



INTERVIEW
LOGIC

—
Make your value known.

DAVID OHRVALL



Chapter 1

Meet Kai and Interview Logic

DAY 1 – KAI’S OFFICE

Kai scanned her desk and looked out her window to the indoor courtyard below. “Not a bad view,” she mumbled. It was her first day at work and first chance to organize her desk. She did her best to ignore the stack of boxes in the corner.

Joining Kranston Business School in New York City had been easy, but leaving Australia was tough. She and Jack loved Australia, but Kai wanted to work with students. She was bored with corporate recruiting and training. Seven years, tens of thousands of candidates, and thousands of interviews later, she wanted something new.

It was going to be a full day. She glanced at the Post-it note on the side of her coffee cup.

- UNPACK
- MEET w/TAB
- REVIEW WORKSHOP DECK

“I wonder if it’s going to be a good group?” she thought. Today she was launching her new workshop, Interview Logic. Kranston made Kai responsible for undergrads, grads, and PhDs. A variety of these students were attending her Interview Logic kick-off later today.

TAB CHECKS IN

There was a quick knock at the door. A dark, close-shaven head poked in around the corner. *And here’s Bullet Number Two*, Kai thought, grinning. “You’re right on schedule, Tab.”

Tab beamed. “Kai, you made it!”

He briskly shook her hand and stretched out in the chair across from her. “Kai, great to see you! I was worried about that delay in Sydney. I’m glad it all worked out.”

Kai smiled. “Good to see you, too. Thanks for your patience, but Australian Larder Foods is a closed chapter. I’m ready to jump in!”

“Great to hear. We have a lot of things on the agenda this year—you’ll need to flex.” Tab chuckled. “You may have heard that despite tuition and enrollment going up, our training budget is tighter this year. You’ll be training and counseling a variety of students across all disciplines. We need this new focus on interviewing.”

Kai nodded, “Well interview prep is important for everyone. As for flexibility, it’s not so different on the corporate side. Budgets are always tight.”

Tab perked up. “Oh, I wanted to talk about your workshop today.”

Tab was all business. Kai liked that about him. “Sure, what’s up?”

“Your first event in the Interview Logic course is today right? Do you feel confident about the content? We didn’t have a lot of time to go over it . . .” Tab trailed off.

“Yeah, I’m ready! I’ve been refining this material for a long time. It’s perfect for all types of students. In my previous role, I got to interview every type of candidate; senior leaders, entry-level engineers, mid-level marketing managers, analysts, and admin. And everyone in between. There are a lot of roles to fill in the food business.”

INTERVIEW LOGIC IS BORN

These Krannies want to take notes and memorize everything, but few seem to put the concepts into practice.

“While interviewing I noted what made people stand out, and how the candidates could have done better. I turned my notes into an interview class, taught it at a local university for several years and refined it into the Interview Logic principles. This practical material will help anyone prepared for their interviews.”

Tab tapped a finger on his brow. “Not to be a wet blanket, but it’s not just about learning the principles. I feel like I’m surrounded by sponges lately. These Krannies want to take notes and memorize everything, but few seem to put the concepts into practice.” He frowned. “By the way, remind me not to call them ‘Krannies’ . . .”

Kai nodded. “I couldn’t agree with you more. Turning the principles into skills is the hard part. That’s why I set up smaller cohort workshops. We will practice taking the ideas and turn them into actions. I’m

all about being practical. Don't worry, the students will be interview ready in two months! And," she grinned, "I promise not to call them Krannies."

Tab looked relieved. "That's great, Kai. We've got all types of students here, and this year's MBAs and undergrads are sharp. I want to make sure our brand builders get the attention they need."

"Brand builders?" Kai tipped her head. "That's a new term for me. I think I get the idea."

Tab was all hands when he talked. "You know, the students with the highest chance of getting the best jobs. Those job offers drive up our rankings. The best students—they've got the skills, they've got the resume, and suddenly they get tapped by a company to interview. But, they were overconfident and didn't practice for their interviews. They bomb the interview, and we all look bad. If companies don't find good candidates, they eventually don't come back to campus."

Kai jumped in, "We will be helping everyone, right? Not just the brand builders."

He waved his hands at the walls. "Yes, of course. It's our mission, but be careful of the laggards who take up all your time. Some of them don't do the work but expect us to take care of everything. They want us to solve all of their problems. We're called Career Management, not Job Placement." He started tapping the placard on Kai's desk that said, "Associate Director, Career Management."

Kai laughed, "You just described two types of students who have something in common. They don't realize they need to do a lot of work to get a job."

