

How to Talk About Yourself in an Interview Without Making it All You About You (Tricky, We Know)#

By [Jenny Foss](#), Career Strategist, The Muse



Read just about any article about job searching and you'll probably get fairly clear instructions to toot your horn, show 'em what you're made of, or make it very easy for the hiring manager to quickly understand your capabilities and value.

"Knock 'em dead!" these articles will shout. "Be your own marketer!" Yes, of course.

But, it's not hard to take this advice too far, especially if you're nervous or really, super need that job. Where, then, is that fine line between "horn tooter" and "cocky son-of-a-gun?" And, more importantly, how can you ensure that you stay on the right side of that line in your next job search?

Here are four ways to [talk about yourself](#) in your next interview in a way that showcases your talents, without making it come off as me, me, me.

1. Tell a Story (Instead of Just Puffing Away)

It's important that you come across as capable, likeable, and [a good culture fit](#) as you interview. In a way, it's that simple. The person to whom an offer is going to be extended—for any given position—is going to be viewed as all three.

One of the easiest ways to accomplish this (and not look like you're strutting around like a darned peacock) is [through storytelling](#). Don't just say you're good at something and puff it up with a bunch of empty adjectives; share a story that demonstrates it. What are you proud of that will showcase your strengths in whatever the interviewer just asked you about? Paint a picture—a relevant, on-point and interesting one—that will draw people into your story.

2. Share Credit with Your Colleagues

While your next employer will certainly hire you for what he believes *you* can do for him (thus, you need to make that abundantly clear in an interview), you don't want to come across as a lone wolf or a spotlight hog. Generally speaking, people don't want lone wolves and spotlight hogs on their teams.

A great way to highlight your capabilities without looking all hey-look-at-me about it is to speak in terms of “we.” What did you and your team pull off together? If you have or had direct reports, what did they do under your direction that went very well (and, at the same time, probably demonstrates your leadership strengths)?

Almost every job you go after is going to require an ability to collaborate with and celebrate the wins of others. As you share your strengths, strive to also illustrate how completely you put the “t” in team player. You can do this by sharing credit as merited.

3. Speak With Genuine Enthusiasm

Have you ever hung out with someone who just oozes with faux enthusiasm? Do you enjoy being around that person? Would you want to hire her? I’m guessing no, and no.

Folks, here’s the thing—most hiring managers can smell a fake a million miles away. And it’s not an endearing smell. That said, when you’re in an interview, be a part of the conversation. Show up with a sense of enthusiasm and genuineness, or don’t bother showing up. If you can’t be excited about, or muster enthusiasm for, the role for which you’re applying, consider (strongly) another option.

Companies hire people who are excited about their products, services, business model, and people. You will be competing with people who are all of the above. Adjust your strategy—and your mindset—accordingly.

4. Don’t Be a One-Upper

And last, but most certainly not least, don’t be the ever-hated one-upper. This is not (at all) your ticket to success when it comes to dazzling decision makers. Yes, we get it. You didn’t just climb the mountain. You climbed it, rappelled over it, and bungee jumped off the other side, and landed in an icy cold stream filled rainbow colored fish and gold nuggets. Of course.

But if your interviewer only scaled the mountain and stopped there, all of your extra razzle dazzle may just alienate him or her, or—at the very least—feel a bit like overkill. Be sincere. Be engaging. Be impressive. But check the one-upping at the door.

There’s something that you’ve just got to remember when you’re looking for a new job:

Everything in life (and most definitely, in a job search) is about packaging. [And branding](#). And presentation. For every given competition, the capable person who markets him or herself the best is going to win, period.

So, before you walk into your [next interview](#), figure out how to best do this. Figure out how to step out strong, without looking like you’re full of yourself. Figure out how to make the conversation about you, without it appearing to be all about you.