Three Big Mistakes I Made While Preparing For Data Science Interviews—And What I Changed To Land A Job

Last year I was rejected by 10 companies before I landed a new job in data science.

The funny part?

I had no problem making it through take-home case studies and live coding interviews. I was getting rejected during final round behavioral interviews - the portion when you need to tell stories about your experience.

So I made three pivotal changes to my preparation that made all the difference.

1. Rehearse out loud

The first recording I played of myself shocked me.

My stories were rambling, non-specific, and dull. So I started rehearsing every story about my past experience at least once a day.

By the time I was ready to try again, I spoke with clarity and excitement.

2. Showcase a portfolio

Interviews are just as exhausting for the interviewer as they are for you.

No matter how engaging the storyteller, it's hard to focus through 30+ minutes of intellectual conversation. I came prepared to showcase a personal data science project live on-screen. This strategy served two purposes: nice change of pace and proof of work.

Win-win.

3. Prepare better questions

Can you believe I once responded "no" when an interviewer asked if I had any questions?

This is a critical moment in every interview. A chance to show your passion for the role. Take the time to research the company and interviewer. You'll have thoughtful questions to ask that set you apart from most other candidates.