

## The Top 10 Mistakes made during an Interview



<http://www.cheatsheet.com/money-career/toughest-job-interview-questions-and-how-to-answer-them.html/?a=viewall>

Going on a job interview can be a nerve-racking experience, especially if it is for your first job. What do I wear, how do I act, will I be hired on the spot? Questions, questions, and many more go through your mind. Nerves, cold sweats, shaking etc. are normal but if you avoid the ten basic errors below, you will look, feel, and act the part.

Some of these mistakes will appear to be basic “I already know that” but having been an interviewer on many occasions, trust me, people totally forget once they are in the interview room.

In addition to this handout, we will also learn how to create your resume and learn how to answer the most common questions asked during an interview.

**So here we go, the Top 10 Mistakes made during an Interview.**

### **Mistake #1: Appearing uninterested.**

Most employers have more applicants than they need or want.

If you aren't *demonstrably* interested in them, they certainly aren't interested in hiring you.

Show up alone and not with a friend.

Treat the receptionist and other employees you meet nicely. Most interviewers ask them after your interview their opinions about you.

**Dress Appropriately!**

**Turn off your cell phone!**

Ask intelligent questions that indicate you have done some research, but don't ask a question that could be answered in 30 seconds with a Google search or a peek at their website's homepage.

## **Mistake #2: Being unprepared.**

Be prepared! Preparation will help you demonstrate your interest in them and the job. You will also perform better in the interview when you are prepared.

Bring at least three (3) copies of your resume with you. You cannot guarantee that only one person will be interviewing you.

### **Successful preparation has several elements:**

#### **Analyze the job description and your match with it.**

Before you go to the interview, write out their requirements and how you meet those requirements. Then, determine your accomplishments that align with those requirements, and write them down to help you remember them.

#### **Know your answers to the standard job interview questions.**

In particular, be ready for the "What do you know about us" and "Why do you want to work here" questions, related specifically to this employer and job opportunity. Research the employer. Yes, check out the website, as thoroughly as you can. What do they do? Do they state a "mission"? How are they organized? Where are they located? Are they part of a larger organization? If they have subsidiaries, what do their subsidiaries do?

Note the names of their products and/or services and get familiar with what each does (unless they have tens or more). Who are the officers named on the website? Where are they located? Do you share any common background with any of them (hometown, school, service, volunteer work, etc?)

#### **Research the interviewers.**

Hopefully you know the names of the interviewers, so check out their LinkedIn Profiles. Do you have anything in common with any of them (as above, hometown, school, etc.)? Do you notice anything else about them, from the same college degrees or the same military service to similar smiling (or not) faces?

#### **Know (and implement) the logistics for getting to the interview on time.**

If possible, do a test run at the approximate time you are supposed to be there, and plan your departure and arrival for the interview accordingly, getting comfortable with the drive or ride, tolls or fees, parking options, etc.

#### **Being late for an interview is DEADLY!**

If you arrive more than 15 minutes early, find an unobtrusive place to hang out until you can officially arrive. Observe what is happening while you wait to learn more about the employer and, perhaps, have additional questions to ask.

### **Mistake #3: Being angry.**

Angry people are NOT people employers want to hire. Angry people are not fun to work with. They may frighten co-workers and/or customers or clients. They may also abuse both people and equipment (computers, cars, etc.). Not good contributors to a happy workplace or a prosperous business, even if they don't "go postal."

**Instead:** If you are angry over a job loss, horrible commute to the interview, earlier fight with your parents or anything else, dump the anger before the interview, at least temporarily.

Stop, before you enter the employer's premises, take a few deep breaths, put a smile on your face, and do your best to switch gears mentally so you are *not* "in a bad place" in your mind.

### **Mistake #4 Sharing TMI (too much information).**

Sometimes, people have a whole-truth-and-nothing-but-the-truth mindset in a job interview, so they "spill their guts" in answer to every question. Not smart or useful!

Don't tell lies, but do not bore the interviewer and blow an opportunity by sharing too much information. If they *want* more details, *they'll ask*.

**Instead:** Answer their question, and then stop talking. Or, ask a question of your own.

### **Mistake #5 Negative body language.**

If you never smile, have a limp handshake, and don't make eye contact with the people you meet at the employer's location, and especially with the interviewer, you'll come across as too shy or too strange or simply not interested.

**Instead:** Show your interest and enthusiasm. If you are naturally very shy or an introvert, smile, say hello, look them in the eye, and shake hands as though you really are happy to meet that person, and soon you will be.

### **Mistake #6 Not having good questions or asking the wrong questions at the wrong time.**

To an employer, no questions = no interest. This is deadly to your success with the opportunity.

As bad as having no questions is asking the wrong questions. During the first interview, asking questions only about salary, raises, promotions, vacation, and benefits are not usually well-received. Those questions apparently indicate that you are just interested in specific personal benefits rather than the job.

**Instead:** Ask the questions that occurred to you as you were doing your pre-interview research, as you talked with the people during the interview, or as you observed people in the location.

Ask for details about the job -- what an average day is like, if the job is new or being filled because the previous employee was promoted, etc.

## **Mistake #7 Flirting or other inappropriate behavior.**

Unless you are interviewing for a job as a comedian or host/hostess in a social club, don't try to be entertaining or amusing. And, don't flirt with anyone, including the receptionist and the security guard.

**Instead:** If making them laugh isn't a *requirement* of the job, take the interview seriously. Save flirting for your second day of work.

Don't chew gum or bring food or drink into the interview. Mind your manners, like your Mother taught you, and be polite to everyone you meet there. The interview is an "audition" for the job. Show them you are best!

## **Mistake #8: Not collecting contact information or asking the next-steps questions.**

Many job seekers leave the interview(s) with no idea of what will happen next in this employer's hiring process. They also often don't know who is the best person to contact as well as when and how to contact that person.

**Instead:** At the beginning of the interview "play (business) cards" with the interviewer(s). Hand them your business card (or networking card, if you are employed), and ask for their card. This is the best way to gather the name, job title, location, and contact information of each person who interviews you. If you don't have this information, you won't be able to proceed with appropriate job interview follow-up.

Then, as the interview ends, ask what the next steps in their hiring process are if no one volunteers the information. Find out who your post-interview contact is and when and how to contact that person. Note the email address and/or phone number carefully, particularly if you don't have that person's business card.

## **Mistake #9: Failing to follow up.**

Often, job seekers leave at the end of the interview(s) with a sigh of relief that the interview is over, and they can get on with their lives. They leave, and wait to receive a job offer.

**Instead:** Remember this is a demonstration of the quality of your work as an employee. To stand out in the crowd of job candidates, which usually number four or five, immediately send your thank you notes to each person who interviewed you. Also send a thank you to the external recruiter, if one was involved, or the employee or networking contact who referred you for the opportunity, if you were referred.

## **Mistake #10: Forgetting the interview is a two-way street.**

Don't go to the interview thinking that you are the only one trying to "make a sale." You need to ask questions to help you discover if the job, the people you would be working with, and the employer are what you want. You also need to decide if you would be happy working there for at least one year.

**Instead:** Have your own list of questions ready (not the ones in #6 above). Observe what is happening at the location. Are employees and customers smiling or not? Do people seem busy or bored? Does the environment look like a pleasant place to spend most of your day? Is the location good or bad for you (commute, parking, personal safety, etc.)? Anything else catch your attention (noisy, very quiet, bad music playing constantly, crummy restrooms, scary elevators, etc.)?



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