

How to Slam Dunk an Interview

5 Steps to landing a Great Job

By Dewey Sadka

All employers use certain practices to select their #1 candidate. Why not slam dunk your interview critic by learning how to win approval? You can practice on your own. Or create a role-play scenario—interviewer vs. jobseeker. Yes it sounds a bit goofy, the idea of talking to a mirror or embarrassing yourself in front of a friend or relative. But it's worth your time. It's the difference between a YES, instead of a NO!

As a major USA employer for 25 years, I've always been amazed at how many qualified people drop the interview ball. In fact, it's rare to find a person that does all five of the simple steps listed below. When they do, they score big.

Step 1: WALKING INTO THE ROOM—YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION

Before you walk into the interview, discard all the reasons why it won't work. Think only why it WILL work.

- Practice walking. Press your feet/toes firmly into the ground. This builds self-confidence. Yes, it even works with high heels! The noise from your shoes is diminished and it looks professional.
- Think positive thoughts about yourself.
- Look into the interviewers' eyes and shake their hand firmly.

CRITIC YOURSELF/OTHERS: Is the look self-confident? Are there any feelings of inadequacy? If so, your “defensive chip” will weaken your image.

Step 2: INTRO SENTENCE—WHO ARE YOU?

Your intro statement is huge. Practice it ahead of time. No, it won't come out the same way—*ever*. If you own it as who YOU are, chances are it will be better! Not owning your career path? Click here: [Color Career Indicator 4.0](#)

- Why are you of value? Offer your contribution.
- Use only one sentence. No run-on phrases. It's not about you!
- Say it over and over until it becomes conversational.

EXAMPLE: “I'm looking for a career where I can use my experience (or degree) to maximize revenue by solving problems.”

CRITIC YOURSELF/OTHERS: Was the intro sincere? Was it about you or them? If it was about you, you're not bringing value to a job/situation. Others won't hear you.

Step 3: COMEBACK SENTENCE—YOUR SALES PITCH

After the interviewer replies, tell them your real contribution to them specifically. Make this phrase be...

- Why you are needed more than the others also interviewing. Make this only two or three sentences.
- First, make your comeback all about them. Yes! Research heavily before your interview.
- Then SELL yourself. Why are you their best choice?

EXAMPLE: “I really enjoyed checking out your website. My career goals (or talk actual experience/skills) fit with this position at XYZ company.”

Offer something for free. “I know I don't have everything required, but I am willing to train as an intern for a month.” Why not close the deal?!?

CRITIC YOURSELF/OTHERS: Make sentences short. If you try and say two different benefits in one sentence, they won't hear either one.

Step 4: BODY LANGUAGE—IT SPEAKS BEFORE YOU DO

Company interviewers are experts at reading your body language. They often say, “I just didn't feel good about hiring that person,” with no explanation required! They open up when you have positive thoughts. Shut down when you don't.

- Whatever you're thinking, they're hearing too. So think great thoughts! Think why you like them and they will like you too.
- Be yourself! Or they'll forget you. Be friendly and attentive.
- Think about all the great reasons you want to work there.

CRITIC YOURSELF/OTHERS: Is there positive, attentive energy? What about forward-thinking thoughts? Yes, dreams! They create enthusiasm and tell the interviewer you are open to learning new things.

Step 5: CLOSING STATEMENT—BE POWERFUL. ALWAYS CLOSE!

This is vital. Show your interviewer, with your close, that you're professional. If you forget it, chances are you lost.

- Ask for their card (If you don't already have it), then stand up and say, “Thank you for your time.”
- Interview Example: “I find your company very exciting/something of real interest to me/my dream career, and so forth. I'll touch base with you next Tuesday.” (Then call or email them on Tuesday, right when they get to work.)

- Networking Example: “Do you know anyone that might need a person with my skills/education/background? Can I send you my resume?”

CRITIC YOURSELF/OTHERS: Did you sound like you really wanted to work? Did you look the interviewer in the eye and give them a solid handshake?

Now prove you want the job. Show them you have willpower and discipline. Be forthright. Maximize your interview and networking hirability.

- The faster you follow-up, the better the chances that they’ll remember you. So email them right back!
- Follow-up with the interviewer right when they get to work. Studies have proven more positive decisions are made in the early morning (Zahl, September 2011). It also shows you’ll be a punctual employee. (Ask the front desk for their hours of operation.)
- Don't stop with one follow-up either. Eighty percent of all sales are completed on the 5th follow-up or subsequent follow-up calls (Hornor, January 2001).

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