



Quick Tips: Top 10 Interview Mistakes

Most experts will tell you that the job interview offers you the best opportunity to sell yourself to a company. It's an old adage, but it still rings true: you don't get a second chance to make a first impression. A candidate can make any number of interview mistakes that can cost them the job, but if you avoid the Top 10 Interview Mistakes listed below, you will likely be on your way to interviews that will yield successful results.

1) Arriving Late

Get directions from the interviewer or company website ahead of time and double check them with an online map service. Leave home early to give yourself plenty of time to arrive for the interview. If you are running late, call the interviewer to let him/her know and see if they want to reschedule. Arriving late can show disrespect for the interviewer, lack of preparation, or lack of interest in the position.

2) Dress Wrong

Candidates make an impression on the interviewer literally within seconds after meeting him/her. You want to be sure that you make the best impression possible.

Dress neatly in a conservative suit that is neutral in color (tan, navy blue, or gray for example). Women should wear simple jewelry that complements the outfit and doesn't distract. Women should wear polished low heels and men polished dress shoes. Make sure your hair is cleaned, combed and worn in a professional manner. Your teeth should be brushed, and you should wear a deodorant with a mild scent. Arrive several minutes early for the interview, so you can take time to check your appearance in the restroom before the interview.

3) Bad Mouth Other Employers

Even if you can't stand your former boss, a job interview is not the time to "trash talk" or complain about your former employer. Avoid any negative references to your former boss. If you were laid off or fired from a previous position, be prepared to give a simple explanation that puts a positive spin on what happened. A potential new employer may figure that they could be the next target of your negative feedback, if this position doesn't work out!

4) Appear Disinterested or Arrogant

Make sure you are familiar with the position that you are interviewing for, and

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practice talking about your experience, strengths, education, and abilities and how they directly relate to the position and the company. Do not just sit there like a zombie, waiting for the interviewer to draw information out of you. Worse yet, do not brag endlessly about how amazing you are! Smile, sit up straight, answer the questions appropriately and ask your own. Be engaged in the interview and show your enthusiasm for the position. Finally, thank the interviewer for taking time with you.

5) Lack of Research

Prepare ahead of time for the interview; the interview is NOT the time to do your research on the company. Know about the company's products, services, clients, goals, annual sales, and other important information that you can learn from the company's website, other internet sources, professional organizations and magazines, and current and former employees. By demonstrating knowledge of the company, you show enthusiasm for the position and are more likely to be taken seriously by the interviewer.

6) Insufficient Answers/Not Prepared

PRACTICE for the interview ahead of time; an interview is not the time to "wing" it. Be familiar with the job description of the position and ready to articulate your strengths, abilities, and what you bring to the job. The more you can connect your experience, education and strengths to the position, the more likely you are to land the job, by clearly showcasing WHY you should be hired for the position. Don't ever lie in an interview. If the conversation turns to a topic that you are unfamiliar with, be honest with the interviewer and use the opportunity to show how you would find a solution to a particular problem for example.

7) Failure to Ask Questions

Use your research to prepare a list of 3 or 4 questions in advance to ask the interviewer. Your questions will help you better understand if this is a company that you are interested in working for. Employers appreciate candidates who ask insightful, intelligent questions since it shows your interest in the company and in the position. Not asking questions can show an interviewer that you don't care or that you came unprepared.

8) Talking Too Much

Be careful not to talk too much and about topics that are of no interest to an employer. Do not bring up personal matters about a divorce, family problem, etc. Be careful not to interrupt an interviewer. Listen carefully and thoughtfully answer an interviewer's questions, feeling free to take a moment to think about your response. Don't let your nerves cause you to blather endlessly. Instead practice ahead of time so you give well thought out responses, to the point responses to questions.

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9) Discuss Salary Too Soon

Don't talk about compensation too soon in the interview process. Wait for the interviewer to bring up the topic, after you have already discussed your qualifications and the company's needs. To focus on benefits, salary, and other employee perks early in the interview, may cause you to lose the position. Salary will certainly come up in time but follow the employer's lead and let he/she bring it up when ready.

10) Forget to Follow Up

Follow up the interview with a handwritten thank you note or an email, expressing your appreciation for the time the interviewer shared with you. Be sure to re-state your interest in the position and why you think you are an excellent candidate for the job. Follow up after that, several days to a week later, with a phone call to the employer to make sure you "stay in front of them." Do not make a pest of yourself though, by constantly calling and/or emailing the employer.