Bank of America Interview Guide

From former Bank of America Corporate Interviewer Jacob Gates

Bank of America is one of the biggest corporations in the United States. Tens of thousands people work for the bank. I have worked for them as well, for couple of years, on the position of corporate interviewer.

I have learned many things about job applicants and interviewers during my experience at Bank of America, and I understood that:

- **The majority of job seekers have no idea what to do in an interview.**

- Many people still believe that success in an interview depends on their experience and education. **They can't be more wrong!**

- There are some "tricks" and techniques that work well at Bank of America. **People who understand and use them typically get the job.**

- Job interview at Bank of America seems to be difficult, with all behavioral and technical questions, and with their role plays… However, once you understand the key rules and apply the right principles in your interview, **it won't be difficult for you anymore.**

I do not work for Bank of America any longer. However, I help many job seekers to get a job there, with my eBooks and interview coaching lessons.
And that is exactly the reason why you are reading these lines. I will try to help you to get a job at **Bank of America.**

Several questions could be sitting on your lips right now:

Why do you do this Jacob?
The situation on the employment market is not fair. Just look around you. There are thousands of recruiting companies and consultancies that help corporations, such as Bank of America, to hire the best talent on the market. But **there are just very few organizations, or individuals, that help job seekers to get a job of their dreams**. I try to change the situation. I do my best to help the job seekers to achieve what I have achieved once – to get a job at Bank of America, or at other company where I interviewed people for jobs before.

How can you be sure about the content of your guide? Isn't the recruitment at Bank of America changing?
Bank of America is a great company with rich history. Such corporations have their values and identity. **These are timeless. These never change**. Once you work at Bank of America for several years, you will know what I was talking about. In this eBook, I connect the values and principles with new trends, showing you how to get a job.

I will show you great answers to interview questions, how to choose your interview attire, how to approach your preparation, how to deal with a difficult role play in your interviews, and much more…

Once you read through the book, **you should know what to do before an interview, during it, and also afterwards**. This should help you to **impress the interviewers**, and also to get rid of your stress. Some minor change in their recruitment (should they apply it before I have updated the book) won't have any impact on your chances to succeed, once you have the knowledge from this book.

Enjoy your reading!
Jacob Gates,
Former Interviewer at Bank of America

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Basic Description of Interview Process at Bank of

America

HR managers working for Bank of America conduct different forms of interviews. They interview people over the phone, in a group, in front of a panel, or in a typical one to one meeting. However, **this is just a question of a form**, to save time and to work effectively. At the end of the day, the interview at Bank of America, for nearly every position, consists of the following three stages:

- **Initial screening part (can be done online, over the phone, or in the group)**
- **Behavioral interview (in the group, or one on one)**
- **Role play (in the group ,or one on one)**

They can screen you out anytime, and your goal should be to be prepared for **all three stages.** Let's have a quick look at them right now.

Screening interviews (in a form of a group interview or over the phone, or online since 2016)

A recruiter will call you and asks you anything from three to seven questions. Typically, it goes about the following questions: *(Note: these questions are the same for every position, which will change in later stages of the recruitment.)*

- Why did you decide to apply for this job?
- Tell me something about yourself.
- What makes you a good candidate for this position?
- Why should we hire you?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Tell me about a time when you had to deal with an irate customer.
- How would your past employers describe your personality?
- …

How you answer the question is actually more important than the words you use

when answering them. It is crucial to smile, to speak loud and clearly, and to answer their questions **honestly**. Show them from the first moment that **you care about the working opportunity**, and that you didn't consider your meeting, or phone call, just another interview that has no special meaning in your life.

Interviewed in a group

Sometimes they invite up to twenty job applicants to do the screening interview in a form of a group interview. One applicant answers the question, then another one, and so on. If you find yourself facing this challenge, **you should not let the answers of the other applicants to distract you.**

It can easily happen that someone says what you wanted to say.
When it happens, many applicants do a mistake, thinking, or even saying *that their answer was already given by someone else.* However, you should **focus only on your own presence and answers in a group interview**. You should say exactly what you wanted to say, doesn't matter if someone else gave nearly the same answer.

Remember: HR managers at Bank of America do not conduct group interviews to compare applicants. **They do conduct group interviews to save time.** Even if some of your answers resemble the answers of other job applicants, it is not a negative sign for them. **You are evaluated as an individual, and they do not compare you to other applicants in a group interview**. Do not worry about the answers of the others, and stick to your plan.

Note: You can find great answers to 15 most common screening interview questions in an eBook you got to your purchase as a free bonus, called 15 most common interview questions and answers. Three of the answers I mentioned a while ago are also directly analyzed in this book, in the fifth chapter.

Behavioral interview

In a behavioral interview (second stage of Bank of America interviewing process), they ask you to describe your behavior in certain work-related situations from the past. The logic they follow is that if someone acted in a certain way in situation A in the past, they will most likely act in the same way in similar situation in the future.

Most job seekers are eliminated at this stage. Why does it happen? Simply because they do not prepare for behavioral questions in advance, and do not know what to say.

Many times I heard job applicants reply to my behavioral question in the following way:

- *I do not have such an experience.*
- *This is my first job application.*
- *I have never been in that situation.*

Their answers were really bad. Candidates could hardly get any positive points for their answers, **because they did not answer my question at all**.

We will analyze particular behavioral questions in the book. However, there is one rule you should remember right now: **Never say you can not answer a question.**
If you really haven't experienced certain situation, use the following formulation for your interview answer:

- *I have not been in such a situation before. However, if it happened to me, I would do the following: ...*

This should be your third option. Before deciding to go for it, you should think about real situations from the past, or think up some before the start of your interview. You should at least prepare an answer to the **behavioral questions from this book**. To summarize it, anytime answering behavioral question in an interview at Bank of America, you should do the following:

1. **Talk about situations that really happened** to you and explain your behavior in them.

