

Seal the Deal in the Interview

Think you're the best project person for the job? Prove it in your interview.

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Once you land a job interview, the stakes are exponentially raised. It's your one shot at showing the organization how you can meet its specific needs — and why you're the best project professional for the position.

Here are five ways to close the deal:

1. Find out everything you can about the organization's current projects — and then show off your knowledge, says Stephen Conway, CEO of Career Library TV, an online tool for job seekers in **Salisbury, England**.

"The interviewer will find you up to date on topical news and that will impress," he says. "You will not only be able to talk knowledgeably about what they are involved in, but you can share how your experience matches the kind of projects they are running and how you can add value."

2. Develop a 45-60 second recap of your biggest success stories, says Joel Garfinkle, founder of Dream Job Coaching, a career coaching firm in Oakland, California, USA.

"Start off with the problem and outline the actions you took to solve it," he says. "Finally, share the measurable result and impact the accomplishment had on the company."

If you completed a project two weeks ahead of schedule, for example, show how that gave the company an edge by getting to market faster. "Focus on results that matter and be as specific as possible," says Mr. Garfinkle, also author of "Getting Ahead: Three Steps to Take Your Career to the Next Level."

3. Frame your achievements in the same terminology the organization uses, says Mr. Conway.

If the company describes itself as dedicated to customer service, give an example of how you went above and beyond to ensure your customers and stakeholders were satisfied with a project's outcome, for example.

4. Show some work samples, such as an especially complex project plan or a work breakdown structure, says Larry LaBelle, owner of Training Tamer Inc., a Tampa, Florida, USA-based consulting firm. Be able to tell a powerful story about that sample and how it benefitted the company.

"Work samples are a mental picture where one picture is worth a thousand words," Mr. LaBelle says. "They are compelling, easily remembered and can be more easily conveyed to other decision makers who weren't in the interview."

5. Illustrate how your strengths will address the organization's specific needs, problems and initiatives. Ask about existing project challenges or new initiatives and then outline the actions you would take,

"This will make you look like you understand the issues the manager is facing and that you have the skills to address them from the get-go," Mr. LaBelle says.

Ultimately, organizations want to know how you can help them succeed. Show how your strengths and accomplishments can do that, and you're one step closer to landing the job.