

Must Haves for Your Next Interview By Dean Tracy

After many years in the recruiting business, I've learned that candidates often lack preparation when facing a career transition or job change.

Here are six simple steps to take before an interview to help you land the job.

1. Prepare Your Story

Throughout your career, you may pursue different directions. Be prepared to discuss the reasons for which you're taking your career in a certain direction.

Organize talking points that help you tell your story. It's important to touch on reasons why you may have left a company without bashing your former co-workers or supervisors. Explain with confidence the reason that you are making or have made a career change.

Remember that a lack of conversation reflects lack of interest. Be prepared to incorporate the storyline of your background into their organizational challenges.

2. Calculate Your Compensation

Know the difference between your needs, your value to the company, and market trends. Your financial needs are of no importance to the hiring manager or the hiring company. They care about your success, but they are not accountable for your financial responsibilities.

Investigate the market trends for the position for which you're interviewing. The dollar amount is usually defined by what the market will bear for your position. This information can be collected from a variety of websites and market research. Keep in mind that this will also depend on the company's size, revenues, headcount, geographic location, etc.

The value that you bring to the company is one that only you can define and present to your prospective employer. This will be based upon your demonstrated experience as determined by contributions you've made in previous roles. Capture and reflect revenues that you generated, incorporate costs and expenses that you managed, and/or numbers of people or clients that you have supported.

Understand acronyms such as OTE and MBO.

- **OTE** = On Target Earnings. This is what your total compensation package is, including annual base salary, bonuses etc.
- **MBO** = Management by Objective. This is typically used to identify a percentage of your annual base and may be paid quarterly or once a year.

3. Articulate Your Value

You need to be able to address the value that you bring to the company. Be prepared to share your skills and accomplishments and discuss how they benefit the company. Articulate these accomplishments in a problem-action-results sequence.

- **Problem** – This will reflect the specific problem, challenge, or situation that you are faced with. The way you would describe this is in the form of an overview or summary.
- **Action** – This represents the steps that you took to address the problem, challenge, or situation. Describe the methodology that you followed to drive results and deliverables.
- **Results** – This is where you define the success or accomplishment of your action. Use this as an opportunity to share how you evaluate the end result.

4. Determine Your Commute Threshold

Estimate how far are you willing to commute to get to work every day. Some candidates will use this threshold to represent miles and some will use it to measure total road time.

5. Determine Your Willingness to Travel

This will usually depend on the position for which you're applying. Your previous experiences with work travel will be a true indicator to consider. You should also carefully consider the impact that this will have on your family and personal lifestyle.

6. Articulate Your Management Style

Be prepared to share and discuss the environment or culture where you can be the most productive. Are you most effective in a chaotic, fast-paced, high-stressed environment? Do you bring a calming influence in a chaotic setting? Are you detail oriented, driven by reports in a micro-managed structure? Be prepared to describe your typical activity in a normal work day.

If you do your homework well, you will be extraordinarily successful in your interview. It will become easy for you to open new doors of opportunity toward landing the job of your dreams! Go get 'em!

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