2. If there wasn't any real situation, but you thought up one, use it for your answer.
3. If there was not any situation from the past and you did not prepare your answer before an interview, you should **use the following formulation**: *"I have not been in such a situation before. However, if it happened, I would do the following: …"*

Role-play exercise

When you pass the screening and behavioral interview, role play stands as a final test in between you and a coveted job contract.

Note: In some cases, all three stages (screening, behavioral, role play) are conducted at once. However, it does not change anything regarding your preparation for an interview. The key is to be prepared for all stages.

Role-plays are usually related to the job you are applying for. For example, if you apply for a position of a phone banker, you will be asked to sell a banking product over the phone (interviewer will play the client).

If you apply for a position of a teller or personal banker, you will be asked to offer a credit card, to convince a client to open a bank account, or to do something similar.

People are typically scared when they imagine themselves doing this exercise in an interview. However, there is no need to be worried if you understand that:

- **Interviewers do not expect a perfect product presentation,** or a perfect sale pitch from you… If they hire you, you'll be trained to do things right.
- Interviewers do not expect you to know all products and services Bank of America offers.
- All they expect from you is **to lead a conversation with "the client",** and show that **you are not afraid of the task.**

Speaking from my experience at Bank of America, many applicants did the same mistake, saying:

"I can not do this. I do not know the details of the product."
"I can do this. But firstly I need to learn more about the service I am supposed to offer, and I need time to prepare for the task".

You won't make it far with such answers. If you refuse to do the role play (for any reason), you won't get any points for it, which means they will not hire you.

What is more, a job seeker who wants to get a job at Bank of America should **know at least something about their products and services.**

And secondly, as I said before, this exercise is not about a perfect presentation or sales pitch. It is about **showing that you know what matters in such a talk with the client, and about having guts.**

We will have a look at particular role play examples, and learn how to deal with them, later in the book. But firstly it is important to understand a few key principles and interview strategies that will help you to get this job.

1st Rule – Be the one prepared for interview at Bank of

America, not at another company.

Past, past, past – what's your past?

Bank of America is a banking institution, and banks are always serious about their background checks, and the credit score of their clients. This approach is pretty much **reflected also in their interviews**.

In the initial interview, they will likely ask you about your past employments and colleagues. The following questions are quite typical:

- How would your past employers describe your personality?
- What was the name of your latest boss?
- When exactly did you work at XXX Company?
- Can you name your principal duties at XYZ Company?
- …

They ask the questions for several reasons, such as checking the accuracy of your resume, **getting ready for a reference check they would do later**, and testing your attention to detail.

Exact answers are the winning formula at this stage of an interview. You should definitely read your resume carefully, think about all jobs your had, your responsibilities, achievements, former bosses, and so on, and you should do so before the start of your interview at Bank of America.

Going one step further

References are important for every company. However, Bank of America stands on the top of the list. **If they consider hiring you, they will usually call at least two of your former bosses or colleagues**. They will ask them about your personality, your results in work, about your strengths and weaknesses, and about other things that are relevant for a bank.

Many job applications are rejected just because the candidates got bad references, or because what their former colleagues said about them did not correspond with their own words in an interview, or with their resume.

The best thing you can do to prevent it from happening to you is:

1. Include on your list of references only the people who would provide a good feedback on your work and personality (or at least those who you believe would do so)
2. **Contact your references in advance, letting them know about the likely call form an HR manager working at BofA**, and kindly asking them say something nice about you.

Dress, as if you were working at Bank of America

When applying for a job of a teller at Bank of America, you should **dress like the tellers do in their daily job** (similar style and colors of clothes). The same rule applies for every other position at Bank of America.

It is easy to find out what the dress code is in the particular banking branch. All you have to do is to visit **a bank and have a look**, or you can ask someone to check it out for you, if you do not feel like going there before the start of your interview.

You should not underestimate the importance of your interview attire. A scientific study showed that once job seekers adhered to the dress code of the institution where they applied for a job, the interviewers had better feeling about them. They saw someone as a good adept to join the company, **just because the colors and style of their dress matched the dress code of the company, the colors and style that belonged to their corporate identity**. Clever job seekers know that our decisions are from 80% emotional, and they use this simple trick to their advantage.
Find out what the employees wear in a bank, and adjust the style and colors of your attire accordingly.

Learn at least something about the products and services of Bank of America

You will be provided a full training before starting your job at BofA. However, it doesn't imply that it is a bad idea to learn something about services and products they offer, before the start of your interview.

You should browse their website for an hour or two, to **get a good grasp of their products and services, and to check the latest trends and innovations**. You can use this knowledge to flourish in a role-play.

For example, in a typical role play you are supposed to sell a credit card. If you know the credit cards they offer, you can name specific benefits the card brings to their clients, when compared to cards they competitors offer. I, as well as any other interviewer at Bank of America, **would give you some credit for such an answer.** Have a look at their website and learn something about products related to the job you apply for.

Job description should also give you a hint on adequate subject of study. For example, one job description I found on the careers section of Bank of America website says:

***Desired Skills*:**

- **Familiar with *FHA and HUD guidelines***

It is not necessary to know these guidelines. On the other hand, it is amongst the desired skills, and you can very easily learn something about the guidelines here: http://www.mortgage-requirements.com/

As a clever job seeker, you should use the job description for your advantage. **Do something more than the other applicants do before an interview**. The competition is tough and you should present yourself as someone who really cares about getting the job. “Do more” attitude is something interviewers appreciate, not only at Bank of America.

On the top of that, pre-interview research will help you to calm down, to feel less pressure in an interview (it is always easier if we are familiar with the environment and the people we talk to—you can and should research about your interviewers also), and to find a good question to ask, once there is a chance (or an obligation) to ask something. One you know a lot about their values, products, innovations, or even history, you will always find a good topic to ask about in an interview.

