

Most Common Interview Mistakes by Allison Doyle

What shouldn't you do when interviewing? Here are the most common job interview mistakes, blunders, and errors a candidate for employment can make.

Unfortunately, it's easy to make these mistakes without even realizing it - and many of them are more common than you might think! Take the time to prepare before your interview, so you don't have to stress out about blunders after it.

1. **Dressing Inappropriately**

When you interview for a job, it's imperative to look professional and polished. Although your attire may vary based on the position you're applying for - for example, you should wear business casual clothing to an interview for a non-professional job and business attire for a more professional job interview - it's important to look well-dressed and put together, no matter what the company.

2. **Arriving Late**

Everyone knows that first impressions are very important in landing a job, but did you know that you could make a bad first impression before you even arrive at your interview?

Running late not only suggests poor time management skills, but also shows a lack of respect for the company, the position and even your interviewer.

Go the extra length to make sure that you aren't late, and arrive on time, at least 15-20 minutes before the interview. That way, if something unforeseen comes up on your way over to your interview, you'll have some cushion time.

3. **Bringing a Drink with You**

Ditch the coffee or soda before you enter your interview. If you need to fuel up, do it before you get to the interview.

Not only is it unprofessional to enter with a drink in hand, but during your interview, you should be focused on the task at hand: making a good impression, answering questions, maintaining eye contact with your potential employer, and paying attention throughout the entire interviewing process.

Having a drink in front of you creates the opportunity for distraction - fiddling with the cup, or missing a question while taking a sip, for example.

4. **Using your phone during the interview**

Before you get to your interview, silence your phone. Texting during your interview is not only rude and disruptive, but it's a pretty clear message to your potential employer that getting the job is not your top priority.

For the same reasons, don't answer calls (and certainly don't make calls!) during the interview. To resist the temptation to check your phone, stow your phone in your bag before the interview.

5. **Not Knowing Anything About the Company**

Don't let your potential employer stump you with the question, "What do you know about this company?" It's one of the easiest questions to ace, if only you do some research before your interview.

Background information including company history, locations, divisions, and a mission statement are available in an "About Us" section on most company websites. Review it ahead of time, then print it out and read it over just before your interview to refresh your memory. Also check the company's LinkedIn page and Facebook page, if they have one.

o. **fuzzy resume facts**

Even if you have submitted a resume when you applied for the job, you may also be asked to fill out a job application. Make sure you know the information you will need to complete an application including dates of prior employment, graduation dates, and employer contact information.

It's understandable that some of your older experiences may be hard to recall. Review the facts before your interview. It can be helpful to keep a copy of your resume for yourself to refer to during your interview, although certainly don't use it as a crutch.

Of course, you should never "fudge" any facts on your resume. The more truthful you are on your resume, the better you will be able to discuss your past experience during your interview.

7. **Not Paying Attention**

Don't let yourself zone out during an interview. Make sure you are well rested, alert and prepared for your interview.

Getting distracted and missing a question looks bad on your part. If you zone out, your potential employer will wonder how you will be able to stay focused during a day on the job, if you can't even focus during one interview.

If you feel your attention slipping away, make the effort to stay engaged. Maintain eye contact, lean forward slightly when talking to your interviewer, and make an active effort to listen effectively

8. **Talking Too Much**

There is nothing much worse than interviewing someone who goes on and on and on... The interviewer really doesn't need to know your whole life story. Keep your answers direct, to-the-point and focused. Don't ramble - simply answer the question.

Don't get sidetracked and start talking about your personal life - your spouse, your home life or your children is not topics you should delve into. No matter how warm, welcoming or genial your interviewer may be, an interview is a professional situation - not a personal one.

9. **Not Being Prepared to Answer Questions**

Your interviewer is probably going to ask you more than just the basics about where you worked, and when. To get a feel of your aptitude for a job, your interviewer is going to take advantage of the allotted time and flesh out everything he or she needs to know about you as an employee.

Don't let yourself be caught off guard. Prepare for your interview by reviewing what questions to expect, and how to answer them.

Be prepared with a list of questions to ask the employer so you're ready when you're asked if you have questions for the interviewer.

10. **Badmouthing Past Employers**

Don't make the mistake of badmouthing your boss or coworkers. It's sometimes a smaller world than you think and you don't know who your interviewer might know, including that boss who is an idiot... You also don't want the interviewer to think that you might speak that way about his or her company if you leave on terms that aren't the best.

When interviewing for a job, you want your employer to know that you can work well with other people and handle conflicts in a mature and effective way, rather than badmouthing your coworkers or talking about other people's incompetence.

When you're asked hard questions, like "Tell me about a time that you didn't work well with a supervisor. What was the outcome and how would you have changed the outcome?" or "Have you worked with someone you didn't like? If so, how did you handle it?" don't fall back on badmouthing other people.