

10 Common mistakes people make in job interviews!

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Mistake one: Viewing the interview as a win/lose situation.

Many people attend an interview with a win or lose mentality, if I get the position I win, if I do not I lose. This will often create an inner tension and pressure that is not congenial to you getting the position or presenting yourself in the most attractive way for the employer. As most people only go to a limited number of interviews in their lifetime they therefore only have limited practice. In addition to this there can be a normal sense of some pressure simply with the thought of changing position, as we move from the known to the unknown. Consider the interview as a two way process, the company is checking if you are the right person for the job, but equally important you are checking if this is the company or position that is the right one for you. Both need to be the correct for this to work long term. "Practice makes perfect" is a saying to remember when going for an interview, how many have you been on in your life and how long is it since your last interview? Think of all the things that you can do well now, yet when you tried the first time they were not as good.

Mistake two: Talking too much or too little

It has been wisely said that as we have two ears and one mouth we should use them in this proportion. We are all different, some of us we have a tendency to talk a lot while others are more reserved. If you are the type of person who likes to talk then it is important that you do not dominate the interviewing process. Answer the questions that you are asked and do it in a concise and direct manner.

If you are a more reserved person then make sure to answer the questions in full, interviewers want to hear what you are really like and therefore it is important that you show the "real you" in the interview.

Mistake three: Not listening to the interviewer.

Many people go into the interview with a mental list of the things that they want to tell the company about, what they have done, how they have worked, what are some of the strengths that they consider they have. Remember that the company is interviewing you so they will probably have a number of questions designed to give them the information required. Listen very carefully to what the interviewer is asking and give them an accurate and clear answer, don't give your life history, just answer the question. Honesty is the very best policy in the interview, do not stretch the truth and do not tell the interviewer what you think they want to hear. If you give false information either by exaggerating or leaving some important information out you could be setting yourself up to fail in the position.

Mistake four: Going to the interview blind and dumb.

Prior to any interview make sure that you do some research on the company so you are equipped with some basic information as to what the company does, the size of the company, who owns it and do they have other divisions. Check if the company has a web site, if so go to it and find out as much as you can, make sure you know the location and how to get there. Find out as much as you can about the industry, particularly if it is one you have not worked in before. Check statistics is it a growth or a declining industry. Find out the main competitors so you can ask questions in the interview of how the company rates with the others in the industry.

Mistake five: Failing to see the obvious clues.

When you arrive for the interview be alert and look for all the obvious clues. What is the standard of the premises? Are things in good order? What do the signs, pictures and messages on the walls say? How are the people dressed? Are there any publications in the reception that talk about the company? If so read them while you are waiting for the interview. All these will give you key information on what this company is like and how they operate, vital information for you to ask the right questions in the interview.

Mistake Six: Dressing above or below the expected standard.

The standard of the clothes you wear should fit with the position you are applying for. If you arrive at the interview for a sales position selling up market furniture, to the most wealthy in the city, in jeans and running shoes with many piercings you are unlikely to get the position. Likewise if you attend the interview for a car mechanic in a 3 piece designer suit, you also are unlikely to get the position. Think about the type of people that the position will be dealing with and then select clothing that is just above the level that would be expected for the position. Also be sure that your hair is clean and well cut and remember that visible tattoos and multiple piercings are generally not considered desirable in most positions.

Mistake Seven: Shooting yourself in the foot – asking the turnoff questions too early.

There are a number of ways in which you can very quickly lose the prospect of getting the position, remember that your first impression is very important. When you meet the person or people doing the interview give a firm but not too hard hand shake (try to have your hands warm), look them in the eye and be friendly and relaxed. There are several questions that you should not ask in the first few minutes of the interview, these are any that relate to the benefits that you will get from the company i.e. salary, benefits, expenses, holidays etc.

Always be there early for the interview - on schedule is late make sure you are there five or ten minutes early. Make sure you know where the company is and if you are driving check the closest parking. If you need to walk make sure you have an umbrella or coat so you do not arrive at the interview looking like a drowned rat if it rains. Check your appearance before you go in for the interview.

Mistake Eight: Missing the boat – failing to prepare for the interview.

Going to an interview without preparation is wasting both your time and the time of the interviewer. Make sure that you know the purpose of the interview, why you would like this position and most importantly what strengths you are bringing to the company and the position. Make sure that you have a great CV as you are competing with all the other applicants and therefore your CV needs to stand out. Should you need a CV contact the company www.cv.co.nz they can prepare a fabulous CV for you.

Mistake Nine: Missing the obvious - would I employ myself.

Before you go on any interview ask yourself the question “Would I employ myself?” If the answer is yes then you are ready for the interview, if the answer is no then list the reasons why not and next to this, list the things that you need to change. Once you have done this explore all the books, people or resources that can help you to change the areas that require attending. One very effective programme to help you achieve significant change in your life is Maximizers (www.futureachievement.org.nz)

Mistake Ten: You never have a second chance at making first impression – the most important 2 minutes.

The first few minutes of the interview are the most important, you need to make a great impression and two key elements in this, is attitude and enthusiasm. Firstly your attitude should be very positive and thankful that you have the opportunity to present yourself at the interview, this is not a negative that you are making a change but a positive that you are heading in a new direction in your career. If you are feeling uncomfortable about the change read the book “Who moved my cheese” by Spencer Johnson. Many companies today place attitude as a high priority, as skills can be taught but attitude is much harder to change. Be enthusiastic, it is contagious and it will present you in a much better way, be enthusiastic about the company, the position and the opportunity to meet new people