Smile on your face matters

Interviewers often let the job seekers wait for hour or two before the start of their interview. **They do it on purpose.**

To wait for such a long time can easily make someone upset, or even angry. However, jobs in banks are not easy. If you get angry waiting for an interview, how do you imagine coping with the stress you’d experience in the job?

Everything is a test, and everything is recorded. Interview starts in a moment when you enter the building of the bank, and ends no earlier then when you leave it.

Try to **stay calm, relaxed, and meet your interviewer (and anyone else you talk to in the bank) with a smile on your face, and with a joy in your heart**.

2nd Rule – Act, as an ideal Bank of America employee

would act in their daily job.

This is a magical sentence. If you follow this single advice, it will win you many job interviews in your life, not only at Bank of America.

In fact, most job seekers believe that their answers to interview questions decide about success or failure. But this is just partially true… If you know any interviewers or HR managers personally, ask them about **the real decisive factors in an interview**. They would tell you exactly the same thing I am going to tell you right now:
<u>Your presence, non-verbal communication, as well as your overall demeanor is even more important than your answers to interview questions.</u>

Let's have a look at the job of a teller (an example), to understand better what to do in an interview.

Who is an ideal teller?

An ideal teller has an outgoing personality. They are passionate about their job, like to talk to all kinds of people. They are a good listener. Good teller definitely keeps an eye contact with the client, is friendly, but acts professionally at the same time. They should have good knowledge of the banking products and services. They should be happy when doing their job. And they should definitely have responsible and detail oriented personality.

And **you should act in the same way in your interview for this position**. What does it mean?

You definitely should:

- **Keep an eye contact with your interviewers.**
- **Be friendly and humble, show respect in an interview.** Do not try to be "Mr. Important". That would be a terrible mistake and you won't be hired.
- **Show some energy.** The interviewers must see that you are passionate about the opportunity to work for them.
- **Listen carefully to all questions, and stay focused.** You should speak only to the point.

- **Be positive about people, about yourself, about the job you want to get.**
- **Have some knowledge of the products and services the bank offers** (we discussed this in the previous chapter) and demonstrate the knowledge in the role play.
- **Smile!**

If you follow this advice in an interview, interviewers will get the feeling that you have **a great personality for job of a teller**. And that is priceless for every employer...
Hiring managers realize that they can always train you to work in a specific software environment or introduce you to some advanced aspects of the job. However, **once you do not have the right personality for the job, you will never become an excellent teller,** either at Bank of America, or anywhere else.
Please, keep it on your mind and **try to present yourself as an ideal employee in every moment of the interviewing process.**

Job description and common sense should help you to understand what abilities and behavior characterize an ideal candidate for any particular job opening at Bank of America.
Act, as an ideal BofA employee would act in their daily job. This is the safest way towards a coveted job contract.

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

This typical BofA interview question should give you some idea on an important aspect of their hiring process. When it comes to recruitment, they prefer to hire people who want to stay for a long time, and grow in the company.

In this case, **your goals should correspond with their philosophy of hiring**. Therefore, in any moment in an interview, you should present yourself as a loyal employee **who wants to stay with Bank of America for long** (if hired, of course).

Note: It doesn't matter if your claims are true or not. You should simple say it to *improve your chances of getting a job. Nobody will blame you if you leave the company two months later. Job hopping belongs to the employment market and everyone counts with that.*

You should actually check the different career growth possibilities at Bank of America (**career plan for each position is nicely described on their corporate website, just google it**). Having this knowledge, you can tell them exactly what position you would like to have in three, or in five years…

Such an answer would make a strong impression on your interviewers, because just very few job seekers (especially for entry level jobs) do check the career growth options at the bank before they go for their interview.

Many applicants invited, few jobs available

I have interviewed at many different companies, but there is one thing I saw at BofA which I haven't experienced anywhere else. **They often conducted interviews even though they had no job openings available at the particular location.** They were just interviewing people all time, regardless of the situation.

It may look strange to the job seekers, but the people leading the HR department of the bank actually know what they are doing: They are building a pool of suitable job candidates, **simply a database of people they can hire anytime in the future**.

But how can we get a job immediately?

To improve your chances of getting hired without waiting, I suggest you to say that you **would agree to work in other branch, and would consider different roles at BofA as well, if your primary choice (of a job and a location) was not available.** You can say that you heard only good things about working environment and employee benefits at BofA, and therefore you would consider working for them on any position that is available at the time.

HR manager will enter the information about you (and about any other job candidate) into their database of job seekers, a big database they run at Bank of America. If you make a good impression on them, you can easily get a call, and an offer, in a week after your interview. And this call can be coming from a person you have never met—an HR person who has found the information about you in their database, and wants to offer you a job in another location.

You can always deny their offer (and it won't ruin your chances of getting another one, if you made a great impression in an interview), bearing in mind the branch is far away, or for any reason you may have for declining the first offer.

One way or another, it is always better getting offers you decline than not getting any offers at all.

Show some flexibility in your interviews, show them that you really want to work for Bank of America. If you do things well, the offers will come.

3rd Rule –Look at things from the right perspective

While interviewing people at Bank of America, I understood that **90% of all job seekers looked at the job from one perspective only—the selfish one. They did not care about an employer.**

It is nice to read the following lines on the Bank of America website:

"Will the professional development program you're applying for help you reach your goals? Do Bank of America's values resonate with your values? Can you find what you are looking for at Bank of America?"

They are very skilled when it comes to selling opportunities, aren't they? They know how to work with you, how to work with a typical job applicant. **But this is just the sales talk** to make you interested in the careers with them, to attract young talent to apply for the jobs there.

In fact, the employer is not interested in your career growth, if you feel respected, challenged, and in all of those things. **Banks care for their own gains, not for yours**.

