

How To Make An Impression At An Interview

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** This guide is structured to comprehensively cover all aspects of making a strong and positive impression during a job interview. It begins by outlining pre-interview preparation, moves on to the interview itself, covering aspects such as body language, communication style, and question answering techniques. Finally, it concludes with post-interview actions to solidify the positive impression made.

Interview preparation, first impression, body language, communication skills, active listening, STAR method, behavioral questions, situational questions, interview attire, follow-up, thank you note, confidence, research, questions to ask, networking, resume, portfolio, strengths, weaknesses, career goals, company research, interview etiquette, non-verbal communication, verbal communication, positive attitude.

Landing your dream job often hinges on the impression you make during the interview. This comprehensive guide provides a step-by-step approach to acing your interviews. From meticulous pre-interview research and strategic outfit selection to mastering confident communication and thoughtful question-asking, this resource equips you with the knowledge and skills to present the best version of yourself. Through detailed explanations of effective interview techniques, including the STAR method for answering behavioral questions, and actionable advice on crafting compelling responses, you'll learn

to showcase your skills and experience impressively. Finally, practical tips on post-interview etiquette, such as sending thank you notes, will ensure your interview experience leaves a lasting positive impression. (1500-word content would follow here, expanding on the following topics. This is a skeletal outline to illustrate the structure.)

I. Pre-Interview Preparation:

- Research: **Thoroughly research the company, the role, and the interviewer(s).**
- Outfit Selection: **Choose professional attire appropriate for the company culture.**
- Practice: Rehearse answering common interview questions using the STAR method.

Plan Your Route: **Arrive on time, or even a few minutes early.**

- Prepare Questions: **Develop insightful questions to ask the interviewer.**
- Prepare Materials: *Bring extra copies of your resume and portfolio (if applicable).*

During the Interview:

- First Impressions: **Make a strong first impression with a firm handshake and confident demeanor.**
- Body Language: Maintain positive and engaged body language throughout the interview.
- Communication Skills: **Speak clearly, concisely, and enthusiastically.**
- Answering Questions: Use the STAR method to structure your answers effectively.
- Active Listening: **Pay close attention to the interviewer's questions and comments.**
- Asking Questions: **Ask thoughtful and insightful questions to demonstrate your interest.**

III. Post-Interview Actions:

- Send a Thank-You Note: Send a personalized thank-you note within 24 hours.
- Follow Up: **Follow up with the interviewer if you haven't heard back within the expected timeframe.**

(The above structure would be fleshed out with approximately 1500 words of detailed explanations and examples. This is a skeletal outline only.)

10 Most Frequently Asked Interview Questions (related to making an impression):**

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why are you interested in this position?
3. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
4. Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
5. Why did you leave your previous job?
6. Describe a time you failed. What did you learn?
7. Tell me about a time you worked on a team.
8. How do you handle stress?
9. What are your salary expectations?
10. Do you have any questions for me?

Making a Stellar Impression: Your Ultimate Guide to Interview Success

Landing an interview is a huge step. You've polished your resume, crafted a compelling cover letter, and now you're on the cusp of meeting the people who could shape your career. But getting the interview is only half the battle. The real challenge lies in making a lasting, positive impression that sets you apart from the competition. After all, employers aren't just looking for someone with the right skills; they're looking for the right fit, someone who will thrive in their company culture and contribute to their success.

In today's competitive job market, simply being qualified isn't enough. You need to be memorable. This means going beyond the textbook answers and demonstrating genuine enthusiasm, a proactive attitude, and a clear understanding of what the role and the company are all about. So, how do you transform from a nervous applicant into a confident candidate who leaves an indelible mark? Let's dive into the essential strategies for making an impressive impression at your next interview.

Preparation is Paramount: Laying the Groundwork for Success

The secret to a great impression isn't just what you say and do *during* the interview, but what you do *before* you even walk through the door (or log into the video call!). Thorough preparation is your superpower, empowering you with confidence and allowing you to articulate your value proposition with clarity.

1. Deep Dive into the Company and Role

This is non-negotiable. Don't just skim the company's "About Us" page. Explore their mission statement, values, recent news, and social media presence.

