



**INTERVIEW**

**ERRORS**

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Find out how to make sure  
you do not make these mistakes

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## Introduction

Sitting down with the employer of a job you sincerely desire often is intimidating. Hundreds of different thoughts may be racing through your mind, and when you walk into the interview, if you are not prepared for that, you will be anxious. If you can force yourself to focus on the most important aspects of the job interview, then you will be able to relax and take control of the image you portray.

For many, it is helpful to know what they should not do when they walk into an interview. The list of things you should do can be hard to remember when you are nervous, so the list of mistakes to avoid often helps. Many of the mistakes will cause a majority of those seeking jobs to fail the interview process regularly. The mistakes are avoidable and when you are successful at circumventing them, you will be able to show the prospective employers that you are the candidate they have been looking for.

There are a total of ten mistakes that people often make during the interview process. When you avoid these critical errors, you have a greater chance to prove that you are the right person for the job.

### 10 Costly Mistakes

1. Inadequate preparation for the interview
2. Arriving too early or too late
3. Having the wrong attitude
4. Being unprepared for the interview questions
5. Dressing inappropriately
6. Not asking the right questions
7. Asking about salary or benefits
8. Not arriving with proper documentation
9. Being dishonest or impolite
10. Marketing yourself incorrectly

### Inadequate Preparation for the Interview

One of the most critical mistakes made by job hunters is to arrive to the interview unprepared. Job seekers that do not do any research into the company they have applied for will not be able to explain accurately to the employer how they are the best fit for the company. This is because they do not know enough about the company to understand how they can benefit.

Benjamin Franklin once said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." This quote is extremely accurate when it comes to preparing for a job interview. You must do research on the company and any necessary homework to ensure you understand the goals of the company. You want to come across as someone who is committed to the company, and is excited about the job. You will have a better chance of impressing the interviewer as well.

The minute you discover that you have landed an interview for a company, begin your research. You want to know everything you can about the company, but also the position you will be interviewing for. This is the best way to make sure you can demonstrate that you are the best candidate, and they do not need to look any further. In addition, you will be able to prepare appropriate questions to ask the person interviewing you.

The most recognizable form of research is done by visiting the company's web page for information. You can find information on the company's history, mission statement, products/services offered, and much more. You will also want to visit the websites of competing

businesses. Look at the information and methods the other companies use, and see how it will benefit your interview. Finally, visit the library to look for more information on the industry.

You do not need your first trip to the company to be for your interview. Drop in and observe for a while. You can also pick up brochures and other flyers that may be available. The more prepared you are, the better your interview will go. Preparing for the interview will also help prevent other critical mistakes from being made. For example, when you do your research, you will be able to ask the right questions and offer the answers that will stand out in the mind of the prospective employer. You will also feel more relaxed during the interview, which will make you come across as confident. Confidence is one of the best ways to prove you are the candidate that is perfect for the position.

### Arriving Too Early or Too Late

Another common mistake made by job hunters is by going to an interview at the wrong time. It is never good to arrive to an interview late, but being there too early can also be seen as an inconvenience. The interviewer may feel the need to change their schedule to fit you in. Some techniques can be used to avoid making this mistake, since you do want to be on time.

It is absolutely imperative that you arrive on time to your interview. You want to make sure you are close to your appointment time, but a few minutes early is preferred. You want to make sure you have the proper directions to the company and the traffic picture during the time of your interview. Many people find it best to drive the route a full day before the interview to make sure the route is known. This method also helps you ensure your timing is down, so you are not extremely early or late.

You also want to make sure that you have all of the information you require in your vehicle and prepared. If you are scrambling at the last minute for information and documentation, you may miss your interview time. This includes documenting whom you are to talk to, so you can go to his/her office when you arrive. Some of the information you will want to consider having with your portfolio are resumes, references, and work samples.

If you arrive and feel rushed, the job interview will not be off to a good start. You want to show that you are the best candidate for the position, and if you are not reliable to even the interview, you will not be seen as that person.

While many do not see it as such, being extremely early to an interview can be just as detrimental as being late. The best time to shoot for is arriving ten to 15 minutes before your interview appointment. Any time before that will force the interviewer to feel rushed. With the ten to 15 minute cushion, you are allowing yourself to become composed prior to the appointment and allow the interviewer to be notified of your arrival.

When it comes to showing up for the interview, you need to make sure you are keeping the convenience to the interviewer in mind, as well as portraying your reliability. If you arrive late, even if it is a few minutes late, you will feel rushed and not composed. You may also be declined an interview, causing you to immediately lose a prospective job. Companies want someone who proves to be dependable and trustworthy, from the moment they see you. Make your first impression a lasting one for good reasons.

