

## Common Job Interview Mistakes:



### **Mistake 1: Not being on time**

Always arrive for a job interview **on time**. Being late suggests you are unreliable, disorganized or disrespectful, possibly all three. Being a few minutes early is great, but arriving more than 20 minutes early might signal that you are insecure or desperate.

### **Mistake 2: Not doing research**

If you have to ask what the company does, you have probably already lost the job. Information is readily available and if you can't be bothered to conduct a **Google search**, then you probably don't deserve the position. Human resources experts tell us that lack of research about the company is the biggest (*and most easily avoidable*) mistake that they see.

### **Mistake 3: Not showing clarity**

A hesitancy to answer questions will **turn your interviewer off**, and if you don't have any stories to tell about your professional life and business triumphs, you should sit down and come up with some right now

### **Mistake 4: Not being concise**

Having too much to say can be just as devastating. You may impress the interviewer by sharing that you went to college on a football scholarship, but you needn't give a blow-by-blow description of your college career or the knee surgery that ended it.

**Tweak their interest**, but allow a little mystery to remain. Don't dwell on trivial topics, because they trivialize you.

### **Mistake 5: Not putting yourself in the interviewer's shoes**

Don't focus on how the job can benefit you during the early stages. If you seem too interested in how the position can advance your career or line your pockets, your interviewer will take note and wonder if you are more **diva than team player**.

### **Mistake 6: Not being focused**

Remember your interviewer's name. If you blank, don't attempt to guess. Trust me. A bad guess will make you memorable in the **wrong way**.

### **Mistake 7: Not being tactful**

Don't bad mouth your current or former bosses, even if they were terrible managers and human beings. Find a way to **keep it positive**.

### **Mistake 8: Not having a clue**

Boasting about your "people skills" and being a people person is rather cliché. It is appropriate to include people skills as part of your repertoire, but boasting about how much you love people **can seem weak**. We all have to work with people, with the exception of that guy who lives alone in the lighthouse. Get more specific about the types of people skills you possess -- mentoring, communicating, motivating, and collaborating.

The same may be said about crowing about what a hard worker you are and how you routinely put in long hours. Maybe you are just slow and can't keep up with your job demands?

If your work ethic is truly a strength that sets you apart, make sure you have an **interview story** about a time when you went above and beyond the call of duty.

### **Mistake 9: Not following up**

Always remember to follow up after the interview. It is easy to rationalize that the employer should be the one contacting you with either the good or bad news, but you need to **show your interest** with a thank-you note or email before the end of the next business day.

## Interviewing Best Practices:

### Never lie in a job interview.

That doesn't mean that you have to **advertise** your weaknesses. There are different ways to word your answers but honesty is important. Interviewers are good at sniffing out dishonesty and lies are likely to come back to haunt you.

### Always answer the question asked.

It's fine to also use a question as an opportunity to bring up or **reinforce a point** that you'd like to make. However, avoiding a question may arouse suspicions that you're trying to hide something.

### Personality does matter...

...but not everyone is looking for a sparkling conversationalist. **Chemistry is key** in a team environment, and attention will be paid to how you are likely to fit in with others.

Be the most confident version of yourself possible.

### Don't be afraid to talk...

...but be concise. **Don't ramble.** Don't go beyond two minutes on any single answer unless you are asked for more information.

### Always come across as interested.

**Show enthusiasm** for the job and company. They want you to be as inquisitive about them as they are about you. Asking questions is always a plus, as long as they are professional and relevant.

### The key to all questions...

...prior to closing the deal is **what you can do for them**, not what they can do for you. You want to excel in the role, take on new challenges, and grow with the company.

You want to contribute, work hard, and make your interviewer's job easier. You can ask about vacation time, bonus structure and dress code after they make an offer.

### Be prepared to tell stories...

...about your work experience, but keep them **short and concise.** Preparation will help you tighten and refine your stories. You absolutely cannot prepare too much. However, you also don't want to sound too rehearsed. Practice, but don't memorize responses word for word.

### Think about how you use "I" and "we."

Interviewers need to know that you can **work well on a team**, but they will also be interested in your individual contributions. In other words, "I" was able to do this and this helped the team, or "we," to achieve success.

As a manager claiming success stories, recognize team members for their strengths but accent how you were able to harness them and put them to their most effective use.

### Future performance...

...can be predicted by past behavior, so you should always be **thinking of how the job you are seeking applies to the example you are sharing**, the story you are telling.

If they ask you about mistakes or failures, position your answer to convey how you learned and grew from the experience and will never make a similar mistake again.

### If you are asked about personal interests...

...and hobbies, choose to share examples that are interesting and **demonstrate positive qualities** that can be applied to work. For example, your love of travel shows that you are adventurous and adaptable. Your charity work demonstrates a thoughtful nature and ability to multitask. Your love of collecting porcelain frogs may be better left unexpressed.

### Always follow up within 24 hours...

...of the interview, thanking interviewers for their time and stating how you enjoyed the experience and are excited about the prospects of working for the company.

Email is fine for this, but a handwritten note will help you stand out with some interviewers. Remember to **proofread carefully** for typos and grammatical gaffes.

Source: Big Interview Software