Understand their products or services, their target market, and their competitors. Who are their leaders? What are their current challenges and opportunities? This research will help you tailor your answers, ask insightful questions, and demonstrate genuine interest. Think about how your skills and experience directly align with the specific responsibilities outlined in the job description. Identify keywords used in the job posting and try to incorporate them naturally into your responses.

2. Master the Job Description

Break down the job description into key responsibilities, required skills, and desired qualifications. For each point, brainstorm specific examples from your past experiences that showcase your proficiency. This is where the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) becomes your best friend. Having concrete examples ready will make your answers more impactful and believable, preventing vague or generic responses.

3. Know Your Audience

If possible, research your interviewers on LinkedIn. Understanding their roles, backgrounds, and career paths can help you build rapport and tailor your communication style. Are they hiring managers, HR professionals, or team members? Each might have a different focus and set of expectations.

4. Prepare Compelling Answers to Common Interview Questions

While you can't predict every question, you can anticipate many. Practice answering classics like:

1. "Tell me about yourself." (Craft a concise, professional summary that highlights your relevant experience and career aspirations.)
2. "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" (Be honest but strategic. Frame

- weaknesses as areas for growth and explain how you're addressing them.)
3. "Why are you interested in this role/company?" (Connect your passions and skills to the company's mission and the job's requirements.)
 4. "Where do you see yourself in five years?" (Show ambition and alignment with potential career progression within the company.)
 5. Behavioral questions (e.g., "Tell me about a time you faced a difficult challenge...")

5. Prepare Thoughtful Questions to Ask

Asking questions is not just an opportunity to gather information; it's a powerful way to showcase your engagement and critical thinking. Prepare 3-5 well-researched questions that demonstrate your interest and understanding of the role and company. Avoid questions that could be easily answered by a quick website search. Focus on aspects like team dynamics, company culture, future projects, or opportunities for professional development. This shows you're thinking beyond just the immediate task.

The First Few Minutes: Making an Unforgettable Initial Impression

The adage "you never get a second chance to make a first impression" couldn't be truer in an interview setting. The initial moments can significantly influence the interviewer's perception of you.

1. Punctuality is Non-Negotiable

For in-person interviews, aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early. For virtual interviews, log in 5 minutes before the scheduled start time to ensure your technology is working correctly. Being late signals a lack of respect for the interviewer's time and can create an immediate negative impression.

2. Dress for Success (Even Virtually)

Your attire should be professional and appropriate for the company culture. When in doubt, err on the side of being more formal. For virtual interviews, ensure your background is tidy and professional, and that you are well-lit. Even if the interviewer can't see your full outfit, dressing professionally can boost your own confidence.

3. The Power of a Confident Greeting

Offer a firm handshake (if appropriate and in-person), make direct eye contact, and deliver a warm, genuine smile. Introduce yourself clearly and confidently. For virtual interviews, a friendly smile and clear verbal greeting are key. This initial physical and verbal connection sets a positive tone.

4. Project Confidence and Enthusiasm

Sit up straight, maintain good posture, and engage with the interviewer. Your body language speaks volumes. Avoid fidgeting or slouching. Your voice should be clear and steady, conveying confidence and conviction. Enthusiasm is contagious, so let your genuine interest in the role shine through.

During the Interview: Demonstrating Your Value and Fit

This is where your preparation pays off. It's about showcasing your skills, experience, and personality in a way that resonates with the interviewer.

1. Active Listening and Thoughtful Responses

Listen carefully to each question before answering. Don't interrupt. If you need a moment to gather your thoughts, it's perfectly acceptable to say, "That's a great

question, let me think about that for a moment." When you do respond, be clear, concise, and relevant. Use the STAR method for behavioral questions to provide structured, impactful answers. Avoid jargon unless you're certain the interviewer will understand it.

2. Highlight Your Achievements, Not Just Responsibilities

When discussing your past roles, focus on what you **accomplished**, not just what you were **responsible for**. Quantify your achievements whenever possible. Instead of saying "Managed social media accounts," say "Increased social media engagement by 25% in six months through a targeted content strategy." This demonstrates tangible value and impact.

3. Show, Don't Just Tell

Provide specific examples and anecdotes to illustrate your skills and experiences. Instead of saying you're a great problem-solver, tell a story about a complex problem you solved. This makes your claims more credible and memorable. Think about soft skills like teamwork, communication, and leadership and how you can demonstrate them with examples.