### Having the Wrong Attitude

Attitudes and behaviors can cost you a job without you even realizing it. Different actions and ways you carry yourself can cause the interviewer to see you as a negative person, or someone who does not have the right attitude for the job.

Coming across as a negative person can happen at any point during the interview, so you need to be conscious of it at all times. For example, making complaints about previous employments (boss, jobs, coworkers, and so forth, will send a negative message to your prospective employer.

Inappropriate body language also creates a negative image. The following body language actions should be avoided at all costs:

- Slouching
- Hunching over
- Avoiding eye contact
- Folding your arms over your chest
- Fiddling with your hair
- Fiddling with items on the desk or in your pockets
- Checking your phone

In addition to the body language, a few signals that can be construed as negative are verbal.

- Speaking quietly
- Mumbling
- Interjecting like, uh, or um into conversation

Practice your answers to likely interview questions, as well as what questions you are planning to ask. This can be done in front of your bathroom mirror to improve your body language and tone. When you practice, you will reduce the possibility of creating a negative attitude at a job interview you are hoping to secure.

### Being Unprepared for Interview Questions

The two main elements to the interview process are to answer the questions asked by the interviewer, and the other is to have questions prepared to ask the interviewer. If you are not able to give the right answers to the questions asked, you will not be able to show the employer that you are the right candidate for the job.

The best way for you to avoid answering the questions wrong is by preparing ahead of time and practice answering questions. This gives you time to think about your answers beforehand. The number of resources available for common job interview questions is vast, and most employers ask the same questions. Each industry may have a different set of questions, but they are often relevant to the industry and easy to prepare for, at least to some degree.

Preparations for an interview do not have to wait until an interview is scheduled. You can start basic preparations as soon as you have an idea of what industry you would like to go into. Interview questions fall into a few categories, with the first being basic or general questions that apply to all industries.

A few questions include (not limited to):

- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Why do you want this job position?
- What are some of your achievements to date?
- Why are you the ideal candidate?
- What would your previous employer(s) have to say about you?

Practice the answers to these questions, and questions similar to these so you can avoid this critical mistake. When you practice your answers, it is less likely that you will go blank during the interview process. You will also appear more confident and poised.

### Dressing Inappropriately

Unfortunately, the next critical mistake seems like common sense to some people. Regardless of where your interview is, or what position you are interviewing for, you want to make sure you are dressed appropriately. Dressing appropriately has different meanings to different people, but it is directly referring to the dress code you should abide by.

It is important to research the company that you have secured an interview with prior to arriving. You will be able to see how the rest of the employees dress, and use that as a basic guideline. While you are observing, make sure you are looking at people in management status, because they will have a different dress code than the entry-level positions.

Another thing to notice while you are observing is the values of the work environment. If you find the company employees are all wearing conservative clothing, you will want to wear business casual that is conservative. You want to impress the person who is looking to hire you, but you want to show them that you can fit into the company dynamics.

Clothing that should be avoided include wearing bright colors, or outfits that seem excessive and loud. Resist the urge to wear heavy perfumes or body mists. When you are dressing moderately, remember to mute your make-up, nail polish, and jewelry. If you have tattoos, cover them up, and remove any piercings that may be considered inappropriate. You can either take the piercing out, or cover it with a Band-Aid.

The important thing with an interview is to get the interviewer to focus on your skills, accomplishments, and the other reasons you are the best candidate. You do not want the interviewer to be focused on how you appear or smell, because they may miss why you are vital to the company.

### Not Asking the Right Questions

In addition to knowing how to answer the questions the interviewer asks, you need to know the right questions to ask the interviewer. It is a guarantee that the interviewer will, at some point, ask you if you have any questions for them. Failing to ask the right questions, the ones that are appropriate, can show that you have a lack of interest in the position. Even worse, it can appear that you have not prepared for the interview at all, and as a result, be passed over.

Use the research that you performed on the company to think about questions that will seem insightful. You want to impress the interviewer, and also gain the most information possible to make an informed decision on accepting the position. During the interview, show interest in the company through taking notes and thinking of questions that pop up while the interviewer is talking. These questions that pop up during the interview should be in addition to the questions you have already prepared.

The most important thing to keep in mind is when you are asked, "Do you have any questions for me?" Do not answer with the word, no. Here are some questions to consider asking the employer:

- What are your biggest challenges?
- What is the average day like for this position?
- What specific tasks will be expected of me in this position?



- What is the next step following the interview?
- Is this a newly created position, or am I replacing another employee?
- How will my job performance be measured?
- What are the immediate goals of the department I am working in?
- What is the biggest challenge the company is currently facing?
- What competitive advantages does this company have over their competitors?
- What do you like best about the company?
- What could I do within this role that would make your job easier?
- Is there anything else that I can further clarify for you?
- How do I compare with other candidates that you have already interviewed?

