

## 3 X 5 Card for Interview Prep

1. Main reason the employer would want to hire you
2. What you have to offer in the way of experience, credentials, and personality
3. Two key accomplishments to support your interest in that position
4. An answer to what you think might be the employer's main objection to you, if any
5. A statement of why you would want to work for this company

Your 3x5 index card holds the personalized keys to interview preparation. It helps you narrow down and stay focused on your most important “talking points.”

First, your card will include the short pitch about yourself to use when you meet a new contact, in interviews, or at other events or meetings.

Here's an example: I am a marketing manager with twelve years of international experience. In my recent job, I was able to grow revenue by 20 percent in a very bad market. The reason I am looking for a job right now is that the company I work for has decided it doesn't want to be international anymore. I am talking to you because I can see that you are very interested in growing internationally.

Your card should also include three or four of your personal accomplishments. You want to know these like the back of your hand in case you are ever asked an off-the-wall question in an interview or meeting. Let's say an interviewer asks you how good your tennis game is. Drawing from your card, you might say: “I don't know about my tennis game, but at my last job I felt like I was really hitting the ball around. One thing I did was help our sales department increase sales by X percent.”

And finally, your card should include the one question you are most afraid they are going to ask you along with your answer. Let's say your most dreaded question is Why are you looking? You might say, “I'm looking for a new job because I was caught in a downsizing like so many others in this market.”

Shape your own interview. The unfortunate reality is that managers who are hiring don't always ask the right questions. When this is the case, as the job hunter, you have to figure out a way to get your strengths and accomplishments into the interview. (Remember the tennis game example?) This is when it is a great time to recall all of the great accomplishments you have on your index card and use them to keep the interview moving forward.

You might expect the person interviewing you to prepare just as much as you did for the interview but that rarely happens. When this is the case, you don't have to surrender to her poor preparation. You can revive the situation by creating your own interview. Use the information on your index card to keep the conversation flowing, and keep it flowing in a direction that works to your advantage.