4. Connect Your Skills to Their Needs

Continuously tie your answers back to the requirements of the job and the company's goals. Show the interviewer that you understand their challenges and how you can be part of the solution. Use phrases like, "Based on what you've described about X challenge, my experience in Y would be directly applicable because..."

5. Be Honest and Authentic

While you want to present yourself in the best possible light, authenticity is key to building trust. Don't exaggerate or claim skills you don't possess. If you're unsure about something, it's better to admit it and express a willingness to learn. Your personality and values are just as important as your technical skills.

6. Handle Difficult Questions Gracefully

If you encounter a question you're not prepared for or a difficult topic (like a past layoff or a career gap), remain calm. Take a breath, acknowledge the question, and answer truthfully and professionally. Focus on what you learned and how you've moved forward. Frame any challenges as learning opportunities.

The Closing: Leaving a Lasting Positive Impression

The interview isn't over until you've made your final exit. The closing moments are your last chance to reinforce your interest and make a strong final statement.

1. Reiterate Your Interest and Enthusiasm

Before concluding, express your continued interest in the role and the company. Briefly summarize why you believe you're a strong fit, referencing a key point from the conversation. This reinforces your commitment and keeps you top of mind.

2. Ask Your Prepared Questions

This is your opportunity to ask the insightful questions you prepared. It demonstrates your engagement and that you've done your homework. Listen attentively to the answers, and don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions if

appropriate.

3. Discuss Next Steps

Politely inquire about the next steps in the hiring process and the expected timeline for a decision. This shows you're organized and eager to move forward.

4. Thank Them Sincerely

Thank each interviewer for their time and the opportunity to learn more about the role and company. A sincere "thank you" goes a long way.

Follow-Up: Reinforcing Your Impression

The interview process doesn't end when you leave the room. A well-executed follow-up can solidify the positive impression you've made.

1. Send a Thank-You Note (Promptly!)

Send a personalized thank-you email to each interviewer within 24 hours of your interview. Reiterate your interest, mention a specific point from your conversation that resonated with you, and briefly remind them of how your skills align with the role. Proofread it carefully!

2. Be Patient and Professional

Respect the timeline they provided for next steps. If you haven't heard back by the specified date, a polite follow-up email is acceptable. Avoid being overly persistent.

Beyond the Basics: Little Touches That Make a Big Difference

Sometimes, it's the small details that truly elevate your impression:

1. **Enthusiasm for the Company Culture:** Show that you understand and appreciate their work environment and values.
2. **Problem-Solving Mindset:** Frame your experiences in terms of challenges you've overcome and solutions you've implemented.
3. **Proactive Attitude:** Mention initiatives you've taken or ideas you have that could benefit the company.
4. **Professionalism in Every Interaction:** From the receptionist to the CEO, treat everyone with respect.
5. **Genuine Curiosity:** Demonstrate a real desire to learn and grow within the role and the organization.

Making an impression at an interview is a skill that can be honed with practice and strategic thinking. By focusing on thorough preparation, confident delivery, thoughtful communication, and a professional follow-up, you can significantly increase your chances of standing out from the crowd and landing the job of your dreams. Remember, an interview is a two-way street; it's your opportunity to learn about them as much as it is their opportunity to learn about you. Embrace the process, be yourself, and let your best professional self shine!

In today's competitive job market, standing out during an interview is more than just answering questions—it's about creating a memorable impression that resonates long after the conversation ends. Making a lasting impact requires a thoughtful blend of preparation, presence, and authentic communication. Rather than relying on generic rehearsed responses, candidates who master the art of impression-making approach interviews with strategic intention, aligning their strengths with the employer's needs in a way that feels genuine and thoughtful. Many people underestimate the power of first impressions, yet research

consistently shows that initial perceptions influence not only hiring decisions but also long-term career trajectories. A strong interview presence goes beyond polished answers; it involves conveying confidence without arrogance, enthusiasm without enthusiasm overload, and professionalism with personal warmth. The key lies in crafting a narrative that reflects not just what you've done, but why you do it—and how you bring value beyond the keywords on a resume.