Tab nodded and arched his brows.

"Don't worry. I'll make sure the students know what they need to do to succeed. I think every student can become a brand builder as you call them. I think most people don't do the work because no one broke it into steps for them. I want all of the students to be empowered to get better and to get their dream job." Kai wondered if she needed to add appointments to follow up with the high flyers and strugglers alike.

"Before I forget," Tab interjected, "are you all set with your cohort leaders? The rest of the Careers team is excited to meet with you."

They were overconfident and didn't practice for their interviews.

INTERVIEW LOGIC SESSIONS

Kai didn't miss a beat, "Yes, I'm meeting with them after the large group kick-off with the students. There are 3 ways we are interacting with the students:

- Large Workshops—I'll teach the Interview Logic concepts
- Cohort Sessions—Each group of 9 students will build skills
- One-on-Ones—Students will have office visits with their cohort leaders.

I'm meeting with the cohort leaders after the kick-off workshop. We'll check in every week of the 8-week course."

Tab nodded and seemed satisfied with her plan of attack. "One more thing. You know that once the dedicated interview period is over, it's not really over."

"I understand," Kai gave a warm smile, "I know a lot of students will have interviews in about 8 weeks and several rounds after that. We'll be pushing hard to be ready for the first-round interviews, but they'll need to keep practicing. In fact, I was just checking out some of the student profiles in one of my cohorts."

Pointing to the profile document on Kai's desk, Tab jumped in, "Yes, I know some of those students. Overall, it's a motivated group."

He smiled and seemed ready to change the subject. "How's Jack settling in?"

"Thanks for asking. I'm glad you two met the last time we were here. You know, typically laid-back Aussie wondering why everyone in New York is in such a rush."

"Uh, yeah, I could see him reading in Central Park and people watching all day."

Kai had to laugh at that one. "You nailed it. We're such opposites. His adjunct teaching gig at Columbia doesn't start until next semester so, let's just say he's loving life." She paused. "But honestly, his finance job in Sydney was miserable. He deserves a little mental space. He's working on his book too . . ."

Tab glanced at his watch. "Well, I'll leave you to it. Don't hesitate to check in. Otherwise, I'll stay out of your hair."

"Thanks for the chat, Tab," Kai said, already diving into the massive box of books. "Talk to you later."

Tomas Böhm

Undergraduate, Senior

Career Goal:

Fortune 500, Rotational Program

**Interview Question:**

How do I prove to interviewers that my experience at my family business was truly valuable and challenging? Not just a “pretend” job handed to me by my parents? I need to overcome this unfair judgement and gain the interviewer’s respect.

Song Chen

Undergraduate, Senior

Career Goal:

Pre-med, switching to business

**Interview Question:**

How do I catch up with my classmates who have been on the business track from the beginning? I need to show that my pre-med program helped me build skills that are relevant. But I’m not sure if I have any good examples to share with an interviewer.

Emily Flock

MBA

Career Goal:

Not sure! I want a new direction.

**Interview Question:**

How do I get employers to take me seriously, with my artsy background? I’m ready to take on more challenging roles, but my resume is a little thin. I’m not sure how to overcome that.

Isaac Castro

Undergraduate, Senior

Career Goal:

I’m open to ideas!

**Interview Question:**

Why do I need to put so much time into planning what I’m going to say in my interviews? I’d rather just be myself and be spontaneous. That always works for me!

Susan Driscoll

Part-time MBA

Career Goal:

Fortune 500 or start-up

**Interview Question:**

Should I try something new at this stage in my career, or should I take advantage of the relationships I already have at my old company?

Alyssa Harris

Undergraduate, Senior

Career Goal:

Marketing or a start-up

**Interview Question:**

How can I be sure I’m totally prepared and ready to interview? I want to make sure I’ve covered everything. But is there a point when I’ve done so much I’m over-prepared?

Aditya Khan

MBA

Career Goal:

Management consulting or strategy role

**Interview Question:**

How do I stand out from my classmates who have a similar background? I know several people whose education and work experience are very much like mine, at least on paper. I’m not sure how to set myself apart and show how I am unique.

Katerina Petrov

MBA

Career Goal:

Non-profit or government

**Interview Question:**

How can I make it clear that I care very deeply about social justice? I want to work in a place that has a positive impact on the world. But I’m afraid people have trouble seeing how passionate I am about these things.

Mingli Zheng

Undergraduate, Senior

Career Goal:

Pursue my passions and hobbies!

