAL INTERVIEWER FEEDBACK

"She kept her eyes down, looking at her notes the entire time. And even then, she stumbled over her words and got lost in her presentation. It was uncomfortable, and it was clear that she had not spent much time becoming familiar with her presentation. She was certainly memorable – but for all the wrong reasons."

Ace the Delivery

- A great way to stand out from other candidates is to step out from behind the podium or a desk, bringing yourself out in front of the audience so they can see you, your gestures, and your stance (you should not be sitting down as you speak).
- Make eye contact with different members of the audience.
- Remind yourself to take a few deep breaths at various points – this will help you stay calm and will also naturally slow your speech a bit.
- Consider preparing handouts for the audience to keep. Your handouts should call back to your key concepts and points, giving audience members the exact information you want them to remember.

Presentations are always nerve-wracking, but remember that the audience wants you to succeed. The hiring committee invited you in because they think you have something to offer, and they want to see more.



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