Understanding the Interviewer's Perspective

To truly impress, it's essential to shift your mindset from simply “getting the job” to genuinely connecting with the interviewer. Hiring managers are not just evaluating skills—they are assessing cultural fit, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving approaches. When you demonstrate that you've researched the company's mission, values, and recent developments, you signal respect and initiative. This awareness allows you to tailor your responses to reflect shared values, making your story more compelling. It transforms the interview from a one-sided Q&A into a dynamic exchange of ideas, where both parties feel seen and understood.

Key Insights into Non-Verbal and Verbal Signals

Verbal communication sets the stage, but non-verbal cues often determine the lasting tone. Maintaining steady eye contact conveys confidence and honesty, while a firm but measured tone reflects calm competence. Body language—such as open posture and purposeful gestures—communicates engagement and self-assurance. Equally important is the pacing and clarity of speech: pausing to think before answering shows thoughtfulness rather than nervousness. These elements, when aligned, create a cohesive presence that feels authentic and trustworthy, significantly enhancing your perceived credibility.

Strategic Storytelling Over Generic Responses

One of the most powerful tools in making a strong impression is storytelling. Instead of listing achievements, use concise, impactful anecdotes that illustrate your skills in action. Frame these stories using the STAR method—Situation, Task, Action,

Result—to provide context, demonstrate initiative, and quantify outcomes. This approach not only makes your points memorable but also helps interviewers visualize your contributions. When stories flow naturally and reflect genuine experiences, they humanize your profile and foster a deeper connection. The Practice of Authentic Engagement Beyond preparation, the ability to engage authentically can set top candidates apart. Active listening—responding attentively, asking thoughtful follow-up questions, and acknowledging the interviewer’s input—demonstrates respect and curiosity. This responsiveness signals emotional intelligence and adaptability, traits highly valued in dynamic workplaces. When you listen deeply, you shift from being just a voice on a screen to a thoughtful participant in a meaningful dialogue.

Long-Term Benefits and Lasting Influence

Impressing at an interview is not just about landing a job—it’s about shaping your professional identity. A well-executed interview experience can generate referrals, open doors to mentorship, and boost your confidence, all of which contribute to long-term career resilience. Moreover, the habits cultivated in preparation—clarity of thought, poised communication, and strategic storytelling—extend far beyond the interview room, enriching both personal growth and workplace relationships. Looking Ahead: The Evolving Nature of Interviews

As remote and hybrid interviews become the norm, the criteria for making an impression continue to evolve. Virtual settings demand even greater control over environment, tone, and digital presence. Yet, the core principles remain unchanged: authenticity, relevance, and connection. Candidates who adapt to these changes by refining digital etiquette, leveraging storytelling in online formats, and maintaining a genuine voice will not only thrive in current hiring landscapes but also position themselves for future opportunities in increasingly dynamic professional environments. To truly make an impression at an interview is to blend preparation with presence, competence with compassion, and

professionalism with personality. In doing so, you don't just impress your interviewer—you lay the foundation for a meaningful and enduring career chapter.

How to Make a Lasting Impression at Your Next Interview

In today's competitive job market, simply answering interview questions correctly isn't enough. To truly stand out and land your dream role, you need to make a memorable and positive impression on the hiring manager. This isn't about being someone you're not; it's about strategically showcasing your best self, demonstrating your value, and building genuine rapport. This comprehensive guide will equip you with the essential strategies to not just survive, but thrive, in your next interview, ensuring you leave a lasting, positive impact.

Mastering the Pre-Interview Preparation: The Foundation of a Stellar Impression

The interview doesn't begin when you walk through the door (or log into the video call). True impact starts long before. Thorough preparation is the bedrock upon which a strong impression is built. This phase involves understanding the role, the company, and yourself, and translating that knowledge into a compelling narrative.

Deep Dive into the Company and Role

This is non-negotiable. Generic answers won't cut it. Research the company's mission, values, recent news, and their position in the industry. Explore their website, LinkedIn page, and any recent press releases. Understand the specific challenges and opportunities the role addresses. What are their products or services? Who are their competitors? This knowledge allows you to tailor your responses and demonstrate genuine interest, a key factor in making a great impression. Look for keywords in the job description and integrate them into your conversation where appropriate. For example, if the role emphasizes "project management software," be ready to discuss your experience with specific tools.

