

Proactive approaches to the interview process

Throughout your career as a business intelligence professional, you will interview with potential employers during the application process. Interviewing is a key skill for your job search. In this reading, you'll consider how to identify BI-specific roles during your job search as well as general tips for interviewing.

Identify BI roles

Part of your job search will include identifying roles that are specific to the BI field. As you learned in previous lessons, there are many types of data-related jobs, but there are key elements you can search for in job descriptions to determine if a job is actually a BI role.

Search for keywords: An easy way to identify BI-specific roles is to search for job listings that refer to business intelligence directly. Often, BI-related roles will be listed as “business intelligence analyst” or “business intelligence engineer.” Previously, you learned about the differences between BI analysts and engineers, but these terms are often used interchangeably; be sure to read the job description and requirements carefully to decide if you're a good fit for the role.

Consider skills and responsibilities: You can also determine whether or not a role is BI-specific by what skills and responsibilities are listed in the job description. Often, data analyst roles are focused on analyzing historical data provided by existing systems. BI roles are usually more focused on developing database systems and delivery processes to provide intelligent access to stakeholders.

Research: A large part of your job search is going to be research. When trying to determine whether or not a role is actually BI-related, researching the business that posted the job listing can reveal the kinds of roles that exist within their organization and how they approach data roles in general.

General tips for job interviews

Find connections between the job listing and your resume: First, re-read your resume and the job description to help you draw lines between the two. Where do they connect? Then, as you interview, include specific keywords or phrases from the job description that match skills you possess or achievements you have accomplished previously in your career.

Focus on data: As you start to think about things you want to highlight in your interview, don't forget to include *data*. This helps your interviewer understand not just your overall achievements, but how big of an impact you made. What data can you provide that tells the story of your experience in terms of the needs of this position? The “equation” we suggest includes something like this: *I accomplished X as measured by Y doing Z*. Here's an example: “I increased customer satisfaction by 22% in three months by designing a new digital onboarding process.” If you don't have access to this kind of data from a previous position, you can still indicate the scope you were accountable for and strengthen the language you use when describing your responsibilities by including action words like *provided, created, developed, supported, implemented, and generated*. For example: “I implemented a new meeting-scheduling system that saved employees time and improved morale.”

Look back at past work experiences: Review your work history. That may not sound like something you need to prepare for, but most of us have done more than we think and it's easy to forget some of our own wins (and lessons learned from mistakes). Think of examples of times you achieved something so you are prepared to answer questions like “Tell me about a time when...” or “How would you approach this situation...?” People often diminish or ignore their past job experiences if they don't immediately apply to the position they're applying for. However, you bring a lot of transferable skills from past jobs that might be useful—you just have to frame them the right way. For example, you might have gained communication skills from a previous position that can help you connect with stakeholders in a BI role.

Come ready with questions: Next, come to the interview with your own questions, such as “What are some upcoming projects I'd be working on? What current goals is the company focused on? Can you tell me about the team I'll be working with?” This shows you care about understanding the company and the position you're applying for. Besides, this is your opportunity to interview them as well.

This type of preparation will help you feel confident and prepared to talk about yourself and the position. It will enable you to fully explore your experience, the position, and your career aspirations and really connect with the employer.

Key takeaways

Job interviews are a necessary part of your job search. As you continue working towards your career as a BI professional, thinking about how you approach the interview process early can ensure that you are prepared for them when the time comes. And being prepared means you can impress potential employers and move forward on your career journey!