

Interview Tip – Present the Evidence

Here's another in the short series of tips for preparing for job interviews, pitching to potential patrons to support your work, or asking another organisation to partner with you – present the evidence!

Showing evidence for your experience and accomplishments is very simple and straightforward, and yet it's an aspect of demonstrating your achievements that few candidates think of when they're preparing for an interview. Out of the dozens and dozens of interviews I've conducted, only in one or two cases did a candidate come with physical or electronic evidence to back up their claims to show the interview panel.

"But won't people just believe what I say in the interview?" you ask. And the answer is yes, many interviewers will. But the more experienced and diligent interviewers will know that statements on your CV or claims you make in an interview need to be substantiated if they're to rely on them in making an appointment. According to the 2020 Checkster report on ethical hiring, 78% of candidates have lied or said they would lie in a job application! So clearly a diligent recruiter is going to be wary of putting too much confidence in unsubstantiated claims.

Candidates make false claims or exaggerations about proficiency and skills they don't have (60%).

Inventing job titles that are more impressive than those they actually had (41%).

Over-stating their role in a project (49.5%).

Making up claims about experience they don't have (42%).

Referencing achievements they didn't really achieve, ie an award or positive press coverage (26%)

Presenting the evidence for your claims shows the recruiting panel that your claims can be depended upon, even as they wonder about the veracity of other candidates' assertions about their knowledge and experience.

So, what sort of evidence are we talking about? Well, it can be anything! Make **copies of certificates from any training** that you've done so you can demonstrate instantly that you really do have that knowledge under your belt. We demand

this with child safety training like Responding to Abuse & Neglect – we'd never employ someone in a role that requires this training without laying eyes on the evidence that they've

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actually done it. So it makes sense to present the evidence for any other training you've done, also.

It may be possible to **present samples of your work**, especially in areas where your efforts have been unique or otherwise noteworthy. You could bring a copy of a policy you've written as an example of your work. If you're talking about how you carefully manage and establish clear parameters for your staff, bring along a job description that you've developed so the panel can see for themselves what you provide those who work for you. If you've been involved in designing promotional material, bring some samples. Rather than simply talk about the websites, databases, and apps I've developed, in an interview I could hold up screenshots, or be ready to quickly swipe through images on a tablet if someone on the panel wanted to see more.

Those of us involved in public teaching work should be ready to **refer people to online resources** we've developed, whether that's video on YouTube, or recordings on our websites. Obviously the interviewer will need to look these up later, but if you present the evidence by telling them where to find the resources, it becomes much easier for them to have confidence about your claims.

If you've **published articles**, or had articles published about you, print a copy of one or more of them and bring them to the interview. If a panel member wanted to know about my public teaching style and methods, rather than simply say, "I was featured in an article in the journal *Homiletics*," I can hold up a print out of the article, and flip it open to the pages on which my approach to teaching is described.

Some evidence is much more personal. If your line manager sent you **an email to commend your efforts** on a particularly challenging task or to acknowledge some work that was especially noteworthy, print it out and add it to your pile. There's a world of difference for the interviewer between hearing a candidate say, "My manager thought I did great work" and "My manager sent this email to say how pleased he was with the high quality of my work."

You might have even **received letters or cards** from people in the community. If you want to speak about how you go above and beyond in your care of people, being able to point to a small bundle of thank you notes helps convey that message.

The goal is not to get the interview panel to read all the evidence, and not even to pass all your documents to them during the interview. You might simply point to the relevant piece of paper or pick it up while speaking about it. If someone on the panel wants to read it for themselves, they'll ask for it, but at least they will know there's evidence to back up your claims!

Presenting evidence is very easy and doesn't take long in preparation. But it can go a long way to helping an interview panel conclude that your gifts and experience are a right fit for their role.

To learn about where presenting the evidence fits in the [STAR\(ce\) method](#) of answering interview questions, [see this article](#).