Understanding Your Audience: The Interviewer(s)

If possible, find out who will be interviewing you. A quick LinkedIn search can reveal their background, tenure at the company, and even shared connections. This insight can help you anticipate their perspective and tailor your communication style. Are they a technical lead? Focus on your technical skills. Are they from HR? Emphasize your cultural fit and soft skills.

Articulating Your Value Proposition: "Why You?"

This is where you clearly define what you bring to the table. For each requirement in the job description, identify a specific example from your past experiences that demonstrates your proficiency. Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to structure your answers. Quantify your achievements whenever possible. Instead of saying "I improved efficiency," say "I implemented a new workflow that reduced processing time by 15%, saving the team approximately 5 hours per week." This concrete evidence is far more

impactful than vague statements.

Practicing Your Pitch: Confidence and Clarity

Rehearse your answers to common interview questions, but don't memorize them verbatim. This can sound robotic. Instead, aim for natural fluency and confidence. Practice with a friend, family member, or even in front of a mirror. Pay attention to your tone of voice, body language, and pacing. A well-rehearsed candidate conveys professionalism and preparedness.

Making a Powerful Entrance: First Impressions Count

The initial moments of an interview set the tone. Whether in-person or virtual, these first impressions are crucial for establishing credibility and rapport.

Professionalism in Appearance

Dress appropriately for the company culture. When in doubt, err on the side of more formal. For in-person interviews, ensure your clothes are clean, pressed, and fit well. For virtual interviews, ensure your background is tidy and professional, and that you're dressed as if you were in a physical office. This demonstrates respect for the opportunity and the interviewer's time.

Punctuality and Logistics

For in-person interviews, plan your route in advance and aim to arrive 10-15 minutes early. This allows you to compose yourself and avoid any last-minute stress. For virtual interviews, log in a few minutes early to test your audio and video connection. Technical glitches can derail even the best-prepared candidate.

The Handshake and Initial Greeting (In-Person)

A firm, confident handshake (if culturally appropriate) conveys self-assurance. Make eye contact and offer a genuine smile. Greet the interviewer by name and with enthusiasm. Your initial verbal greeting should be clear and polite.

Virtual Greetings and Engagement

For video interviews, maintain eye contact with the camera as much as possible to simulate looking the interviewer in the eye. Nod occasionally to show you're listening. Ensure good lighting so your face is clearly visible.

Engaging with Confidence: Demonstrating Your Fit

The core of the interview is the conversation. This is your chance to showcase your skills, experience, and personality, and to demonstrate how you align with the company's needs.

Active Listening and Thoughtful Responses

Don't just wait for your turn to speak. Listen intently to each question. If you need a moment to formulate your answer, it's perfectly acceptable to say, "That's a great question, let me think about that for a moment." Avoid interrupting. When you do respond, be clear, concise, and directly address the question. Use specific examples and the STAR method as your framework. Show your understanding by paraphrasing or asking clarifying questions if needed.

Showcasing Your Enthusiasm and Passion

Hiring managers want to see that you're genuinely excited about the role and the company. Let your personality shine through. Talk about what specifically interests you about the opportunity and why you believe you'd be a good fit. Enthusiasm is contagious and makes you a more appealing candidate. If you're passionate about a particular aspect of the industry or the company's work, share that with them.

Strategic Storytelling with the STAR Method

As mentioned earlier, the STAR method is your best friend for behavioral questions. Instead of just stating a skill, tell a story that illustrates it. * **Situation:** Briefly describe the context of your experience. * **Task:** Explain the goal you were trying to achieve. * **Action:** Detail the specific steps you took. * **Result:** Quantify the positive outcome of your actions. This approach makes your answers memorable and demonstrates your ability to problem-solve and achieve results. For instance, when asked about handling a difficult colleague, use STAR to describe how you navigated the situation and achieved a positive resolution, impacting team productivity.

Asking Insightful Questions: Demonstrating Engagement and Initiative

The questions you ask are as important as the answers you give. Prepare thoughtful questions in advance that demonstrate your engagement and understanding of the role and company. Avoid questions that can be easily answered by a quick Google search. Instead, ask about team dynamics, company culture, growth opportunities, or specific challenges the team is facing. Examples include: "What does success look like in this role in the first 90 days?" or "How does the team typically collaborate on projects?" This shows you're thinking critically and are invested in the future.

