

6 Ways to Create Interview Chemistry

Selena Dehne, JIST Publishing

Interviewing is a lot like dating. When two people agree to go to dinner or watch a movie with each other, it's generally because they had something in common, found each other interesting and wanted to spend time together.

When interviewing job candidates, interviewers are looking for these same things. They don't want to hire just anyone. They want to hire a candidate who can do the job *and* connect with others in the workplace. Therefore, it's not enough for job seekers to highlight their skills, knowledge and experience. They must be able to create chemistry and connect with the interviewer if they want that person's buy-in for the job, according to Susan Britton Whitcomb, author of "Interview Magic, Second Edition."

"During an interview, you will be judged on three dimensions: **chemistry**, competency and compensation. The first dimension -- chemistry -- is critical. You'll want to connect with the company's mission, its people and its **customers**. And you'll certainly want the interviewer to connect with you," Whitcomb says.

Given only a brief amount of time, many people find it very difficult to connect with interviewers, who are often complete strangers to them. Further complicating the task is the fact that many people think of interviews as high-stress, pressure-packed situations. This attitude influences job seekers to spend their time worrying and trying not to make mistakes, instead of making an effort to connect with interviewers.

To help job seekers overcome this common obstacle and quickly create chemistry between themselves and interviewers, Whitcomb offers the following tips in "Interview Magic":

1. Share commonalities

Discuss your passion for your field or enthusiasm for a new product or service, as well as personal commonalities such as family (i.e., children of the same age), recreational activities, hobbies or interests.

2. L.I.S.T.E.N. attentively

Laser your focus. **I**nvestigate and be curious. **S**ilence your tongue -- hold your judgment and open your mind. **T**ake brief notes and take time to formulate your response. **E**levate the other person. **N**ote the nonverbal, including your body language and that of your interviewer. It is impossible to connect with others if you don't listen well.

3. R.E.S.P.O.N.D. well

Remember your objective; **E**ngage the interviewer. **S**hare succinctly. **P**oint to benefits. **O**ffer proof. **N**ever drone on. **D**edicate yourself to a win-win relationship.

4. Pay attention to the 'howchas'

The "howchas" are *how* you say something (as opposed to *what* you say). Tone, inflection, body language, attitude and motive combine to make how you say it just as important as what you say. To improve your 'howcha's,' remain deferential, respectfully curious and concerned about the interviewer/company's welfare. Use verbal and body language mirroring to enhance **communication**, matching aspects of your interviewer's voice, language, mannerisms and body language.

5. Recognize their learning style, whether auditory, visual or kinesthetic/tactile.

Offer variety in your interview so that each style is addressed. This might include answering questions for the auditory learners, writing an outline on a whiteboard or showing a PowerPoint demonstration for the visual learners, and engaging the kinesthetic/tactile learners in activities or encouraging them to take more thorough notes.

6. Understand their temperament

Theorists (often seen in executive roles) value impressive training or credentials, and stress vision, logic, innovation, mastery, progress and excellence. Catalysts (often seen in human service roles) value harmony in work relationships and appreciate ideal, meaningful work environments. Stabilizers (often seen in **finance** and **management** roles) value factual, reality-based responses in a sequential, detailed fashion. Improvisers (often seen in sales/marketing roles) value action, excitement and variety, and prefer solutions that are practical and effective to help them get what they want.

Making these efforts throughout the interview will go a long way toward impressing the interviewer and positioning yourself ahead of other candidates. Even if you don't win the job offer, the interviewer may be inclined to recommend you to others or keep you in mind for future opportunities if he or she developed a connection with you.

"Acing an interview -- even for a job that isn't perfect for you -- will put you on the radar screen of those who can help you in the future," Whitcomb says. "Remember that interviewers have their own network of contacts that will likely be valuable to you."