Just a small group of job seekers have an ability to **look at things from a perspective of an employer**. For example, when asked why they apply for a job, they say that:

- *They apply for the job as they believe to be good tellers (bankers, analysts, managers).*
- *They apply for the job as they believe to **bring some value to the team in a bank.***
- *They apply because **they really like Bank of America, the vision and goals**, the working environment and believe to fit perfectly to the team, and deliver day in day out.*

Simply they do not speak only about things they want to gain from the bank, but also about things **Bank of America can gain from starting the employment relationship with them.**

In the next chapter I will show you great interview answers that **correspond with the perspective of an employer**. But it is important to understand this principle before you mock the questions and answers—that is now. To **think about an employer in every moment** should become **your mindset**, as it is a winning state of mind. <u>Employer first, your benefits second.</u>

Try to leave your ego at home, at least when you are going to be interviewed for a job. It is the only way to succeed in a tough competition of dozens job seekers who try to get the same job as you.

Most common interview questions at Bank of America and how to answer them

Based on my experience with interviewing candidates for various positions at Bank of America, I chose and analyzed the most common interview questions.
We will have a look at **some personal, behavioral and technical interview questions**. Role play exercises they typically use in the interviews are outlined, explained and practiced in the next chapter of the book.

*Note: Don't forget to check the bonus material you got for free with your purchase of Bank of America interview guide. There's an eBook in which you will find brilliant answers to **fifteen most common screening interview questions** (the questions you'll have to deal with in the first part of the interview process at BofA, the phone or group interview).*
Question from that book and from this one make for more than thirty questions in total, and you should check them all before the start of your interview, thinking a bit about your own answer. But back to the questions in this book....

You will find a short hint for every question. The hint explains **why the interviewers ask you the question, and what you should focus on when answering**. Several **excellent answers** follow the hint. Feel free to use them as an inspiration for your own interview answers.
The following questions are analyzed in this book:

1. **Tell me something about yourself.**
2. **Why do you want to work at Bank of America?**
3. **What do you know about BofA?**
4. **Why do you think you can be a good [name of the position you apply for]?**
5. **Where do you see yourself in five years time?**
6. **How would your former colleagues describe your personality?**
7. **How far are you willing to travel/what location do you prefer?**
8. **Have you ever worked at a bank before?**
9. **Give an example of you dealing with an irate customer and what you did to fix the problem?**

10. **Give an example of a time you made a point to go above and beyond with customer service?**
11. **Talk about your successful sales experience.**
12. **What do you think will be the most challenging aspect of this job?**
13. **What did you like and dislike the most about your previous job?**
14. **Explain a time when you were very busy and needed to prioritize the tasks ahead of you.**
15. **Tell me about a time when you thought it was important to follow a rule. Why was it important to follow this rule and how did following this rule effect others?**
16. **Why did you choose Bank of America and not another bank and how does it relate to your career plan?**

1. Tell me something about yourself

Hint: Interviewers are not interested in your family, or in your free time activities (many job seekers talk only about these things). You should **focus on your personality, experience, education and professional interests**. On the other hand, it is fine to show your outgoing and honest personality (suitable for many banking jobs), mentioning one or two things that occupy your body or mind while you are not working.

Good answers:

- *I am twenty years old, like to spend time with all kind of people and socialize. I am keen to learn more about banking industry and finance in general. I graduated from the Lincoln High School, with good marks. In my free time, I like to play sports, learn something new, and I spend time with my friends.*

- *Hi, my name is Jenni, I am from Toronto. I graduated from City University. Currently I am looking for a job where I can utilize my communication skills and knowledge from my studies. I believe that teller position would be a great* *start for my career. In my free time I like to read books and go out to the nature.*

2. Why do you want to work at Bank of America?

Hint: You should focus on **personal preferences to Bank of America**, their vision**,** culture, working environment, products, etc. You should simply focus on something that distinguishes them from other competitors, something that interviewers should be proud of.

Interviewers are not stupid. They understand that job seekers would be happy to get a job at any bank, not only at Bank of America. However, you should do your best to **convince them that BofA is your first choice.** Pre-interview research will help you greatly in this case…

Good Answers

- *I meet all requirements and I believe that I would fit the working environment well, considering from what I have observed as a client of this bank so far. That's why I prefer to work at Bank of America. Though I submitted my job applications to two other banks, you will always be my first choice.*

- *I really like Bank of America. I, as well as other members of my family belong to the millions of satisfied clients of your bank. I believe this bank offers the widest portfolio of products, services and solutions for huge variety of clients. That's why I would love to work here and would be proud of that.*

3. What do you know about BofA?

Hint: You should definitely focus on good things. If you can pay them a compliment, do not hesitate for a second. Speaking numbers and facts, you present yourself as someone motivated to work for them, **someone who did their homework.** Again, the pre-interview research will help you greatly.

But it is an interview, not a lecture. You shouldn't speak about the history of the bank or something similar. You should simply focus on positive and relevant things that will clearly show that that you have some knowledge of their bank, and didn't apply just because you need a job, or couldn't find anything better.

Good Answers:

- *Bank of America is the most popular and biggest bank in the US, in terms of assets. It is widely recognized for its leading online banking services, top notch customer service and friendly tellers. I hope to become one of these tellers.*

- *Bank of America is well known with its friendly working culture, good possibilities for career growth and fair system of employee benefits. It's also my dream place of work. Of course, I read a lot about goals, values and history of your institution, but I believe it's not something you want to talk about right now in an interview.*

4. Why do you think you can be a good [name of the position you apply for]?

Hint: If you have a similar working experience, focus on that in your answer. If not, you can just list the strengths and skills relevant for the job, the one you believe to have. And if this is your first job application, try to convince them that you have the right attitude and motivation, and would do anything to become a great analyst/banker/mortgage consultant/etc with BofA.

