

Authentic Interviewing – For Those Looking to Make Better Hiring Decisions

'The Art of Interview', is a great HBR Podcast with Cal Fussman writer and journalist for Esquire who has interviewed many high profiled people from politicians to global CEO's and musicians such as Dr. Dre. In this insightful podcast, Cal offers some great strategies for building trust with those he interviews to enable him to really get the honest answers he is looking for. He cites the example of Dr. Dre when you are looking to find out if people are truly passionate about what they do. Dr. Dre can work for 72 hours straight when he is passionate about a project he is working on. We can leverage or adapt this in interviews to ask questions around "When were you last totally immersed in a project at work?" Or, "When was the last time you pulled an all- nighter to get a project done at work?"



This is a great podcast for anyone who is looking to develop their interviewing skills in order to make better hiring decisions. From the podcast I took away the need to have a more authentic interview style and less of a formulaic process. Perhaps we need to tone down some of the rigour and structure with interviews to create an environment where the interviewee "feels at home" enabling us to really get to know who they are and what drives and motivates them. We need to listen deeply. As we all know interviews are not very

natural – from how they are staged to the standard questioning and the fact that interviews are by their nature an exclusionary process. Very rarely do interviewees feel comfortable in an interview.

In a recent recruitment assignment I adopted a more ‘authentic interview’ style and it was such a richer and more successful process. I did not interview in an office like I normally do. Instead we had an informal meeting at a café. I left the standard interview questions aside and spent the time building trust through sharing some of my career and life story with the interviewees. In turn I was able to build trust and learn more about each interviewee in this meeting than I probably would if I had worked with them for a few months. It resulted in a fantastic hire being made. Moving forward I am certainly going to continue to evolve my ‘authentic interviewing’ style as I know it works.

For anyone whose role includes interviewing I highly recommend listening to [‘The Art of Interview’](#)

What are your thoughts and experiences with ‘authentic interviewing’?

Insightful Interview
Preparation Questions

It is always a challenge to know what questions to prepare for an interview. It can also seem that the questions asked by the interviewer have no logic or real purpose behind them – this is rarely the case.



I found an insightful post by Yscouts called '[15 Outstanding Executive Interview Questions](#)'. They are a pretty good selection of questions to start from as they give you an explanation as to why they are being asked and therefore what the interviewer is looking for you to respond with.

For example:

Teach me something I don't already know.

A good friend of mine informed me of a brilliant question that is asked from the top heads at Google during the hiring process. The candidate is asked some iteration of, "teach me something I don't already know." The candidate then has to quickly think of something unique on the spot to teach that will effectively portray their intellect and personality.

What are your goals?

I find this question helps me understand what motivates a potential hire and sheds light as to whether she would be a good fit. I am a big believer in 'fit' and this question goes a long way. People draw motivation from different sources, and understanding that from the outset is very helpful in building a successful relationship.

If you are going through the interview process you may find these [15 interview preparation questions](#) very valuable.

What are some of the better interview questions you have asked or been asked?

How to prepare for your next Skype interview

These days more and more people are having Skype interviews for both local and international roles. While general interview preparation is a given, very few people take time to consider the logistics around preparing themselves physically and their environment for the interview.



This great 4 minute YouTube video '[How to Look Good in Skype Interviews – Tips & Training](#)' takes you through some of the logistics and practicalities essential for creating a positive interview impression from the lightening, to your make up (for men & women), optimal camera positioning through to backdrops. The tips include a lot of the things that many people overlook when preparing for a Skype interview. It is certainly worth a view if you have a Skype interview coming up.

Ways You Can Improve Your

Interview Odds!

There is a lot of information about on how to prepare for an interview, some of it is great – some of it is the same old content reworded. That is why I enjoyed reading Jeff Haden's article ['The Perfect Job Interview in 8 Simple Steps'](#)



All of the 8 steps that Haden details are important, a few however really stood out for me in terms of where I most commonly see candidates fall down.

These are;

- **Point 5** – Know what you can offer immediately
- **Point 6** – Don't create negative sound bites

In relation to point 5, you would be surprised how many candidates cannot articulate what they have to offer the prospective employer. Having done a similar job before is not enough, nor are giving vague generic answers. This is where mock interviews and role plays are effective. Haden's take away from this point is to 'just think about what makes you special and show the benefits to the company.

Point 6 highlights the need to create positive messages that stay with the interviewer, not negative sound bites. Most of us will have questions thrown at us that are challenging, particularly those asked about a specific skill or experience where we may not be strong. The language and phrases you select to respond can turn a small amount or no experience around from a negative to a positive. Haden's take away from this point is "basically, never say, "I can't," or "I haven't," or "I don't." Share applicable experience and find

the positives in what you have done.”

