

TIPS

Learn from common mistakes!

Q: What are the top mistakes candidates make while looking for a job?

A: Most people underestimate the power of networking. Looking for a job takes a lot of time and effort. A job seeker can never network enough. This must be done every day. Also remain open minded. Limiting a job search based on job title, salary or corporate level can be a mistake. It also is a mistake to mass mail resumes to companies with no specific job opening.

A: Common problem is poorly-prepared resumes. An interviewer has many resumes to cull through. To stand out, a resume needs to show the candidate is qualified for the specific position. The resume also must have a business-like presentation that is succinct, no more than one page. Candidates also underestimate the importance of preparing for an interview. Know the name of the person conducting the interview. Know what the company produces. Also research how old the company is, where the home office is located and what the company goals are. Check the internet to see if the company has made any headlines recently; Google their name. This information is relatively easy to come by in annual reports and can make a strong impression on the interviewer. Also do not underestimate the power of a positive mental attitude.

A: The biggest mistake is not arriving 10-15 minutes early. Arriving early ensures punctuality. Arriving late may leave a bad first impression. In an interview it is a mistake to discuss illness personal problems. Even if the interviewer shows a relaxed attitude do not drop your guard. Stick to the subject at hand and keep comment light and to the point. Along these lines, dress professionally. It is better to be slightly overdressed than run the risk of being too casual.

How should I respond when asked by an interviewer to "Tell me about Yourself?"

"This is an appropriate time to qualify the question. Never answer this question without knowing what area the interviewer is focusing on, business or personal. Demonstrate a personality trait, perhaps honesty or integrity. Both the interviewer and the applicant can learn a lot from this exchange."

"You should use this opportunity to first talk about contributions you can make to this organization with the skills that you bring to the party."

"The statement, "Tell me about your self is often used as a means to make an applicant comfortable and at ease, since it is easy for most people to talk about themselves, as well as to find out a little more about a person. I believe it is important, when asked to talk about you, to be honest and sincere and not to try too hard to sell yourself at this point in the interview. The interviewer will be able to determine, through your conversation, whether your personal attributes or skills will be able to contribute to the organization's needs."

"When you are asked this question in an interview, it is your chance to highlight work-related achievements, work experience and points that will make you an interesting candidate that might not have otherwise been brought out in an interview. It is best to have an answer prepared (without sounding too rehearsed) for this type of question, so that you are not left fumbling for the right words. Keep in mind that the key purpose of an interview is for the interviewer to learn what you can do for a company. Talking about personal attributes will give the impression that you don't have skills, achievements or experience to talk about."

"This question is asked to gain insight into whom you are as a person, as well as what job strengths you may advertise. How you have gained your vision of the work around you, your thought process, your value system and ethics are going to be revealed in your answer.

"You should be well-prepared to answer this. Of course, you want to advertise what you've done well in the world of work, hopefully in line with the needs on this job. Keep in mind, just as important is the manner in which you accomplish your tasks. You should reveal how you set about doing things, and those items you think that are priorities."

Avoid "blowing" an interview...

Q: What are the most common reasons applicants are not successful in employment interviews? What are the most common "make or break" interview factors?

A: Many applicants "blow" interviews because they do not come across as capable and self-confident. They don't look the interviewer in the eye and they mumble one word answers. Poor applicants are not prepared with intelligent questions about the job or company. If all applicants are qualified for the job, the one who gets the job is the one who had the best personality and was the best fit for the company.

A: Decision-makers go to great lengths to hire the applicants they liked in the interview. Many applicants have equally impressive credentials. The factors which tip the balance in such circumstances are enthusiasm, preparation, punctuality and a friendly personality.

A: Some applicants fail to make a proper first impression, which is crucial to success. It may be in the way they dress, their speech, or the attitude they project. Other candidates tend to show more interest in salary than the position being offered.

26 Ways to Strike Out When Interviewing

A recent survey of 153 companies, who were questioned as to why they did not hire a qualified applicant, resulted in the following answers:

1. Poor personal appearance.
2. Lack of interest and enthusiasm.
3. Over-emphasis on money.
4. Condemnation of past employers.
5. Failure to look at interviewer while conversing.
6. Limp, fishy handshake.
7. Late to interview.
8. Failure to express appreciation for interviewer's time.
9. Asks no questions about the job.
10. Indefinite response to questions.
11. Overbearing, over-aggressive, conceited "know-it-all" complex.
12. Inability to express oneself clearly.
13. Lack of planning for career; no purpose or goals.
14. Lack of confidence, ill at ease.
15. Lack of fact.
16. Lack of manners, courtesy.
17. Lack of maturity.
18. Lack of vitality.
19. Indecision.
20. Merely shopping around.
21. Cynical
22. Low moral standards.
23. Lazy.
24. Intolerant.
25. Inability to take criticism.
26. High pressure type.

10 Tips For a Positive Interview

1. Use the interviewer's name-title and last name-from time to time as you speak. Don't use the interviewer's first name unless you have been requested to do so.
2. Phrase your questions so that you sound sure of yourself. "What would be my duties?" sounds more assertive than "What are the duties of the job?"
3. Use good grammar and good diction. Say "yes," not "yeah."
4. Listen to how quickly you speak and look for moderation. Don't talk too fast. Don't pepper the hiring manager with too many facts at once.
5. Don't fill pauses with "um," "uh," or "ah." Don't punctuate sentences with "you know," "like," "see," or "okay."
6. Punctuate your speech just as you would a sentence. Stress the words that are most important. Don't arbitrarily emphasize every third word; don't keep your voice a monotone.
7. Use active verbs.
8. Don't use the word "think," "guess," or "feel," which sound indecisive; sound positive. Also avoid "pretty good" or "fairly well." Talk about your skills with positive words.
9. Watch the tone of your voice. While it might be trendy among your friends to end a sentence with a higher tone of voice, so that sentences sound like questions, this habit will kill your credibility with hiring managers.
10. Offer examples of your accomplishments. Use illustrations, descriptions, statistics, and testimonials to support your claims.

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