



# Interview- Transition Question Guide

This is a section of my Interviews Guide- designed to master the transition question of “Tell Me About Yourself”



## ACING THE “TRANSITION” QUESTION

Following the introduction and agenda, in which the interviewer is just establishing rapport, providing expectations, and fulfilling the social niceties, there is a very clear and understood line in which the interview has transitioned from introduction into surface questions.

It usually starts with one of these questions:

- "So! Walk me through your resume"
- "Tell me a little about yourself"
- "Talk to me about your experience"

And if you are like most people - you eagerly respond and do the one thing you shouldn't:

***You actually walk through your resume.***

How could answering the question the interviewer just asked count against you? It's because you are squandering precious minutes and keeping the conversation in low value territory.

The purpose of an interview is to allow the interviewer a glimpse into your skills, your achievements, your personality. It's the time to shine and in the course of a half-hour to 45 minutes, show them why you are the best person for the job.

Your resume passed the ATS. Your resume has already been viewed by a sourcer and/or a recruiter and the hiring manager. This person sitting across from you has a copy. It could be in their hand, or just pulled up on their laptop, but all of the information in it has already been presented.

If all you do is walk literally through your resume, all your interviewer is doing is reviewing the timeline you are providing and not taking anything of consideration or interest, they are just mentally checking the boxes as they follow the book report of your life that you are reciting.

Walking through your resume in this way is a waste of an opportunity. I'll use myself as an example, this would be a very literal answer to this, demonstrating exactly what my resume shows:

*"Well, I graduated with a music degree and fell into HR by accident. I got my start as an HR Coordinator for American Express and really liked the field. I spent some time in Benefits before deciding to get my masters in HR Management."*

*I decided to pursue the HR Generalist path and did a small stint in retail for HR, as well as contracting for a big auditing firm. I eventually landed a job as an HR Manager for WebMD where I stayed for about 6 years, being promoted to Sr HR Manager and then HRBP at about the third-year in. Towards the end of my 6th year, I started looking for something different and through a strange series of fortunate events I landed a dream job doing HR Business Partner work for EA Games, the world's largest distributor of video games.*

*I packed up and moved to San Francisco and spent a few years there. Everything was great working there, but I missed home so in 2017 I left, decided to spend some time traveling through South America and then started work with Spotify in late 2017 back in NYC, leading me here."*

This doesn't sound so bad does it? A nice succinct elevator pitch, but there is a problem.

If I gave this as my answer, it means that the next few questions will likely be on tactical pieces:

- *"And why are you looking to leave your role now" or "why did you decide to leave Spotify?"*
- *"What business groups did you work with?"*
- *"What size populations do you have experience with?"*
- *"What was the HRG/BP model in relation to specialist functions?"*
- *"Who were your most difficult clients?"*

By keeping the time in the shallow ended questions, it takes away from the opportunities to really dig into my experience or persona.

Now consider a different approach where I use this question to instead tell my **career story**.

Where instead of just a literal walkthrough of my resume, I craft a story that is more interesting, gives us several great topics to dive into and also proactively answers the questions that may be asked:

*"I have been in HR for almost 17 years. I started with Benefits but have spent the last 10 years really focusing on the Business Partner role. As you can see in my resume, I've worked for large international companies within the tech, media and entertainment spaces, companies that are known for their technological acumen and personalization elements and I've been fortunate to work alongside brilliant leaders and experts in these spaces.*

*I've worked with various functions but primarily with Marketing, Analytics, Data and Engineering. I pride myself on engaging as much into the business as possible and ensuring that I am bringing value to the leaders I work with by being credible and understanding of the business, with a focus on talent. I am a firm believer in working closely with specialists in a center of excellence model and value working closely with my TA, Comp, Training and Diversity teams.*

*I'm really passionate about various HR strategies and initiatives and my most notable achievements have been in designing and implementing international job families. Large scale org design for Analytics and Data departments, overhauling performance management and leadership, as well as using HR metrics and data to help with strategic workforce planning, attrition modeling and engagement. I enjoy coaching managers of all levels to be the best leaders they can be, and I am a big believer in being direct, compassionate and building accountability."*

Both of these introductions are about the same length.

The first one provides a generic overview of my career, companies I worked with, my job titles and location.

The second one however showcases important career elements, achievements I am proud of, how I work with HR functions, my general philosophy on business perspective and my experience within hot HR topics and trends. From there we can do a much deeper conversation, and the next question may be far more interesting:

- *"Tell me more about how you used data and analytics for workforce planning"*
- *"How did working with industry leaders help your skills within HR?"*
- *"Tell me more about the org design for Analytics - how did you do that? What skills/process did you use?"*
- *"Do you have examples of how your efforts helped to increased morale and engagement?"*

As you can see, the conversation we are having is now far more in depth. We are talking about my skills, aptitude and actual experience and giving the interviewer a chance to translate those directly into the business needs to see if I am a fit.

When you are interviewing, take the opportunity to really focus on telling your career story and especially highlighting pieces that you are particularly proud of. Don't waste time walking through the piece of the paper that the person already has!