

5 Tips for Interviewing

Use the following 5 tips to design and conduct an awesome conversation.

Semi-structured interviews follow a discussion guide, which helps keep the conversation on target, but still allows for spontaneity. The goal is to empathize with interviewees and to see things from their point of view.

Interview Discussion Guide

ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions allow room to truly hear how a person experiences the world. Interviews are more fruitful as a conversation. Always ask participants to explain their reasoning. Keep asking “why” until you get to the underlying meaning.

SHOW ME

Ask participants to show you the things they interact with (objects, spaces, tools) instead of just talking about them. It might prompt an even richer conversation. Don't be afraid to ask: “Can you show us how you do that?”

START BROAD AND FINISH DEEP

Pacing matters. First, get to know the person, then explore your topics of interest and conclude by digging deeper into the most interesting areas.

BUILD RAPPORT

Your body language, how you listen, the tone of your voice and your posture matter as much—if not more—than the questions you ask.

+ BODY LANGUAGE

Non-verbal cues such as eye contact, nodding, and smiling signal that you're engaged and interested.

+ MINIMIZING YOUR PRESENCE

Try not to make interviewees feel that you're more knowledgeable than they are. Avoid making them feel tested or interrogated.

MIND THE GAP

Keep in mind, what they say might not match up with what they do. They might not be able to verbalize—or even be aware of—what they need. Tune into the things that don't match up— said or not said. Then ask!

Advanced Interview Tips

Here are some **advanced tips** for conducting a great interview

Helpful Tips for Going Deeper

TELL ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN...

Ask participants to tell a story about an event in their past, e.g. "Tell me about a time when you made a significant discovery in your lab."

5 WHY'S.

Asking "why" in response to five consecutive answers pushes the interviewee to examine and express the motivations behind their behavior and attitudes.

THINK ALOUD.

As participants perform an exercise, ask them to think aloud to uncover relevant motivations, concerns, perceptions and reasoning.

ASK NAÏVE QUESTIONS

Unassuming questions encourage people to explain the logic of their behaviors. Be careful to pose these questions with genuine curiosity to avoid sounding patronizing.

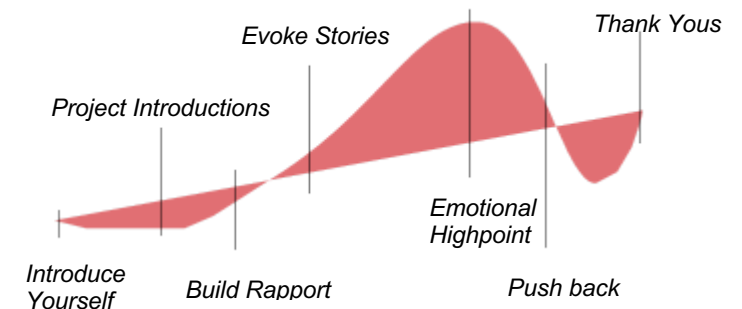
ALLOW FOR PREGNANT PAUSES.

Try not to fill any silence. After asking a question give them time to reflect and answer. Don't assume you know what they're going to say or put words in their mouth. Let them articulate their thoughts in their own words.

STAY UNBIASED.

Observe and ask questions without judging. Don't correct, refute or challenge.

INTERVIEW CURVE // 60-90 MINS



Capturing an Interview

It can be easy to forget to capture useful thoughts and images for storytelling after an interview. Here are some prompts to help you in the moment.

What to Capture During the Interview

CAPTURE NOTES ABOUT

- + Interesting Quotes
- + Problems
- + Opportunities
- + Interpretations
- + Ideas
- + Insights

TOP 3 IMAGES TO CAPTURE DURING EACH INTERVIEW

Asking the right kinds of questions is just one aspect of becoming a great interviewer. Setting the stage is equally as important. The activities and tools in this lesson will help you hone your skills at both.

CONTEXT SHOT In home, environment, city

PORTRAIT SHOT A close-up in context, action shot

ARTIFACT SHOT Close-up that gives insight into their personal story