### Asking about Salary and/or Benefits

In addition to asking the right questions, you need to know which questions not to ask. The biggest mistake that many job hunters make is by asking the interviewer about salary and/or benefits during the interview. You do not want to ask that question until the job offer has been placed on the table, and you are being offered the job.

Instead, take time to learn more about the company and the position you are looking at. Money is not everything, and it is definitely not what you should be obsessing about before you have proven to the company that you are worth the investment. Career satisfaction comes in a variety of forms, so focus on joining the team environment with room to grow.

Many other questions should be avoided during the initial interview. In addition to the question about salary, here are a few other questions to avoid.

- How long does it take to be promoted? – While it may be beneficial to ask about advancement opportunities in the company, focus on the position you are applying for.
- When will I be able to take a vacation? – If you are already asking for time off, the interviewer is not going to be impressed.
- Will I be required to work overtime? – Asking about the hours that you will work shows the employer that you are a clock-watcher. It also shows you are not flexible.
- What kinds of employee activities are held? – This question will tell the employer that you are more interested in the company events, rather than working hard and being a member of the team. This question can be asked after you are hired.
- What can I use my company computer for? – Many employees use computers for purposes outside of company work, but do not bring it up during an interview. It shows the employer that you lack the maturity to handle company property, and it shows a lack of business sense.
- Will I be able to work from home? – This question may be one you need to know the answer to, but the initial interview is not a time to ask it. You want to know the dynamics of the work office and the company before you can work from home. This means you should look for someone who will be dependable and on time, working to make the company more successful, as well as getting along with other coworkers.

While many of these questions may seem naïve, and seeing them written down may pinpoint the trivialness of the question. However, job seekers ask these questions repetitively. Unfortunately, many do not realize why they failed until after the interview.

### Not Arriving with the Right Documents

When you are called in for an interview, do not assume that means they have any of your documents. You want to make sure that you have your resume on hand when you go into an interview. Many employers will do group interviews, and they may ask for paperwork at the end.

It would be a critical mistake for you to arrive at the interview without the documents that you need.

In addition to bringing your resume, make sure you bring several copies so that everyone who attends can have a copy. This is a great way to make sure the interviewer has what they need, but also that you have considered the interviewers. Your employer will see that you are prepared.

Having a portfolio ready is always a good idea, but necessary if the interviewer requires it. Make sure that you have enough copies of all necessary documentation for everyone. Documentation includes resume, curriculum vitae, recommendations, references, work samples, and anything else that shows you are the perfect candidate for the job.

Before your interview, it is important that you know where you are going and that you have an idea of where to park. Consider printing off simple maps of the building and surrounding area. You want to make sure that you leave early enough that you can get there with about ten minutes to spare. Some other things to take with you include a notepad to take notes, a planner, and writing utensils. You will want to make sure you take a pen that is either blue or black ink in case they need documents filled out.

You may be able to enhance your professional appearance by carrying a portfolio (folder or briefcase). Inside should have the person you are meeting with, their title and time you are to meet, and the any notes you have made on research performed. When an interviewer sees notes you have taken, it shows that you have taken the time to find out about the company.

Prepare for the tough questions that the interviewer may ask so you will not have to pause in answering. Having the questions to a few common questions written down will allow you to put a few key points you want to touch on in the answer. With bringing paperwork with you, you will show the prospective employer that you will take this job seriously and you know how to make a good impression. The more prepared you are, the more successful you will be.

### Being Dishonest or Impolite

Your overall attitude has much to do with how your prospective employers perceive you and your candidacy. A couple of other things you can do to make sure your prospective employer or interviewer sees you in the best manner. Therefore, you will want to make sure you are never dishonest or impolite.

#### Dishonesty

You should never lie to an employer, under any circumstance, to get the job you want. By lying or being dishonest in general, you are undermining your own strengths and abilities. You are also destroying any trust or rapport that has been developed by the interviewer before you have a chance to build your character.

If you are unable to get a position based on your current skill set, then you probably should not be applying for the position to start with. If you are applying for a position that is beyond your capabilities is going to lead to problems, and being dishonest about your capabilities could cost you future jobs.

#### Impolite

When you are going into an interview, the person conducting the interview may be your future boss. You should not sit until asked and ask permission before removing your coat. Thank you



host if drinks are offered, and for taking the time to see you. You should also make a point to make sure you express your interest in the position and show it through your behavior.

