



CollegeRecruiter.com  
November 20, 2014

### 3 Easy Ways to Keep Your Interviewer from Zoning Out

November 20, 2014 by [William Frierson](#)



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Often, job candidates are so worried about saying the right thing during an interview that they forget how to keep another person (in this instance your interviewer!) engaged in a conversation. Obviously there's more weighing on this conversation than a chat with your parents or best friend, and this means you need to display the best version of yourself. However, focusing too much on "covering everything" or "saying the right thing" can lead to boring your interviewer with drawn out answers – a surefire way to cause him or her to zone out. Practice and master the below tactics before your next interview to make sure this doesn't happen to you!

#### **Use the S.T.A.R. method to answer open-ended questions.**

The questions that begin with "Tell me about..." are the ones that often lead to long-winded rambling. It can be challenging to briefly get your key points across. In a past interview, I posed a "Tell me about..." question and the candidate went on and on and then forgot what I'd asked. He stopped, looked confused, and said, "What was your question again?" Not good. To answer these types of open-ended questions succinctly, use the S.T.A.R. method. It stands for:

**S** = Situation: Describe the situation

**T** = Task: Explain the task or your main goal

**A** = Action: Tell what actions you took

**R** = Result: Highlight the positive results and try to quantify them, if at all possible

Practice the S.T.A.R. method before your next interview – it can be difficult to use at first. And remember, sometimes a simpler, shorter answer is better, and the hiring manager can ask a follow up question if there is anything else he or she would like to know.

#### **Watch for nonverbal cues that indicate how you're doing in the interview.**

Many people are so worried about how they're coming across during an interview that they forget to watch the body language of their interviewer, even though reading nonverbal cues can increase your chances of interview success. Why? The way a hiring manager reacts to your comments can demonstrate whether they are listening or bored, whether or not they agree with what you're saying, and if they believe you would be a good fit for the job.

For example, if the interview is going well, the hiring manager should be making regular eye contact. If the interviewer is looking around the room, glancing at the clock on the wall, or looking down at their watch or notepad a lot, this could mean you're rambling, that he/she is ready to move on to the next question, or that they've already made a decision about you as a candidate.

If you're unsure of something you've just noticed during your interview, don't be afraid to check in with the hiring manager. You could say something such as: *"It looks like I might have confused you with my answer. Were you looking for specific examples or for my overall philosophy about people management?"* Or, *"Did that answer your question or was there something else you were looking for?"*

#### **Interview the company and hiring manager.**

Job interviews should always be a two-way street – it's just as important for you to interview a hiring manager about the company to ensure they're a good fit. Having this mentality going into an interview also helps you set the tone for a compelling conversation about your interest in the company, as opposed to a one-sided Q&A session.

Before your interview, prepare a list of questions you'd like to ask the interviewer so you aren't left with a blank stare when he or she asks, *"What questions do you have for me?"* A few examples to get you started are:

- Why did you decide to work for this company?
- What keeps you working here?
- How would you describe the company culture?
- Is this a newly created position or was there someone previously in it? If someone was in it, what did that person move on to do?



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Practice and use these three techniques for your next interview and you'll keep the hiring manager engaged and interested!

**About the Author**

For more advice on how to ace the interview and get a job, check out Lisa Quast's newest book [Secrets of a Hiring Manager Turned Career Coach](#). Lisa is a career coach and award-winning author, and in her recently released book, she shares the step-by-step advice that has helped her clients get a job they love with a 100% success rate. In it she details everything you need to know from writing a cover letter to acing an interview and negotiating a starting salary. Get your own copy on [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#).



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