

Chapter 27

Ten Interviewer Personality Types

In This Chapter

- ▶ Interviewer styles you may encounter
- ▶ Amusing but useful information

Liking people who are like you is human nature. Moreover, job interviewers for companies tend to be representative of the kinds of people at their respective companies.

Using general perspectives (see Chapter 1) as a starting point, look over the following personality types, presented according to my “Latin” designations. Without resorting to a personality transplant, try to strike a pose harmonious with that of your interviewer. For example, if your interviewer is full of courtly charm, let honey drip from your lips; if your interviewer is brisk to the point of brusqueness, stick to the verbal point with virtually no detours.

Heed this mirroring strategy, and you have a better chance of establishing a good rapport.

Achieveus Youngius (Young Achiever)

***Achieveus youngius:** A twentysomething, fresh-faced, conservatively dressed, preppie type most commonly seen on college campuses during job fairs; easily tamed; demeanor is cheerful and positive — friendly.*

Approach these specimens with down-home charm, and you have them eating out of your hand. Encourage conversations about extracurricular activities, common interests, leadership positions, admiration for the company, and a lot of enthusiasm. But not for too long.

Specimens of this type have little or no interviewing experience, so help out by asking questions. Doing so puts them at ease. To get the job, focus on demonstrating traits, skills, goals, and experiences that the *achieveus youngius* can relate to.

298 Part V: The Part of Tens

Businessius Serious (Serious Businessperson)

Businessius serious: Gray-haired, successful, most often seen wearing a slightly rumpled, expensive suit; females are less common than males; demeanor is serious and businesslike.

Approach these specimens with confidence and humility and let them know that you're willing to work your way to the top. Discuss your academic or work achievements, strict work ethic, steadfast dedication to a goal, and leadership skills. Let the *businessius serious* see that you have broad knowledge of the company.

Let this specimen control the interview. To get the job, focus on showing the *businessius serious* exactly what skills you bring to the company and how you can apply those skills toward the position you seek.

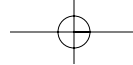
Caution: Most specimens of this type are friendly. However, a few have a mutant gene that makes them very dangerous. Watch out for the ones who try to bite you with stress-inducing situations and off-the-wall questions.

Bossus Potentialus (Potential Boss)

Bossus potentialus: Of variegated descriptions; similar to *businessius serious*; usually found at top of department, looking for help; demeanor is serious and practical.

To identify these specimens, ask whether the *businessius serious* interviewing you would be your direct boss. If so, ask questions about management philosophy. Then present your skills as compatible with that philosophy. For example, if the *bossus potentialus* mentions teamwork, show yourself as a team player.

The *bossus potentialus* values common sense, work experience, and a positive attitude and despises arrogance and immaturity. Use level-headed practicality when approaching these specimens and let them control the interview.



Contemplativus Coldius (Cold Contemplator)

Contemplativus coldius: Usually found in comfortable, uninteresting clothing in a practical environment; doesn't collect personal items; likes to be alone; methodical, precise, and work-oriented; demeanor is quiet and self-sufficient.

If you have any discrepancies on your resume, beware — *contemplativus coldius* wants a logical explanation. These specimens are thinkers — analytical and critical. Approach them with reserve and self-confidence. Don't talk too much and don't try to be their new best friend. Focus your answers so that you do not stray into irrelevant information — doing so drives *contemplativus coldius* crazy.

Do give plenty of information for them to mull over; they love details, so tell them the *who, what, why, when, and how*. These specimens love analyzing, but they need something to analyze. Offer your skills, achievements, and experience as a rich analytic possibility, more interesting than any other yet offered, and they'll be happy.

Fuzzius Warmus (Warm Fuzzies Person)

Fuzzius warmus: Nonthreatening, friendly, likes people; several personal items in office; usually involved in several things at once; smiles often and genuinely; demeanor is concerned, comfortable, and thoughtful.

These specimens make sure that you're happy and comfortable before they start the interview. In fact, you may find that they spend so much time caring for you that you never get interviewed.