Bank of America provides an excellent training for all new hires, so you do not need to be worried if you lack previous experience. Show motivation and the right attitude to work, and they won't have any problem hiring you for one of their entry level jobs, or perhaps even for a better job.

Good answers:

- *I meet the requirements for this role better than for any other one you advertise. On the top of that, I had the same job in the past, so I have the experience and I believe I can bring some value to your branch on this position, and that also other employees can learn something from me.*

- *While I have no previous experience with a job in a bank, I am eager to learn, and I am motivated. I have read wonderful things about your training program, and I am not worried I could not become a great teller. The personality is there, as well as the motivation. I just need some training to see how exactly to do the job, and I know you can provide the training better than anyone else.*

5. Where do you see yourself in five years time?

Hint: Recruiters at BofA try to hire people who want to stay for long, and grow professionally in the bank.

They have a career plan for nearly every entry level job, going all the way up to managerial roles. Therefore, your answer should correspond with the possibilities they offer to the candidates.

Good answers

- *I would like to have a managerial position in a bank in five years time.*

Ideal scenario would be to start working here as a teller, improve my skills and knowledge over time, do a good job, and end up working as a assistant manager in five years time. Let's see if we can make it happen.

- *I would like to have a senior financial analyst position in five years time. I know I need to learn a lot, and gain experience, but I am ready to commit my time and best effort to this dream. The entry level position in wealth management I am applying for sounds like a perfect foundation stone on my way to the job of a senior financial analyst.*

6. How would your former colleagues describe your personality?

Hint: There is no need to downplay your skills. **Say good things about yourself—who else would say them, if not you?** You can also say that you believe your colleagues focused mostly on their own job—as well as you did, and therefore you are not sure if they had anything to say about your personality.

Good Answers

- *Love to talk to colleagues and clients, happy about his job, enjoying the big crowd – that's likely how my colleagues would describe me.*

- *My colleagues would perhaps describe me as a perfectionist. But it is hard to guess what exactly they would say, since everyone has their own perspective, and sees their own strengths or weaknesses in the others. You can call them and ask, that's the best way to find an answer.*

- *I have no idea what they would say. I always focused on my job, and didn't think much about the personality of my colleagues, and I believe most of them did the same thing. But I can say how I would describe myself—motivated, enthusiastic, and optimistic. .*

7. How far are you willing to travel/what location do you prefer?

Hint: The **more options you mention, the better the chances of getting a job.** If you have a car, you should say it. However, **I recommend you to mention also the most preferred locality, to ensure you'll get the job in that place, if it is available.** Also, I would suggest avoiding talking about children you have, or about any other reason for your location preferences.

Interviewers should see you as someone flexible, as someone who is willing to sacrifice something for their job at Bank of America.

Good Answers

- *I have a car, so I am flexible. I can work anywhere in Washington and neighboring places.*

- *I would prefer to work in this district. However, I would not mind traveling anywhere in the range of twenty miles.*

- *This job is a great opportunity for me. I really want to work at Bank of America, and grow professionally at your bank. Therefore I would not mind relocating, if needed. However, the best location for me is definitely Denver, a place where I live right now.*

8. Have you ever worked at a bank before?

Hint: An easy question for someone who has worked in a bank. If it is your case, simply say **where you worked, and which position you had**. However, what to do if you have never worked in a bank before?

In such a case you should mention other **roles you had, those related to the job you are trying to get** *(customer assistance, sales, management, depends on the job you* *apply for at BofA).*

You should also stress that despite you have not worked in a bank before; you know what is expected from you in the job (according to job description, and your pre-interview research).

If this is your very first job application, you can mention the **"experience" from "the other side of the table", the one you gained as a client of any banking institution.**

Good Answers

- *I have worked as a Teller at City Bank for almost two years. I really liked my job, but our branch was closed. That's the main reason why I apply for a job here, as I would like to continue my career in the same field.*

- *I have never worked in a bank before. However, I have related working experience. I worked as a customer assistant in a shop for two years. I believe I gained the required customer assistance and cash handling experience in this job. It has also helped me to improve my communication skills, and I feel ready for the position in a bank.*

- *I have never worked in a bank. In fact, this is my first job application. However, I visit Bank of America quite often, as I have a checking account here. I understand what tellers do and how they behave, so I know what is expected from a good teller at this bank—at least I believe so. I am also a quick learner, so I am sure I can become a great teller soon, though having no previous working experience.*

9. Give an example of you dealing with an irate customer and what you did to fix the problem?

Hint: Different clients visit the bank every day. Some people are nice and clever, while some others will complain, or even shout, for no real reason… However, as a good employee, **you need to stay calm and smile all time.** You should be able to **look**

at the problem from the client's perspective, and you should **get over bad words rather quickly.** That's what you should focus on when explaining a situation from the past. If you have no experience with irate customers, say what you would do if it happened.

Good answers:

- *In my previous job at AT&T, I was always confronted with irate customers. People were not satisfied with their invoices. I always calmly explained them, in a simple language, why the numbers were different as they had expected. I was friendly in these situations and also empathic sometimes, if I felt it appropriate. It worked well in most cases, and their insults that occasionally came did not affect me negatively in job.*

- *I do not have such an experience, as this is my first job application. However, if it happened in a bank, I would most likely try to understand point of view of the customer, listen carefully to their words and then, using all information I had, I would try to calm them down. But I would definitely not argue with them. I count with this behavior from the customers, and it would not make me feeling uncomfortable in job.*

10. Give an example of a time you made a point to go above and beyond with customer service?

Hint: As a great applicant for any customer service/sales job in a bank, you should **always go above and beyond for the customers.** If you have no previous experience, say what you would do to go above and beyond with your service.