Going the Extra Mile: The Follow-Up That Seals the Deal

The interview doesn't end when you leave the room. A well-executed follow-up can reinforce your positive impression and keep you top of mind.

The Thank-You Note: Timely and Personalized

Send a personalized thank-you email within 24 hours of the interview. Reiterate your interest in the role and the company. Briefly mention a specific point from your conversation that resonated with you, and tie it back to your qualifications. This shows you were attentive and thoughtful. Avoid generic "thank you for your time" emails.

Reinforcing Key Strengths

Use the thank-you note as an opportunity to briefly re-emphasize a key skill or experience that you may not have fully conveyed during the interview. If you forgot to mention something important, you can subtly weave it in.

Addressing Any Missed Opportunities

If you feel you didn't adequately answer a particular question or left something important unsaid, the follow-up is a subtle way to clarify or add to your response. Be concise and avoid making excuses.

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Even with the best intentions, certain missteps can undermine your efforts to make a strong impression.

Negativity and Complaining

Never speak negatively about past employers, colleagues, or jobs. This reflects poorly on your professionalism and character. Focus on what you learned and how you grew from challenging experiences.

Lack of Preparation

Failing to research the company or role, or being unable to articulate your skills, signals a lack of interest and preparedness. This is a surefire way to make a bad impression.

Poor Non-Verbal Communication

Avoiding eye contact, fidgeting, slouching, or speaking too softly can convey nervousness or disinterest. Pay attention to your body language.

Arrogance or Overconfidence

While confidence is key, arrogance is a turn-off. Be humble and willing to learn. Showcase your achievements without bragging.

Not Asking Questions

Failing to ask questions can make you appear disengaged or uninterested in the opportunity.

Conclusion: Making Your Mark

Making a lasting impression at an interview is a multi-faceted process that requires preparation, confidence, and genuine engagement. By focusing on thorough research, articulating your value proposition, demonstrating your

enthusiasm, and following up professionally, you can significantly increase your chances of standing out from the competition. Remember, an interview is a two-way street. It's your opportunity to learn about the company, and their opportunity to learn about you. By approaching it strategically and authentically, you can make a powerful and positive impact, paving the way for a successful career move.

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Questions & Answers About how to make an impression at an interview

N o	Question	Answer
1	Beyond just knowing the company, what's the *most* important research to do before an interview?	Research the interviewer! Look them up on LinkedIn. Understanding their background, recent projects, and any shared connections can help you tailor your answers and build rapport. It shows initiative and genuine interest.
2	How can I make a memorable entrance without being over the top?	Your 'entrance' starts before you even say hello. Arrive 5-10 minutes early (not too early!), have a confident posture, make eye contact with everyone you meet, and offer a firm handshake. A genuine smile goes a long way.
3	What's the secret to answering 'Tell me about yourself' in a way that captivates the interviewer?	Think of it as your 'elevator pitch.' Start with your current role and relevant experience, highlight a key accomplishment or two that aligns with the job, and then briefly explain why you're interested in *this specific* role and company. Keep it concise (60-90 seconds).
4	How do I showcase my enthusiasm and passion without sounding fake or desperate?	Authenticity is key. Connect your personal interests and values to the company's mission or a specific project. Use strong action verbs to describe your experiences and articulate *why* you're excited about the opportunity. Specific examples of your drive are more impactful than generic statements.
5	What's the best way to ask insightful questions that demonstrate my engagement?	Go beyond 'What's the company culture like?' Ask questions that show you've thought critically about the role and the company's future. Examples: 'What are the biggest challenges someone in this role might face in the first 90 days?' or 'How does the team collaborate on project X?'
6	How can I effectively follow up after an interview to leave a lasting positive impression?	Send a personalized thank-you email within 24 hours. Reiterate your interest, briefly mention a key point discussed, and perhaps add a thought or detail you forgot to mention during the interview. Proofread carefully!

7	What's a common interview mistake that people make, and how can I avoid it?	Failing to connect your skills and experience directly to the job description. Don't just list what you've done; explain <i>*how*</i> your past successes will help you excel in <i>*this*</i> role. Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to provide concrete examples.
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