I would add to this that there are only so many messages you can leave with an interviewer. Decide before you go into the interview what the three key messages are you want to leave. This will help shape and focus how you respond to questions. Regardless of what many think, as the interviewee you do have an element of control in the interview. This is why interview preparation is paramount. Without it you are left with minimal control.

If you find that you are falling down in interviews, consider engaging the support of a career coach.

Power Posing – a technique that may improve your interview & meeting performance!

When it comes to the job search process, rightly or wrongly how we present ourselves does play a role in our success. There are many aspects to how we present ourselves – from our clothing, hair, to our language, tone and also our body language. Our body language is one that often we neglect to work on – as we



don't see it.

Its role in our career is important – as it is so very telling. It lets people know if we are engaged, confident, defensive, happy, easy going and so on.

The topic fascinates me and I am regularly working with clients on this aspect of their job search. When I came across Amy Cuddy on TED, talking about body language and 'power poses' I was delighted. [Amy Cuddy – 'Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are'](#) is a brilliant video worth watching if you are interested in personal development. Her research suggests that if you hold a powerful position for 2 minutes, it can have a profound effective on how you feel – and ultimately how you come across to others. It could be just the interview preparation or meeting boost we all need!

There is also another link to a talk on the subject Amy Cuddy did on [CNN](#)

I am a true believer in the simple things often being the most effective – this is just an example of this at work. Let me know your thoughts.

Note: image provided by [Graffiterati](#)

[Why finding the top performing recruiters can double your job search odds](#)

[Recruitment Extra](#) is a monthly journal that I always enjoy  reading as the content offers a diverse range of

perspectives and is always current and thought provoking. This post was not intended to be a plug for Recruitment Extra however given they do such a great job I thought it worth mentioning. The other reason is that it offers job seekers some good content to assist in understanding how the recruitment market works to better manage a job search or career change.

One of the articles in a recent addition that caught my eye was '[What does that top performer really look like](#)' by [Nigel Harse](#). The article was describing a top performing recruitment consultant, which was interesting. More interesting was the fact that it talks about 'candidate utilisation' which they state that with a top performer "candidate utilisation is also generally twice as good as the industry average which runs at approximately 10%-12% of people being interviewed that are placed." So, as a job seeker it is interesting to know your odds of securing a role are basically one in ten with a typical consultant. This stat indicates how hard you need to be working when it comes to job seeking to secure a role. It is a case of doing your own networking, contacting companies direct and meeting with a lot of recruiters – and where possible finding out who the top performing recruiters are to increase your odds!

The more you understand about how the recruitment process works, the more empowered you are as a job seeker, and hopefully you can achieve your goals in a quicker and less stressful fashion.

Watch What You Say in Interviews – “I guess” is a Common Mistake

I have recently been helping an organisation interview for  an exciting and challenging role. The candidates being interviewed have been bright interesting people who bring significant experience in their fields. Unfortunately this recent experience brought back to me one of the all too common terms that people use when prefacing an interview response – “I guess”.

While it may seem I am being petty, when you start an answer with “I guess” it basically negates whatever proceeds this, as when interviewing you are looking for definite responses, not “I guess”, particularly when people are talking about specific experiences, how they solved problems and so on. While you may well have done all you said you did, the “I guess” at the start does not leave the interviewer feeling very confident in your reply. Doubt creeps in and that is not what you want. Instead take the time you need to gather your thoughts (as sometimes people say I guess to bide time) and then launch into your response.

Next to all of us do and say things in an interview which are out of character as the nerves set in. However the key is to debrief and reflect on the interview, ask the interviewer for feedback and/ or run practise interviews with a friend or a professional to ensure that you come across as the best candidate for the job.

A [Career Strategist & Coach](#) can help you overcome any interview challenges you may have.

Alternatively see [The DIY Job Search & Career Change Program](#)

electronic works, including [‘Interviewing, Negotiating & Landing Your Next Job’](#)

Powerful Words to Sell Your Skills, Engage the Reader & Get the Interview

Most Executives and Senior Professionals find preparing  their resume a challenge. As a result the resume is put together quickly and reluctantly, and reads like a chronological list of their education and work experience. At its basic level this is what the resume needs to be, however if actually want your resume to stand out and engage the reader, more energy needs to go into how you write about and sell your skills and experiences. It is difficult for most of us to sell ourselves effectively in a couple of pages of text, yet essential for job search success.

Quantify and Qualify Your Skills!