Your tone of voice is important when answering this question, or a similar one. You should **speak with love and joy** about every situation when you had to do (or wanted to do) something extraordinary for the customer. Interviewers should get the feeling that you **enjoy doing something extra for the people you interact with in your job.**

Good answers

- *I consider it my duty to always do my best for every customer. For example in my last job in retail, I called a friend, expert in the area of electronics, to ask for an advice when a customer asked me a specific question about a computer we were selling. The customer really appreciated what I did and I was happy to help them. Such moments make me proud of my work.*

- *I always try to exceed the expectations of my customers. That's the best way to motivate them to come back, and do business with us again. It also helps me to feel satisfaction in job. In my last job I visited a customer at home outside of our working hours, just to explain him and his wife the advantages of our mortgage plan, comparing it to the plans of other financial institutions. They could not make it in the hours, so I went to visit them.*

- *I have never gone above and beyond with customer service, as this is my first job application. However, I understand the importance of customer satisfaction in a bank, and I will always look for opportunities to deliver exceptional service. I believe that with every passing week in job I will understand better what works with the customers, and soon enough it will become easy for me to exceed their expectations.*

11. Talk about your successful sales experience

Hint: If you do not have any experience with professional selling, you can still give a good answer, **talking about a situation from your personal life.**
We are selling something all time, aren't we? We are selling our ideas and thoughts to our colleagues, partners, and children.
It is also good to recall **the lesson you learned** from your successful sales experience.

Good answers

- *In my previous job of a customer assistant at Boots, I was the most successful sales person. I always talked to customers, tried to give my honest opinion, an advice on the additional items they should purchase. It worked well and my sales numbers were great each month. I realized that proactive approach is the best one, and I plan to stick to that approach if working in a bank.*

- *I have never worked in sales before. However, I had to use my sales skills when my children were choosing their college. They both wanted to study teaching, what wasn't really the most perspective field. I tried to sell them my idea of studying business and management – which is a field I wanted to study myself, but never had. I explained them the benefits this degree could bring to their lives, and eventually one of them applied for a study program in management. *You should choose similar "idea-selling" experience from your own life.*

12. What do you think will be the most challenging aspects of this job?

Hint: Interviewers try to understand whether you see both positives and negatives of the job or prefer ignoring the challenges. They want to hire **people who see their jobs realistically**, and would not get discouraged, or lose their motivation, after first few weeks in work (when first challenges present themselves).

Say that you expect challenges, say that a perfect job doesn't exist, and **ensure them that you know what will be expected from you in job**, and that you feel ready for every aspect of it.

Good answers:

- It will be challenging to understand all nuances of products and services of

Bank of America. But I would like to understand them, to be able to offer the perfect solution for every client. Since I am not an expert in this field, I know it will take some time to learn that. But I would like to become an expert, and I am eager to face this challenge.

- Each person is different, and it is challenging to deal with angry clients, or people who expect something we can not offer them. And it would be difficult to decline the requests of some clients. But I understand it is a part of the job, and I will have to take care of that. Perfect job does not exist, and every role presents some challenges. I do not expect this role to be any different.

13. What did you like and dislike the most about your previous job?

Hint: Try to focus on positives, speaking more about the things you liked. **Nobody wants to hire people who see only the bad things, and complain all time about something in job.**

Bu you can say that the job was not challenging enough (if you are not applying for the same role of course), or that they did not offer you career growth possibilities, or that you didn't fit well to the team.

Good Answers

- I mostly enjoyed my time in the previous job. The store was nicely organized, I knew what I had to do and I had good relationship with my colleagues. But the company became too small for me, and I felt that I had already learned everything I could learn with them. I believe that at this stage of my career, I should work for a bigger corporation, such as Bank of America, which offers more option for learning, professional development, and career growth.

- I liked that people worked really hard, and the company had a nice vision and goals. But I struggled to find a feeling of friendship and community in the workplace, what's obviously also important. I did not feel particularly happy anymore, and I decided to change my job. Many people have actually left that company for the same reason.

14. Explain a time when you were busy and needed to prioritize the tasks ahead of you.

Hint: Interviewers test your basic **time management skills** with the question. Any answer in which you demonstrate, on practical example from the past, **that you did not struggle to prioritize your tasks,** will be a good one. If this is your first working experience, you can talk about times at the college or about a situation from your personal life. What matters is **your attitude, not the situation you decide to talk about.**

Good answers:

- *I remember when my colleague unexpectedly left the company we both worked for. I was supposed to temporarily take care of their working duties, until they found the replacement. I really needed to prioritize my tasks, and to do the most important things first. Though working for eleven hours a day, for a span of two weeks, I managed to take care of everything important. Looking back, I consider it good time management training.*

- *I was busy when I was preparing for my school leaving examination. I had to babysit my small sister, go to part time job, and of course I had to study. I prioritized my study tasks, created a daily plan, and I worked according to the plan. Task after task, day after day, it helped me to cope with all my duties, as I avoided wasting time with things that weren't really important.*

15. Tell me about a time when you thought it was important to follow a rule. Why was it important to follow this rule and how did following this rule effect others?

Hint: Employees need to follow strict rules at Bank of America. It is the same story with any other banking giant. Say that you always follow the rules, and consider it as something important, and normal. You can even say that you prefer getting orders to giving them.

Good answers:

- *I believe that rules are important, especially in a bank. I always try to follow the rules, as explained to me. I remember one Monday when my colleague came to work drunk. I reported it to the manager, because it was a rule to report if someone came drunk. The colleague was dismissed on the very next day. Though feeling bad, I would do the same thing again, as it is important to follow the rules in work.*

- *Some time ago I was deciding about approving a loan for a close friend. She hoped that I would approve her application. However, she did not meet the requirements for getting approved. Therefore, I rejected the application. She did not understand it and it was a blow to our relationship. But I would make the same decision again, following the rules, not letting my emotions to control my decisions.*

16. Why did you choose Bank of America and not another bank, and how does it relate to your career plan?

Hint: Banks may seem similar for an outsider—and in fact, **they are similar, in terms of goals, working environment salaries they offer to entry level applicants**, etc.

