

13 Interview Mistakes to Avoid

The wrong move can cost you the job! You've worked hard to get to the interview stage. You passed the cover letter and resume screening process...maybe even a few telephone interviews.

Now it's time for the face to face interview with the employer itself. Any number of items can go wrong but you have to be in control and must have confidence. Go into an interview with the feeling that you are going to impress them so much that they will have to make you an offer. The interview is the most stressful part of the job hunt for many people because now they can't hide behind the cover letter and resume. The real face to face human connection between possible employer and job candidate takes place. But for starters if you simply follow these 13 tips below, you are on your way to interviews with results. A big part of a successful interview is avoiding simple mistakes. Mistakes are deadly to the job seeker and easy to avoid if you are prepared.

These are the most common interview mistakes - and their antidotes.

- **Arriving late.** Get directions from the interviewer - or a map. Wear a watch and leave home early. If the worst happens and you can't make it on time, call the interviewer and arrange to reschedule.
- **Dressing wrong.** You make your greatest impact on the interviewer in the first 17 seconds - an impression you want to make powerfully positive. Dress right in a conservative suit, subdued colors, little jewelry (but real gold, or silver, or pearls), low heels (polished) and everything clean and neat. Hygiene includes combed hair, brushed teeth, deodorant and low-key scent. Check everything the night before, again before walking out the door and once again in the restroom just before the interview.
- **Play zombie.** OK, you're nervous. But you can still smile, right? And make eye contact, yes? Sit up, focus on the interviewer, and start responding. Enthusiasm is what the interviewer wants to see.
- **No smoking, no gum, no drinking.** This is all comfort stuff for you, and none of it helps you here. Employers are more likely to hire non-smokers. At a lunch or dinner interview, others may order drinks. You best not.
- **Research failure.** The interview is not the time for research. Find out the company's products and services, annual sales, structure and other key information from the Internet, the public library, professional magazines or from former employees. Show that you are interested in working for the prospective employer by demonstrating knowledge about the company.
- **Can't articulate your own strengths and weaknesses.** Only you can recognize your most valuable strengths and most hurtful weaknesses. Be able to specify your major strengths. Your weaknesses, if such must come up, should only be turned around to positives.
- **Winging the interview.** Practice! Get a friend, a list of interview questions and a tape recorder and conduct an interview rehearsal. Include a presentation or demonstration if that will be part of the real interview. Start with introducing yourself and go all through an interview to saying good-bye. Write out any answers you have difficulty with, and practice until your delivery is smooth (but not slick).
- **Talk, Talk, Talk.** Rambling, interrupting the interviewer and answering to a simple question with a fifteen-minute reply - all of these can be avoided if you've thought through and practiced what you want to communicate. Good answers are to the point and usually shorter.
- **Failure to connect yourself to the job offered.** The job description details the company's needs - you connect your experiences, your talents and your strengths to the description. It answers the



essential reasons for the interview - "How my education/experience/talents/strengths fit your needs and why I can do this job for you."

- **Not asking questions - and asking too many.** Use your research to develop a set of questions that will tell you whether this is the job and the company for you. This will help you limit and focus your questions. But don't overpower the interviewer with questions about details that really won't count in the long run.
- **Bad-mouth anyone.** Not just your present employer, or former employer, or the competition. You don't want to look like a complainer.
- **Asking about compensation and /or benefits too soon.** Wait for the interviewer to bring up these issues - after the discussion of your qualifications and the company's needs and wants.
- **Failure to ask for the job. When the interviewer indicates the interview is over, convey your interest in the job and ask what the next step is.**