

You Talk Too Much

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The following article describes how to maximize your interview effectiveness by engaging the interviewer throughout the interview. Interviewer attention declines over time. The following describes how to keep the interviewer fully engaged.

When you start speaking the interviewer is listening with 100% intensity. After 10 seconds they begin listening with less attention. After 60 seconds their mind begins to wander and they're listening at a 50% level. After you've been speaking for 90 seconds without interruption, the interviewer is barely listening at all.

Also an interviewer's attention level is very difficult to accurately assess because most people are skilled at nodding their head and saying "hmmm" while looking at you, in an effort to disguise their wandering mind.

The longer you speak without interruption the less attention the listener is giving you. Hence, when you deliver a long answer that builds to an important conclusion, often the interviewer is no longer listening. This is particularly important when you respond to the question "Tell me about yourself." Near the end of your long response the interviewer starts to formulate their next question unless you keep them engaged.

Skilled interviewers ask "behavioral event questions" where you're asked to describe specific examples of your experience. In these situations your response can easily last much longer than 90 seconds. Maintain the interviewer's attention by asking the interviewer a question like, "Is this the level of detail you're looking for?" or "Is this the type of example you're looking for?" Stop and ask a question whenever you feel you've been speaking for more than 90 seconds continuously.

By asking a question you promote two-way communications and minimize the risk of talking too much.

Your goals are to ensure you are understood accurately and address their concerns. Engaging the interviewer in two way communications by asking questions helps you ensure they are listening while you deliver a detailed response.