Nevertheless, you should **point out something unique**, something that distinguishes them from their competition. The mission statement that was once published on their website should give you a good idea:

Corporate Workplace distinguishes Bank of America from its competition by delivering innovative space solutions that attract talent, foster satisfaction and productivity among its associates, and allow customers and clients to transact business with efficiency, security and confidence. We are committed to cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable practices that benefit shareholders and our global community.

Good Answers:

- *The cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable practices of your bank correspond with my personal belief of what a bank should do for the community. I did not find this in any other banking institution. That's why I decided for Bank of America. When it comes to my career plan, I want to become a senior financial analyst later, and found it possible to follow this career path in your bank.*

- *I believe that Bank of America offers the most innovative and challenging working environment. And I have read pretty good things from your former employees, on various online forums. That's the reason why I decided to apply for a job here. I am sure it was a good choice.*

Right preparation for the interview questions

As you can imagine, **one can get dozens of different questions in an interview at Bank of America.** We tried to cover all important subjects in our short selection (*and in the eBook you got for free with your purchase, the one that covers 15 most common screening interview questions*), following the **most updated information** we could get our hands on.

But at the end of the day, interviewers can use **different wording**, or completely different questions, to **assess the same capacities of the job applicants**. And the technical questions will differ from one job to another.
However, it is impossible to list, and to prepare for, all questions you could possibly get. If you tried to do so, it would only stress you out, and at the end of the day, you would hardly remember a single answer you prepared upfront…

The key to job interview success lies in **mastering the right principles and attitudes, those interviewers seek in the best applicant for the job (and in their answers)**. We outlined it in detail in our answers to the most common interview questions, as well as in other sections of this book.

That's the only possible way to prepare for everything that can happen in your interview, because after all, **nobody can tell the exact questions they will ask you**.

How to deal with role-play exercise in Bank of America interview

If you successfully pass the screening and behavioral part of an interview at Bank of America, you will be often confronted with a role play.
<u>Role play represents the trickiest part for most jobseekers, because it is not easy to prepare for it in advance.</u>

I remember many *"great tellers"* and "*great phone bankers"* from my interviewing experience. I had a good feeling about them after the first two parts of the interviews.

However, once we did a role play and they were supposed to pitch me over the phone or offer me a credit card in a proper way, **they completely failed**. Role play shows the truth. Your ability to deal with it reflects your readiness for the job.

There are three key principles you need to learn if you want to **ace a role-play at a bank**. But before we look at them, I want to show you examples of two role plays that we commonly used at Bank of America, so you know what we are talking about:

<u>Role-play nr.1:</u> Imagine that I am a customer of the bank. I came to deposit money to my checking account. You are processing the transaction. On a screen of your computer you can see I do not have a credit card. Try to use the opportunity to sell me the credit card.

<u>Role-play nr.2:</u> Here is the notepad with a logo of Bank of America. Try to sell me this notepad. (Role play done in a group interview.)

Interviewer always plays a client or prospect, while you play an employee. In most cases, your goal is to sell them something, or at least to offer the product in a **best possible way**, because after all, if you close the deal or not depends on many factors, and some of them are not in your control.

Three important things to remember before you start to stress out about doing the role play:

1. **Interviewers do not expect to hear a perfect sales pitch from you**. First of all, you are not prepared for that, and secondly, they will show you how to do it, if they hire you for the job.
2. **The worst thing you can do is to refuse doing the role-play, saying you were not prepared.** If you refused the role play, they would not hire you. **They want to hire people with courage**. Even if you have no idea what to say, you should try.
3. **You should take it seriously.** I know it sounds stupid, trying to sell a notepad with a logo of Bank of America to an interviewer… However, it doesn't matter how stupid the exercise seems to be—you should always give it your best effort.

Principles you need to learn and remember, before doing the role play

1st principle: In a good pitch in a bank, you should ask your client questions, instead of just talking about the product or service.

2nd principle: You should always look at things from the point of view of the client. What would they gain if they had the product? How could they benefit from having it?

3rd principle: You should talk about the benefits, not about the features of the product.

Note: I do not know if you understand the difference between features and benefits of something. Let me show you an example, on a Mercedes Benz car.
Amongst the features of one model of Mercedes Benz are eight airbags and a new spacious design.
Then, the benefits of having the car would be high level of safety for you and your family, and high level of comfort on your trips.

Customers do not buy Mercedes because of its "new spacious design". They buy it, because they want to experience great comfort and safety. **People buy things they do not really need, just to enjoy the benefits the things offer.**

To show you how to apply the three principles in a role play, I prepared for you two practical examples. Please, find explanations in the brackets. ("JA" stands for job applicant; "I" stands for interviewer.)

Role play example nr.1: Offering a credit card

I: Task: Imagine that I am a customer of this bank. I came to deposit some money to my checking account. You are processing the transaction. I do not have a credit card yet. Try to use this opportunity to sell me the newest credit card we offer.

JA: Sir, while we process your transaction, can I ask you a couple of questions? (Good start. Client can hardly say "no", as they have to wait for the transaction to be processed anyway.)

I: Yes, you can.

JA: I see that you do not have a credit card yet. Have you heard about our new credit card program? (Again, this is a good question. The teller does not ask the client any form of direct selling question that could make him feeling uncomfortable, such as "Would you not mind having a new credit card?" Oppositely, they just offer the client free information, while they are waiting for the transaction to be processed.)

I: No, I have not heard about it.

JA: Okay then, let me tell you a few sentences about it. It is a special program and we can offer this card only to our best clients, who have been with our bank for several years *(compliment is always a good thing in a sales pitch, doesn't matter if true or not)*. It is called a loyalty card program, and it allows you to pay for your purchases in up to $13,000 dollars without a need of having any money on your checking account. Later on, you can enjoy the lowest interest rates on the market, when we speak about credit cards. Moreover, there are no limitations to the payoffs schedule. Without paying any additional fees, you can payoff the whole debt with a one time payoff, or in monthly installments. It's up to you to choose.