A sentence that says you have ‘exceptional interpersonal and communication skills’ is largely a waste of text! It tells the reader nothing, yet many resumes have a listing of skills or competencies with no supporting evidence to demonstrate them. You know why you are skilled in certain areas however unless you can communicate them to the reader in a powerful way, they are empty words.

Including specific examples, where you can demonstrate these

skills or competencies in a past or current job is crucial as they create a picture in the readers mind and offer credibility to what you are saying. Without it, the words are pointless. If you cannot quantify or qualify everything in your resume (aside from your personal details) then the information is taking up valuable real estate that you could be using to really sell yourself to the reader and secure that next brilliant role.

Always avoid including lists and sentences that don't describe in detail with a relevant example your skills or competencies. Rather than, 'I have excellent client relationship skills demonstrated through 10 years in Sales', the example below tells the reader you deliver client satisfaction which is more important than how many years you have been using these skills. Being specific and outcome orientated wins hands down.

Example: Client Relationship Skills: In over 100 client assignments I have never received negative feedback from a client. I have used each new project as an opportunity to develop my client relationship skills to ensure their continued satisfaction.

Below is a listing of words to assist in selling your skills more effectively in your Resume and in the interview. These relate to everything from data to people and systems. Using powerful action orientated words create a positive impression.

□ Accomplished □ Administered □ Analyzed □ Built □ Completed
□ Composed □ Conducted □ Controlled □ Coordinated □ Created
□ Decreased □ Delivered □ Demonstrated □ Designed □ Developed
□ Directed □ Eliminated □ Established □ Evaluated □ Expanded
□ Founded □ Generated □ Guided □ Implemented □ Improved
□ Increased □ Initiated □ Instructed □ Invented □ Launched
□ Led □ Maintained □ Managed □ Modified □ Motivated
□ Negotiated □ Organized □ Originated □ Participated In
□ Performed □ Planned □ Produced □ Proved □ Provided
□ Recommended □ Reduced □ Re-organized □ Researched □ Revised

□ Saved □ Sold □ Solved □ Streamlined □ Supervised □ Trained

The resume is often only looked at when you change employers. Such an important document warrants more attention and together with these tips you should see your resume have more impact.

Tips to Write & Sell Work Achievements in Your CV

Achievements are a critical part of your resume, perhaps more important than responsibilities, and therefore should be given prime resume real estate. Ensure that any achievements that are already listed on your resume are engaging to the reader and actually quantify or qualify what you have achieved. If they are fairly un-inspiring due to how you have presented them, either edit or remove them and update with more exciting and relevant examples. When describing your achievements, remember to think about how your reader is interpreting what you are saying. A couple of well written, relevant examples paint a more positive and engaging picture and far outshine a long list of basic and poorly written achievements.

Consider reading the following statements whilst reflecting on your more recent jobs. Take down notes of situations that come to mind.

Have you designed or introduced a new process that may have increased efficiency or sales?

- Have you solved a difficult problem?

- Have you received any awards?
- What has been your experience with managing or training difficult people?
- Have you mentored or coached colleagues or those external to your business?
- Have you developed a new system, a product, etc?
- Have you designed something?
- Can you think of something you have done for the first time?
- Have you prepared any reports, papers, articles etc that others could not?
- Have you saved your company or department money?

It is worth compiling this information as it happens, get into the habit of documenting your achievements either as they occur or regularly with enough detail that you can recall what you did when it comes to updating your resume. With these examples at hand, it will help enhance your resume and create more compelling stories for the interview. When documenting your achievements, it is important that they are detailed, relevant and engaging to the reader. Below is a weak and strong example of the same achievement.

Weak Example: *The introduction of new rebate initiatives, that was successful in saving the company a substantial amount of money.*

Strong Example: *I successfully negotiated revised annual trading terms by offering lower rebate terms to the company's key accounts through incentive targets and the introduction of promotional rebates. This initiative generated a cost saving of \$700,000 within six months of the change.*

If you are unsure if your achievements are coming across strongly, ask a colleague or friend to review.

[A Few Social Media Terms to Help in Your Job Search](#)

Social media is so much a part of our lives these days, and if not so much our own, chances are it has consumed our children's, nieces' and nephews' lives. Terms like 'trending' have been added to our vocabulary in recent times.

12. Trending: A word, phrase or topic that is popular on Twitter at a given moment.

17. Tweeps: Twitter + People = Tweople.

21. Link bait: Designed to attract incoming links. News and widget hooks are good examples.

This short post [THE TOP 25 SOCIAL MEDIA TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW](#) on Social Media Today gives a snapshot of the key terms.