



Brand Camp  
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## Are You Connecting with Your Interviewer?

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From personal experience, I can confidently say that communicating a strong personal brand in your interviews can be the difference between getting the position and going home empty-handed.

However, just verbally telling an interviewer what your personal brand is may not be enough. Part of communicating a strong brand is making a strong connection with your target audience (i.e. your interviewer).

The following are some top tips on how to make stronger and lasting connections in your interviews and in turn, more effectively communicate your personal brand:

- **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** You need to make sure the job and company are a good fit for you just as they need to determine if you are a good fit for them. Think of it as a two-way interview. This will allow your character and personality to shine through, as well as give you insight into the position. – [Lisa Quast, CareerWomanInc.com](#)
- **Help them relate to you.** When doing informational interviews or interviews with managers beyond HR who are actually in your chosen functional area or industry, you can create a stronger connection with them by asking them to share their own career search journey. Ask questions like, "How did you break into [insert industry, functional area or company name]?" and "Do you have any advice for someone trying to get his foot in the door in [insert industry, functional area or company name]?" These questions not only engage them in conversation which often creates a more personal connection, but often remind them of what it's like to be in the job seeker's shoes which may help them relate to the challenges you are facing and which may motivate them to assist you in other ways to overcome them. – [Chris Perry, CareerRocketeer.com](#)
- **Identify their interests or passions.** One way to make a personal connection with interviewers while still remaining professional is to comment on something in their office. Don't pick anything too personal, such as family photos, but perhaps a piece of artwork on their desk or an item that appears to be a souvenir from traveling. If you're able to make a genuine comment or pose a sincere question, it can be a great way to get interviewers to open up and talk about themselves. Pick the right item, and the interviewers will remember a warm conversation and that you showed an interest in them. – [Laurie Berenson, SterlingCareerConcepts.com](#)
- **Try the path less travelled.** When I was a consultant and had to regularly job hunt to keep the paychecks coming, I made a habit of requesting a walkthrough of the area and an introduction to a couple of people that I would be working with, so they could also look me over. I wanted to make a personal connection with as many people as possible, so they would be sure to remember me. Plus, I knew that most interviewees are too terrified to make such a request. While my interviewer was introducing me to someone, I would smile at the person and offer a warm handshake. I would then ask how the role for which I was interviewing would assist them with their daily duties. When possible, I would look for something around their desk that I might have in common with them and could comment on. This not only worked like a charm with respect to building a rapport, but once I started the assignment, I already felt like a part of the group. – [Monique LaCour-Henry, CenterStageGroup.com](#)
- **Tell a story.** Tell a brief story that illustrates one of your core values or skills. With the job market so tight, the employee's character matters even more than ever before, and besides, telling the right story can highlight your communication skills. So how do you pick the right story? You can go one of two ways: tell about an event that helped make you the person you are today (i.e., someone they want to hire); or tell a tale that highlights your problem-solving ability. After all, that's why you're being considered — to solve a problem or fill a need that the company has. Keep your tale short and sweet. Make sure your anecdote follows the basic form of situation–problem–resolution. And if you pick a story with genuine emotion in it, your interviewer will feel a connection with you. – [Bruce Hale, BruceTalks.com](#)

Thank you to all of the experts who contributed to this wealth of interview insight!

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