The best thing is that you can have this card for free. If you decide to not use it, you do not pay anything for having it. You simply have this option to use a credit card, just for the case you needed it, but at the same time there is no obligation for you at all. What do you think? *(Teller shows the client the benefits of the credit card, such as a financial freedom, no obligation, having something for free, ability to pay the debt back in the installments of their choice, etc. It's the best way how to sell something. On the top of that, it's not a long sales pitch (try to repeat it, it won't take more than one minute)).*

I: Thank you, it looks promising. Can you please give me a brochure, so I can have a look at it at home and think about it with my wife?

JA: For sure Sir. I hope you would not mind if I call you in one week, to see how you decided and to answer additional questions you may have. Anyway, your transaction has been processed. Here is your receipt. (A good teller uses every opportunity to close a deal. The client decided to not get the card, but they said they would think about it. That's why a teller suggested contacting them later. It is something a client can hardly refuse.)

I: Yeah, for sure. Thank you. Speak to you later.

JA: Thank you Sir, here is the brochure. Have a nice day!

Role-play example nr. 2: Selling a notepad in front of a group

I: Imagine that we are in a shop and I am looking at some notepads. Try to sell me this simple notepad we have here on the table.

JA: Hello Sir, I see that you are looking at these notepads. Let me help you a bit with your choice. Can I ask you what you are looking for in a perfect notepad? (This is a brilliant opening, as you try to uncover the needs of the client.)

I: I am not sure. I am just looking at them….

JA: I see. Well, let me recommend this notepad of the Bank. I also use it, for a couple of reasons. It has a perfect size and it is very light. You can carry it in your pocket, please try it (hand the notepad to the interviewer).

I: Yes, you are right, the size is good.

JA: It is, right? What's more, if we compare it to similar notepads, of the same paper quality, this is the less expensive one. I believe it is important, because people typically buy many notepads over time, so price matters. What do you think? (The interviewer can hardly argue with you about the importance of cost effective purchases, so they will agree with you.)

I: You are right. It seems like a wise purchase. I take one.

JA: Perfect sir, would you want anything else, for example a nice ball pen of the Bank, that fits into a series with a notepad? (Why not try to sell them something else, once you are successfully pitching? Interviewers will love that approach.)

I: Thanks, I want just a notepad.

JA: Okay Sir, here it is. If you do not want anything else, please proceed to the cash-desk. Thank you!

…..

These were two examples of a nicely done role-play in an interview at Bank of America. **If you stick to it, you should get a job nine out of ten times.**

Of course, your task may differ. They may tell you to sell a credit card, a pencil, a loan, or anything else. But the principles remain the same, regardless of your task in the role play:

1. Ask questions – like our applicant did it in the examples. Elaborate on the conversation with right questions.

2. Look at things from a point of view of a customer. Present the benefits of the product from their perspective.

I suggest you to **practice a role-play with your friend.** Tell him or her to play the client of a bank. Describe them the situation. Pitch them using the principles defined on the pages of this eBook. Once you practiced it three or four times, **the principles should become a part of your mindset, and you'd use them automatically in an interview, without a need to think about them.** Needless to say, it will help you a lot to ace the role play. **Practice makes perfect**, and job interview is no different…

Last impression and job interview follow-up

Most job applicants at Bank of America do not use their chance to leave a good last impression in an interview. It is a pity.
Once your interview is finished, you should **thank the interviewer** for their time, **praise them for their efforts** and simply **leave a room in a positive and friendly manner.** That is called *leaving a good last impression.*

Even if you do not have a good feeling from the interview, you should still do it. You should take control of your emotions and leave a room with a big smile on your face.
Last look into the eyes, firm hand shake and good impression can do a lot, especially if the interview is narrow and interviewers undecided. In such a case personal preferences may decide it for you.

What's more, I suggest you **to send a follow up letter, ideally** one day after your interview, if there was no response from an employer.
You can inspire yourself with a following letter:

Dear Mr. Abc,
I want to thank you for giving me a chance in the interview for Teller position at Bank of America.

After the interview with you, I am really motivated to work on this position. I like the vision, goals and ideas of the corporation, as well as the working environment in the branch where we met.
I hope you will make a right choice, and wish you all the best in your job.

Best Regards
Your name
Your phone number
Your email

It is always good **to send at least a short thank you note** (you can find countless examples online), in order to demonstrate your interest for the job which lasts after the interview.

Follow up letter can not win you a job contract. But it can help you to get one, or to open doors that lead to other job openings. It is easy to send a letter and you should do it after every interview. Please, do not be like the majority of job seekers…. The majority is screened out, but you want to get a job. **Build bridges, not fences.**

Final word

Interview at Bank of America belongs to **difficult job interviews**.

One competes against **dozens of other applicants** with similar qualification and experience. What is more, interviewers use different forms of questions, such as personal, behavioral and technical, and they will often test your readiness for the job with a role play.

They do it to get a complete picture of your abilities, and to uncover some important and some minor differences between you and other job applicants.

However, interviewers at Bank of America are only people, like I and you… They have their desires, like to be praised for their work, and they can not resist hiring an applicant who presents themselves as an ideal applicant for the job.

If you use the knowledge from this eBook, if you present yourself in a right way, bring everything with you, give brilliant answers to the interview questions, and flourish in the role play, **they will have no other option to giving you a job.**

I recommend you to read the entire book once again, mock the answers to interview questions, practice the role play and follow the suggestions, step by step. Then you should read the bonus materials you got with your purchase. Doing all of that, you should be perfectly ready to ace your interview and get a job at Bank of America.

Thank you for reading this book, and see you in an interview!

Jacob Gates,
Your Personal Job Interview Coach