**Interview Question:**

When the interviewers says, “Tell me about yourself”, where do I start? How do I explain myself, but not sound a little crazy? My personality, my background, everything is very unique. I want to find a special company that will recognize my special talents, so I need to learn how to “sell” myself.

Three principles will guide our preparation, and there are five skills we need to show our interviewer.



Alyssa Harris

Age: 22

Status: Undergraduate

Hometown: Detroit

Career Goal: Marketing

Traits: Achiever,
Diligent,
Competitive

ALYSSA NEEDS SOME HELP

Kai just started unpacking when she heard a firm knock on her door.

Kai looked up at the wide-smiling, young woman in the doorway. Her bright eyes complemented her bold red top, and she got right to the point. “Sorry to bother you, but my name is Alyssa Harris. Are you Kai Bennett? I’m scheduled to attend your Interview Logic workshop later today.”

“Yes, I—”

“I just found out that I made final rounds in the Colgate marketing challenge, and I can’t miss the briefing this afternoon, or I’ll be disqualified. Do you have a few minutes?” She flashed a dazzling smile.

Kai blinked. “Sorry, um, for the boxes . . . Come on in. I’d be glad to help you, but I plan to have a strict policy about not teaching workshop material during one-on-ones. I don’t want students missing out on the classroom interaction.”

Alyssa took a seat, adjusting her collar. “Oh, I really appreciate you taking the time. I would attend if I could. I am very serious about my preparation. I’ve heard a lot of great things about you!”

Flattery, thought Kai, will get you everywhere. Why not help her? It’s an excellent chance to get back into the swing of things.

Kai put her business voice on. “Alright, Alyssa. Grab a pen. Why don’t we just fast-review the main concepts? You can catch up during your mandatory cohort session next week. But I can give you some thoughts to work through in the meantime.”

Alyssa lit up again. “Great!” she gushed, “that’s exactly what I wanted. Interviews are coming up so soon, I’ve got no time to waste! Go as fast as you like,” she said, pulling out a notepad, and Kai leaned in . . .

3 PRINCIPLES AND 5 SKILLS

Kai, “Okay—I’ll give you 10 minutes. When you think about interviews, I want you to remember three and five.” Kai raised both hands. “It’s quite simple. Three principles will guide our preparation,” she held up three fingers in her left hand, “and there are five skills we need to show our interviewer” she said while spreading out her right hand.

Alyssa nodded intensely.

“If you stick this approach, you’ll rock all kinds of different interviews. And it’s easy to remember.”

“I love it. Sounds straightforward. What are the three principles?” Alyssa asked, pointing to Kai’s hand.

Alyssa’s impatience was palpable. “Let me guess, things like leadership, and teamwork, and perseverance. Companies always want the same stuff.”

Kai smiled and shook her head knowingly. “That’s a pretty good list, but my approach covers almost everything you need for any type of interview question.”

Alyssa frowned. “Honestly, I thought to do well in your interviews you just needed to know the interview questions. You research the kinds of questions they’ll ask, have your answers ready and you’re good to go.”

Kai nodded but didn’t agree, “That’s what most candidates think. But do you think you can memorize all of the questions that a good interviewer will ask? Also, do you think having a bunch of canned responses is the best way to represent yourself?”

“No, I guess that does seem kind of silly, the more I think about it,” Alyssa said sheepishly.

PRINCIPLE 1: BE ANSWER FIRST

“Here, take a look at this.” Kai pulled out a worksheet with 3 Principles and 5 letters.

O INTERVIEW LOGIC	Approach		
3 Principles	1. Be Answer First	2. Know Your Value	3. Connect Your Experience
5 LOGIC Skills	Communication	Impact + Goal Setting	Organization + Leadership

“Let’s start with Principle 1. Almost every interview will involve you talking and presenting. What do you think most candidates get wrong when they are talking about themselves?” Kai asked pointedly.

“Probably they are boring. Or take too long. You know, ramble on.”

Kai smiled, “Yep, you’re spot on. We all know the problem, but what’s the solution? It’s a simple phrase you should burn into your brain. Be Answer First!”

“You mean, answer the question directly,” Alyssa said while nodding.

“That’s right. Get to the point. And bring specific facts to the front of your statements. When you do that you engage with your interviewer.”

“What do you mean?” Alyssa asked curiously.

“Let’s say your interviewer asks you about leadership, like, ‘Alyssa, tell me about the time you were a good leader.’ What would you say?” Kai asked playfully.

Alyssa straightened up like she was reciting a speech—which, in fact, she was. “I have a lot of leadership, as you can see from my work-study positions. I’ve led a variety of things in several departments. I also have been very involved in my sorority as the Alumni Director.” She paused suddenly as Kai’s smile got big. “What? Am I saying something wrong?”

