



# How to Stand Out In a Group Interview

*Differentiate yourself from the crowd tactfully with these tips.*

Picture this: You've thoroughly prepared for your interview and feel confident and calm heading into your meeting. Then, you enter the hiring manager's office...and find four other candidates also waiting to be interviewed for the job. What? Together? Surprise! Welcome to a group interview.

Unlike traditional interviews, group interviews include multiple job candidates. These events may have one interviewer or a panel of interviewers and can be planned or sprung like a pop quiz. You might be asked typical interview questions, or to complete and present a project as a group. For companies, the benefits are clear: interviewing multiple job seekers together is a quick, effective way to fill open roles. Besides saving time and money, recruiters can also observe how individuals handle pressure-cooker situations and interact with others—vital skills where team projects, leadership, and group cooperation play key roles. For retailers, restaurants, and other customer service industries, group interviews streamline the hiring process, especially when staffing up for seasonal or similar types of positions. When used during second interviews, the group approach enables employers to easily compare finalists side by side. So, to land that job, your goal is to stand out for the right reasons.

## Initiate, interact, and impress

Expect employers to observe you even before the interview begins. Do you hold the door for others? Are you friendly toward fellow interviewees? Introduce yourself. Start a conversation with those around you; set the tone for a positive, constructive meeting. In fact, helping others feel comfortable can help put you at ease, too. Initiating contact also positions you as outgoing and a leader who doesn't shy away from meeting new people, despite feeling jittery. Plus, speaking to and interacting with others enables you to strategically learn about and assess your competition beforehand.

## Command without commandeering

It sounds simple, but pay attention to everyone in the room. Consider a group interview a group conversation where everyone's input is valid and important. To stand out without minimizing others,

be supportive; never discount another's opinions. Convey levelheadedness and teamwork by staying positive and collected, even when you disagree. Expand upon what others are saying while adding your own thoughts. Just don't get cocky, try to one-up others, or monopolize the meeting; you'll come across as a know-it-all rather than knowledgeable. Address your co-interviewees by name; it respectfully acknowledges them... and subtly gives you a leadership nod. When asked a group question, take a leadership role by answering first. If given a group task to solve, offer ideas and support others to demonstrate that you can be both a good leader *and* follower. Also, *listen carefully* to avoid a huge conversation no-no: repeating what someone else just said.

Group interviews follow the basics of any interview, and courtesy counts. When answering questions, make eye contact with all interviewers, even if they are silent; aim to make everyone feel included. Pay attention to your body language to show that you are engaged with the group, even if the spotlight is not on you at the moment. While waiting to speak, discreetly jot down notes so you don't forget what you want to say next.

## For the less bold

If you're not naturally talkative, do your best to speak up. But remember, louder isn't always better, so be yourself. Also, fake it 'til you make it! Even if you are surprised and nervous to see other candidates, put on a brave face. Enter the room with confidence and with the mindset that you will do your best.

Finally, you can safely bet that all other candidates will be sending thank yous. So, just as you worked to shine during the interview, stand out by sending a well-crafted thank you note to each interviewer. Highlight specifics from the meeting and thank that individual personally by name.



## i n a nutshell:

Acing a group interview requires differentiating yourself through talent and tact:

- **Apply interview basics: good preparation, strong delivery, and memorable follow-up**
- **Be kind, professional, and respectful of all interviewees**
- **Position yourself as both leader and team player**
- **Be inclusive; don't monopolize**
- **Share the spotlight but don't be overshadowed**
- **Think fast, speak up, be confident and gracious**

A group interview is much like other interviews, only with more people in one space. So, double down and focus on communicating your value and fit. Do it better than anyone else seated in the same room and you just may walk out with that job offer.