Even if you are no longer interested in the position by the end of the interview, the person who interviewed you may be a contact you can use in future positions. You also want to make sure they know that you are grateful they took the time out of their schedule to meet with you and giving you a chance to work with the company.

You should never burn bridges with potential employers or others working within your industry because there is no telling whether they will be of help down the road. If you obtained the interview through an agency, you should give them a call immediately following the interview so you can advise them on whether you are interested in the position.

A large part of your success in an interview hinges on your demeanor, listening abilities, ability to ask and answer questions, honesty, and being able to maintain a positive outlook. If you are not projecting the right attitude, you will have difficulty proving you are the best candidate for the job. This is especially true when there is heavy competition for the position.

### Marketing Yourself Incorrectly

Marketing yourself is one of the most important things when it comes to job interviews, and if done incorrectly, you can lose the position. Marketing yourself is how you are able to show the employer that you are the best person for the job.

You need to be able to know yourself so you can define yourself for others. Take the time to map out your skills and the skills required for the job. Make sure you are aware of your strengths and accomplishments, especially with their relation to the job you hope to possess. Knowing these things about yourself are how you can answer questions the interviewer asks to make you stand out.

Your goal is to be as memorable as possible, without standing out in a negative manner. If you have any unusual job experiences, interesting skills, unusual hobbies, or other characteristics that set you apart from everyone else, then you will want to bring them up naturally. You do not want to drop other contact names or relations, but rather how you are able to perform the job the best on your own.

### Conclusion

When you finally sit down to interview with a potential employer and you are genuinely interested in the position, you want to make sure you handle every aspect of the job interview. You need to focus on the important facets and show the interviewer during the initial interview that you are the best candidate for the position. You want to be prepared so you can be relaxed and in control of the message that you are portraying.

By now, you should have a good feel on the critical mistakes that people make during interviews, as well as the best method to avoiding them. If you want to be successful in proving to the potential employer that you are the best candidate, you want to consider the art of interviews. Using these tips and information, you have a giant step in the right direction to mastering the art. Once you master the interview process, you will have no problem securing any job you desire.

When you avoid these ten critical mistakes, you can launch yourself forward and prove you are the best person. This is a better alternative to making a mistake that will cost you potentially your dream job.

It might surprise you how easily a handful of minor mistakes can affect your interview and your ability to secure a job. If you are serious about the job, make the time to learn the mistakes and prepare yourself to avoid them. Let us go over the ten mistakes very briefly again.

#### **Mistake #1 – Inadequate Preparation for the Interview**

Show up to the interview with the preparation complete. Research the job position, as well as the company you are applying with.

#### **Mistake #2 – Arriving Too Early or Too Late**

Arrive to your interview ten to 15 minutes early to give yourself time to become composed. Arriving too early will cause the employer to feel rushed, while too late shows you are unreliable.

#### **Mistake #3 – Having the Wrong Attitude**

Your attitude shows how serious you are about the job, but it can be shown with both verbal and non-verbal cues.

#### **Mistake #4 – Being Unprepared for Interview Questions**

Most interviewers ask similar questions, which allow you to prepare yourself ahead of time. Practice your answers to the tougher questions, and jot down some key points you want to cover.

#### **Mistake #5 – Dressing Inappropriately**

It is wise to visit the company before your interview appointment so you can get a good feel on what appropriate dress is.

#### **Mistake #6 – Not Asking the Right Questions**

Prepare questions for the interviewer so when you are asked if you have any, you are able to ask insightful questions.

#### **Mistake #7 – Asking About Salary or Benefits**

Among the many questions that you should never ask during an interview, is what your salary or benefits will be. This question and several others should not be asked until a job offer is presented.

#### **Mistake #8 – Not Arriving with the Proper Documents**

Bring resumes, work samples, references, referrals, and recommendations to your interview. Make sure you show up with several copies so anyone in the room has a copy of your information.

#### **Mistake #9 – Being Dishonest or Impolite**

Your first impression is a lasting one, so make sure you are honest, polite, and a positive attitude. Your interviewer may be your future boss.

#### **Mistake #10 – Marketing Yourself Incorrectly**

Job interviews are about marketing yourself, selling your skills, talents, hobbies, and anything else to make yourself memorable. The more you stand out from others, the better your chances are to secure the position you desire. You are in charge of mastering the art of a job interview.

The more you practice in front of a mirror, the more you will be ready to answer the questions presented to you during the interview. You will be able to fine tune your abilities, eliminate negative habits and attitudes, and create an appearance that is pleasing to the potential employer. You want to leave them with the impression that you are an excellent candidate for the job position, and the perfect one to do the job.

By avoiding these ten crucial mistakes during the interview, you will have greater success in your interviews. You will be relaxed and composed. It is that simple.

Good luck!