

Top Mistakes Candidates Make

Not feeling so great about your last interview? Take heart. Chances are the interviewer has seen worse. A recent CareerBuilder study surveyed hiring managers to identify the most common mistakes candidates make. Here are the top five categories - along with some real-life examples:

1. What They Say (or Don't Say)

According to CareerBuilder's survey, the number one mistake interviewees make relates to how they communicate. Some come in with a pre-determined script and sound as if they're reading from a textbook. Others give one-word answers with no further elaboration. While still others use profanity or ramble on about their personal problems and social lives rather than answer - or ask - questions about the job or company.

Others are too candid. For example, when asked what interested her about the position, one candidate replied: "I'm open to anything; I really need to get some medical insurance." Another candidate at a children's organization stated that he "hates kids." Those interviewing for customer service positions confessed: "I'm not a people person," and "customers are annoying." While a man applying at a drug treatment facility anxiously asked if they drug-tested employees and whether they'd give advance notice.

Others complain about former bosses. And many make the mistake of bringing up money and hours-required in the first interview. But the "Too Much Information" award has to go the candidate who said: "I'm only here because my mom wants me to get a job." He was 37!

2. How They Act

The second most common way candidates flub their interviews is what they do. Many of these mistakes are the result of being unprepared and knowing nothing about the job or company. Others are because candidates don't listen to the questions being asked or try to bluff their way through technical questions.

Some stem from a lack of common sense or courtesy. Many hiring managers complain about candidates showing up late and the surprising number who interrupt the interview to take calls on their cell phones. One woman brought her children along.

And which is worse? The candidate who asked the hiring manager to hurry up because he wanted to have lunch, or the one who pulled out a sandwich and began eating?

Yet other bloopers are simply a result of nerves - or too much coffee. Several hiring managers complained of nail-biting while another watched in horror as a candidate jumped up to make a point, then turned around and fell to the floor!

3. Bad Attitudes

The third most-cited category of mistakes has to do with the candidate's attitude. No one likes a braggart, know-it-all or name-dropper - or the candidate with the super-sized ego who demanded to be hired and said the company could do no better. Then there's the interviewee who declared he was "used to a higher class of business."

On the other side of the coin, are those who show no enthusiasm. Many hiring managers complained of interviewees who show little energy or interest in the conversation. One candidate spent the better part of the interview looking at his watch.

4. How They Look

Coming to the interview improperly groomed and dressed is the fourth most common mistake. Along with the usual culprits: bad posture, tattoos, facial piercings, fluorescent-colored hair and poor hygiene, hiring managers also told of a candidate who did not wear shoes, one who wore a skirt slit to her derriere, another

who wore dark glasses throughout the interview and a candidate with dirty fingernails wearing jeans and a t-shirt - oh, by the way, he was drunk, too!

5. They're Dishonest

Common forms of dishonesty include exaggerating about achievements or misrepresenting knowledge. There's also the candidate who mentioned his arrest after saying on his application he had never been arrested - and the one who actually stole something from the interviewer's office.

Besides highlighting ignorance in action, the survey confirms that truth is stranger than fiction and proves that life is not all that rosy on the other side of the interview process either.

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