

## Seven Tips for SME Interviews - Overcoming the Lack-of-Curiosity Blues (Oct 15)



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“Boundless curiosity will help you get all the information you need to meet the goals of your interview.”

As the summer draws to a close, I’m coaching my daughter on language comprehension skills. She does great on the topics that interest her, but when it comes to the dry, scientific topics, she is not interested and gets lower scores.

I tell her: “If you want to do well on this test, don’t switch off—open your mind to learning new things.”

Of course, we all need to do the same with our own work, especially when gathering information from SMEs to create targeted, customized learning solutions. There are times when your topic is pretty dry or basic. There are also times when you may be embarrassed to ask an obvious question.

### **Overcoming those mean old lack-of-curiosity blues**

These situations may result in the lack-of-curiosity blues, when you are less curious and less likely to ask questions.

To overcome your lack of keen interest, take a “step back” and look at the topic from all angles. Boundless curiosity is one of the top skills every interviewer needs.

*Before you start an interview, keep these tips in mind:*

- Even though you have done your homework, adopt a “know nothing” attitude so you remain open-minded.
- Adopt a child-like curiosity to open your mind to new knowledge, ideas, and different perspectives.
- Remember everyone has his or her own perspective on a topic, so don’t pay attention to the “right” answers and ignore the ones you think are “wrong.”

*During the interview:*

- Ask open-ended, non-judgmental questions to give the SME a chance to explain in depth.
- Keep asking, “What else?” to cover all angles and get to the core of the topic.
- Take notes to listen actively and be engaged in the interview.
- Use “The Five Whys” methodology, developed by Toyota, to get to the root of a problem. With this method, you ask “why?” no fewer than five times. The answer to each question then forms the basis of the next question.

Boundless curiosity will help you get all the information you need to meet the goals of your interview. When you overcome the “lack of curiosity” blues, you can establish rapport with your sponsors and SMEs—they are more likely to share deep, detailed and valuable nuggets with a passionate interviewer than with someone who is just doing their job.

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