“No, it’s just you’re doing what most people do—giving me all the background details when you could be more direct. Like, what if you said, ‘Yes, over the last two years I led the alumni outreach for my sorority. I showed leadership in a few critical ways as we increased alumni event participation by over 30%.’”

“I get it, answer directly and hook the listener,” Alyssa said triumphantly.

“I couldn’t have said it better. With an Answer First approach, we engage the interviewer immediately. By saying the most important parts of our answer first, we also take advantage of the primacy effect. People more easily remember the first few things you say. Interviewers are no different. They’ll remember and engage with the first few things you state.”

And that leads us to our list of five skills.” Kai tapped the word LOGIC with her pen and then pointed to the “C.”

INTERVIEW LOGIC

Approach

3 Principles

1. Be Answer First

5 LOGIC Skills

Communication

“We have to be great communicators. It’s the foundation of all successful interviews and the foundation for being successful in your new job. Remember the 100 questions and answers you mentioned? Most

students memorize what they think interviewers want to hear and then spit those answers back. They become ‘interview robots.’ They fail to engage their interviewer.”

We’ll do a lot of communication exercises and work on stories about your experience to make sure you show off Principle 1: Be Answer First and engage the interviewer.”

“OK, this is great. I’m tracking so far. What’s next?” Alyssa asked anxiously.

PRINCIPLE 2: KNOW YOUR VALUE

“Principle 2 of course. And that is ‘Know Your Value.’ You’ll want to thoroughly assess what you have to offer and be ready to explain it.”

INTERVIEW LOGIC	Approach		
3 Principles	1. Be Answer First	2. Know Your Value	
5 LOGIC Skills	Communication		

“I think I know my value. I mean, I’ve been successful at school, I’m involved in a lot of extra-curricular activities, and I lead where I can. I know I would do great in almost any work environment,” Alyssa said with confidence.

“Well, you might be the exception to the rule and have thoroughly examined your skills. But most people do a shallow job. They are light on examples and can’t explain why they’ll succeed. Why do you think people are weak in this area?” Kai prodded.

“I know it sounds harsh, but most people are kind of lazy. They get busy with school and life and never really take the time to thoroughly assess themselves. Most of my classmates think creating their resume is all they have to do,” Alyssa said nodding.

“That’s right. People want to do a good job, but they don’t know what to do. They create their resume because it’s an output they must show people. Likewise, during the Interview Logic course, we’ll do several

KAI'S QUICK TIP #1

Your resume is only the beginning of your interview preparation. Be ready to prepare more with Interview Logic exercises and outputs.

exercises with outputs that will help you assess yourself. And our focus will be on two skills: Impact and Goal Setting.”

INTERVIEW LOGIC

Approach

3 Principles

1. Be Answer First

2. Know Your Value

5 LOGIC Skills

Communication

Impact + Goal Setting

“This first skill I know is going to be right up your alley. Interviewers want goal setters.” Kai gave a knowing look while tapping the words Goal Setting. “Interviewers want to know about your past and future goals. For the past examples, show them that you’ve set and met clear goals. If you can do that in your own life, they figure you’ll do the same for them at work. They might ask you about future goals and how those intersect with the job or their company.”

“You’re right, I’m Miss Goal Setter.” Alyssa laughed while drumming the table. “What am I trying to get across with those examples?”

“Well,” said Kai, “with each example, you want to show interviewers what it’s like to work with you. Honestly, the employers would love to hire you for just a few weeks and fire you if it doesn’t work out. But, since that’s not ideal for the company’s reputation and employee morale, they have interviews instead. It’s a chance to listen to how you work and think, and then tie that history to what you’ll do for them.” Kai steepled her fingers unconsciously. Divulging industry secrets was going to be fun.

Alyssa continued, “I just heard of a recent grad who actually is kind of going through the hire-then-fire option. He has thirty days to prove himself, or his contract is up. If it goes well, then he’ll be hired full-time. It’s some startup in the Silicon Valley.”

“Interesting. I’d like to research that trend.” Kai made a mental note.

“Well, that brings us to ‘I.’ You’re going to find this next word to be funny. Interviewers want impacters.”

Alyssa immediately frowned. “‘Impacter’ is a funny word. Is it a real word?”

“Oh yes, it’s a great word. Basically, it means one who makes an impact. You could also think of the term, value-add. Like goal setting,

Impact is a skill. Some people are more effective than others at work.

interviewers want to know about where you added value in the past and how you'll add value going forward.”

“They want evidence,” Alyssa jumped in.

