

Interviewing Users

Tips for Interview Success

1. Be casual and conversational
2. Learn to love pauses and gaps
3. Paraphrase what you heard
4. Practice active listening
5. Avoid leading the participant

How to Act as an Interviewer

1. Avoid inserting your own opinion
2. Don't judge or dismiss answers
3. Ignore distractions
4. Be assertive and lead the discussion
5. Watch out for vague answers

When you hear vague answers, probe for deeper insights with questions like...

- "Can you tell me more about that?"
- "Is there something else you'd like to add?"
- "Could you say a bit more about that?"

More than Words

Only a small part of communication is about the actual words. Think about:

- The words of the question you ask *and* the way you ask it. Is your tone casual or formal? Friendly or angry?
- The words of the person's answer, and his tone when answering
- The *body language* you're both expressing (more on that shortly!)
- Any pressures he may feel in answering a certain way (such as pressure to agree with you, or to represent himself in a positive way)
- The context around you. If small children are around, an interview subject may not feel comfortable sharing details on a horror movie that he likes!

Remember...

If you find yourself asking a leading question during an interview, let it go. This self-awareness means it's less likely that you'll do it again. It's a difficult skill to be conversational with zero affirmations or instances of leading the participant.

Resources

- Chandler, C., Slee, Anna van, & Dove, Sean K. (2014). *Adventures in experience design : Activities for beginners*. S.I.: New Riders.
- Mears, Chris "How to Improve Your Interview Skills."
<http://uxmastery.com/how-to-improve-your-interview-skills/>