Start by establishing a connection and then steer the interview toward more serious matters. *Fuzzius warmus* is delighted to follow your lead; after all, they just want you to be happy. Don't expect them to be very skilled at interviewing — they hate making decisions. So be ready to present all of your qualifications for the job.

300 Part V: The Part of Tens

Interviewus Incompetus (Incompetent Interviewer)

Interviewus incompetus: *Of all shapes, colors, and sizes; found in various environments; identified by a poor interviewing technique; demeanor varies.*

Unlike its distant relative, the *interviewus competus*, the *interviewus incompetus* either has little training or experience in interviewing or has personality problems. If your interview seems unfocused, or you find yourself asked unethical or irrelevant questions, or you're faced with an arrogant brute who never lets you speak, you can be fairly sure that you've entered the lair of *interviewus incompetus*.

To escape this specimen unscathed and leave the best impression possible, gracefully take control of the situation by repeating the questions for focus, asking questions that demonstrate your skills or knowledge in a particular area, staying calm, and initiating discussion of your skills and their application to the position you seek. Don't overestimate this specimen's ability to uncover your potential.

Intimidatus Serious (Serious Intimidator)

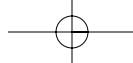
Intimidatus serious: *Impeccably dressed, conservative; very neat and organized; prefers expensive, classic furnishings; work-oriented; always on time; demeanor is reserved, dedicated, and critical.*

Approach these specimens quietly and seriously. Don't scare them away with chatter, false friendliness, or insincerity. *Intimidatus serious* doesn't go to work to make friends, but to work — only work. So don't waste time with pleasantries; get right to the point as succinctly as possible.

Whatever you do, don't let these specimens see your fear or intimidation. They'll kick you right out and race to the next interview.

Recruiterus Professionalus (Professional Recruiter)

Recruiterus professionalus: *Suave, professional, well dressed; demeanor is quiet and confident, measuring.*



Chapter 27: Ten Interviewer Personality Types **301**

These specimens spend their days interviewing people for specific companies. Their goal is more to screen you out than in, as they narrow their list of applicants. They won't let you ask many questions, so concentrate on answering their questions with as many specifics as possible about your skills, experience, and accomplishments.

To get this specimen on your side, focus on presenting the best possible you. Make sure that your appearance is impeccable and that your enthusiasm and interest in the job shine forth. Answer confidently and communicate clearly.

Talkus Alotus (Person Talks a Lot)

***Talkus alotus:** Fashionable, often individualistic in dress; hoards sentimental items like pictures or mementos; prefers clutter to order; often runs late; demeanor is talkative and upbeat.*

The *talkus alotus* enjoys company. These specimens gravitate toward busy offices where they're surrounded by many others. They like to talk and they talk fast, so keep up.

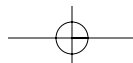
Start by establishing a personal connection with these specimens. They probably won't pay much attention to you if they don't like you, so work on creating a friendly foundation by pasting a wide, sincere smile on your face and exuding enthusiasm. Focus on keeping these specimens interested throughout the interview — beware of boring them.

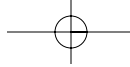
Technicus Strictus (Strictly Technical Person)

***Technicus strictus:** No definite description; look for pencils, notepads, and gadgets, like a pocket calculator or laptop computer; often found behind a technical title, like accountant, marketing assistant, or chemical engineer; demeanor is friendly but distant.*

The *technicus strictus* doesn't mix well with other species, so camouflage yourself in the tools of your trade. Focus on your technical knowledge and achievements. Get this specimen excited by discussing common interests in your field.

These specimens usually have little interviewing experience, so make sure that you discuss your skills in detail. Don't assume that they will be able to uncover all of your strengths — *technicus strictus* are undoubtedly skilled in their fields, but not in interviewing, so be ready to ask good questions.





302 Part V: The Part of Tens

Too Muchus of a Good Thing?

If you're not flatlined after reading this good but goofyius list of interview types, reinforce your understanding by trying to think of a person you know who fits each category. Or meet with friends and pretend you're trying out for the cast of a sitcom. Each friend assumes a personality type and role-plays an interview with you. Good luck with *contemplativus coldius* and *technicus strictus*.