“Yes, they especially want to know how you are making an impact today. We'll develop examples that showcase those value addition moments. Going forward, interviewers want to feel confident that you'll be a good thinker and that your actions and personality will likely be effective in the organization.” Kai smiled at how quickly Alyssa was absorbing the Interview Logic concepts.

“But is it a skill? I don't think of the word impact that way.”

“It is a skill. Some people are more effective than others at work. Whether they are more thorough, follow up more consistently or network better, they consistently add more value. The sum of those skills is your impact.”

“OK, this makes a ton of sense,” Alyssa said with a grin.

PRINCIPLE 3: CONNECT YOUR EXPERIENCE

“As we move to Principle 3 we have to think about the interviewer. Principle 1 is designed to help you communicate effectively. Principle 2 is focused on bringing the right content to what you say. And Principle 3 brings it all together. Our theme is ‘Connect Your Experience.’”

“Do you mean, connect to what the company wants?” Alyssa said while furrowing her brow.

INTERVIEW LOGIC

Approach

3 Principles

1. Be Answer First

2. Know Your Value

3. Connect Your Experience

5 LOGIC Skills

Communication

Impact + Goal Setting

Organization + Leadership

“Exactly! Up until now, we have been mostly communicating what we know every interviewer will want to hear. We're Answer First, succinct and clear. And we are talking about the value we have shown in the past with our goal setting and impact. But now we need to take it up a notch,” Kai said with intensity.

“And connect the things that the company cares most about. Some are very focused on grit. You know, showing you can be tough during a

hard situation. Other companies might make a big deal about empathy. What they emphasize can vary quite a bit, and your company research will help.”

“But let me guess. Leadership and Organization are two that they always want,” Alyssa interjected with confidence.

“Yep, I know it sounds simple, but the most successful people consistently show those two traits. And companies want employees who are leaders and can get things done.”

“What do you mean by the term organization? My roommate Song is super organized. I’m fairly neat as well . . .”

“And I’m sure that your daily habits of being orderly help you. But I believe that any person can build work organization skills even if their apartment is typically a mess,” Kai laughed while continuing.

“With most jobs, we are trying to turn chaos into order. Whether it’s cleaning my messy bookshelf or putting interview concepts together logically or marshaling a team to roll out a project, we are trying to make things more orderly. You can talk about improving a process, consolidating spreadsheets or running down missing data. These are all about organizing things.”

Alyssa nodded and tapped her foot. “I feel good about the organization skill, I have a lot of examples of streamlining processes. Even in my sorority, I helped develop a new fundraising process that other campuses are using now.”

“Sounds like you’ve got some good leadership elements as well. Let’s finish with that skill. Interviewers want leaders,” Kai tapped the word Leadership on the diagram.

“You need to fully understand your leadership examples and be good at connecting the dots through all of your work experience and activities.”

Alyssa looked back at Kai, and some of the light returned to her face. “Okay, well, my work in the Finance office was the most meaningful, I think. I did reconciliations between funds and loans. It was a lot of detail, and the process wasn’t well mapped out. But, I didn’t do all those great things my friends did, like start a reading program for illiterate inner-city . . .”

Kai gave an empathetic smile. “Alyssa, we can’t worry about the past; we just have to make the most of the experiences we have. You seem a little obsessed with the competition.”

Alyssa grinned and nodded. “Yeah, I know, I can be a bit competitive.”

**KAI'S
QUICK TIP #2**

Don’t worry about the past. Focus on making the most of the experiences you have.

That made Kai laugh, “I’m guessing a little more than a bit.”

Alyssa laughed nervously too, saying, “I’m just feeling the pressure. I’m the first in my family to go to college, and everyone is expecting a lot. I need to prove that the sacrifices that we all made were worth it.”

“I don’t know your family, but they must be so proud of you. Keep preparing right, and you’ll be brilliant. You are going to get an amazing job.”

“Thanks! I just need to try my hardest.”

“Well, the good news is that we’ll use several tools and exercises that will help you develop your skills over the next eight weeks. You’ll have to put the work in, but it seems like you are ready.”

They both looked up at the clock. “Alyssa, it looks like we’re out of time. I think you have plenty to think through. Any burning questions?”

Alyssa stood, already energized. “Not right now. This has been a real eye-opener. Thank you!”

“Here are the worksheets for the first large group workshop. Fill these out and bring them to your cohort session. They’ll really help you get a jump on the workload.”

“I’ve got a lot to do. Thank you again for making time for me! Good luck this afternoon!”

Kai beamed. “I’ll see you in class.”