

CREATE. LIVE. SELL.

How to use your personal brand to ace a job interview



You've landed an interview for what you believe is the perfect job for you. But whether you get hired for that job has very little to do with whether the job is perfect for you. The fact is, getting hired is all about convincing the interviewers that you are perfect for the job.

That means you have to convince them that you are qualified to do the work; better than all the other candidates; and a pleasure to work with.

You have to sell yourself. That sale will be much easier to make if you know how to sell.

The most effective way to sell yourself during a job interview is two-pronged:

1. Rely on a thoughtfully crafted, authentic personal brand as your most powerful sales tool.
2. Sell with the skill and vigor that professional sales pros use when they introduce their products and services to potential buyers.

When you sell yourself, you are the product. Before you walk into any interview, know the answers to these five questions:

1. What do you know about your product?
2. What makes your product more valuable than all the competing products on the market?

3. What can your product do that other products cannot?
4. In what way will your product benefit the organization you are applying to?
5. What need or problem does that organization have that your product can fill or solve?

Your personal brand

Your personal brand is how you present yourself to the world—and to a job interviewer. It is your signature, your trademark, that thing that is “so you.” It's uniquely yours and it's what people know you for, say about you and expect from you. It's something you have chosen to follow as a guide to the way you speak, behave and live your life.



An effective personal brand is one that you:

- 1 Create.
- 2 Live.
- 3 Sell.

Create

To effectively sell yourself during a job interview—or ever—it's important to create a personal brand that showcases your superpower—the thing that sets you apart from everyone else.

That brand should encapsulate everything you want others to see, know and say about you. It should be the thing you identify with and that others identify you with. It should leave no question in anyone's mind that this is who you are, what is important to you and what you stake your reputation on.



Live

If that brand truly represents your authentic self—and not simply who you hope to be some day—it will be easy to live it day in and day out. It will be what guides you before you speak or act. It will be top-of-mind when you walk into a job interview and want to make your best impression.

An effective personal brand is like an unwritten script for your behavior—a script you never deviate from. An effective personal brand lets others know what they can count on you for.

Creating a brand and then ignoring it won't do you any good. Live that brand every day. Show that brand off from the minute you walk into a job interview until the moment you say good-bye.

Sell

If you live your personal brand, it will be easy to sell. Your consistent behavior and demeanor sell others on knowing that they can trust you to do what you say and be who you present yourself as. Your personal brand is the most powerful sales tool in your sales toolbox. So make it strong, sharp and prominent.

Use it to sell yourself to your potential employers. Use it to showcase your skills, personality and superpowers during every job interview.

Creating and living your brand won't help you get a job unless you let it shine during your interview. Study your personal brand before your interview so you can stay on brand throughout the interaction. Sell yourself by letting your brand guide your words and behavior during the interview.

The Sales Job

Acing a job interview is a sales job, so candidates who understand a few basic principles of selling have the advantage.

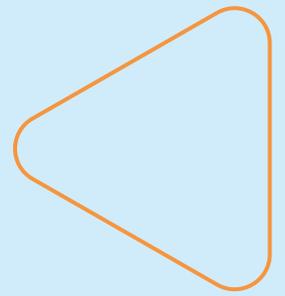
Sell Yourself: How to Create, Live, and Sell a Powerful Personal Brand outlines a five-step sales process that can help anyone sell anything. This process can help you sell yourself during a job interview.

The steps are:

1. **Plan.**
2. **Look for opportunities.**
3. **Establish trust.**
4. **Ask for what you want.**
5. **Follow up with gratitude.**



1. Plan



The minute you accept an invitation to interview for a job, start planning how you will sell yourself to the interviewers. The planning phase should include:

1. Do lots of research. Learn everything you can about the company, its products and services, its mission and goals, its strengths and weaknesses. Read news articles about the organization and look at its social media posts. Examine online comments from people who have posted reviews. Study the organization's website.
2. Identify ways that your superpowers could benefit the organization. Review your experiences at prior jobs that have prepared you to meet a challenge at the company you want to work for.
3. Gather your stories. Storytelling is a potent sales tactic. Saying you know how to do something is not nearly as powerful as proving it with an interesting story about how you solved a problem or saved the day for another employer. Stories help you link your past experience with the current needs of the company you want to work for next.
4. Anticipate the questions. And make a list of your own questions for the interviewers. An attractive job candidate is one who shows genuine curiosity about the company, the job and whether you will be a good fit.
5. Rehearse. You will likely have less than 50 minutes to sell this new employer on your qualities and qualifications. Practice answering questions in a way that packs a lot of information into a quick and succinct few sentences.

2. Look for opportunities



Don't count on the interviewer to ask questions that will help you showcase how awesome you are. Look for opportunities to share stories, information and ideas that will set you apart from others who have applied for the same job. Look for the chance to:

1. Answer "yes" or "no" questions with explanations and examples instead of with a single word. Answer, "Do you work well under deadline pressure?" with, "Let me tell you how well. At my last job, my team and I had only six hours to do XYZ, and we did it in five. I love the challenge of a tight deadline."
2. Know your strengths and weaknesses before you get to your interview. "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" is a question you can count on and "I don't know" or "I don't have any" won't get you hired. When you speak about a weakness, however, choose something you have been working on, have shown improvement on and are eager to be coached on. Interviewers are looking for candidates who are open to coaching and growth. Sneak personal stories into your answers. If you're asked, "Why do you want to work with us?" tell the story about the moment you realized that your skills would be perfect for the new company. In response to, "Where do you want to be in five years?" tell about the journey that prepared you for this new job and how that will help you succeed and grow there.





3. Establish trust



No sale ever happens without trust. People like to buy from those they trust. Job interviewers like to hire candidates who seem trustworthy, reliable, honest and likable. Showcase your charm, authenticity and personality during the interview. A few tips:

1. Smile. Take the interview seriously but let the interviewer know you're happy to be there.
2. Read the room. Match your energy to the energy of the interviewer.
3. Be honest. If you don't know an answer, say so. Then offer your opinion or suggestions.
4. Focus on the company's needs. As much as possible, put your answers to questions in the context of how your skills and qualities will help fill a need or a gap.
5. Don't brag. Make yourself look good without boasting. Stories will help you do this.

4. Ask for what you want



Make it clear that you're interested in the job—even if you're not sure you are. To that end:

1. Be curious about the company, your future co-workers and the job duties.
2. Come right out and say you would like to join the team.
3. Ask when the interviewer will make a decision.

4. Follow up with gratitude



1. Within a few hours of the interview, send an email or video message to the interviewer expressing gratitude for the opportunity. Comment on a couple of the main points you covered during the interview and say it would be a honor to join the team.
2. If you get the job, send another thank-you. If you do not get the job, send another thank-you. Once you're working for the new company, follow up on the promises you made during the interview. Your personal brand depends on that. Don't let your "professional and qualified" brand turn into "talks a good game but doesn't come through."
- 3.

Create an authentic personal brand.
Live that brand every day.
Sell that brand to everyone you meet.



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