

INTERVIEW ANSWERS "TRICK"

I bungled every job interview until I stumbled on this 3-step method

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The 8 Biggest Interviewing Blunders

When it comes to the job search process, getting interviews is a major milestone. It means you stood out from most other potential candidates and are worth the investment of time. A lot rides on the interview. It's a make-or-break activity that tips the scales in one direction – you either move forward in the process, or you're removed from the short-list. So nailing the interview is critical. Yet there are some mistakes that job seekers commit over and over, despite the fact that they are guaranteed to tip the scales in the undesired direction. Here they are along with advice on what to do to avoid them.

1. Not doing your homework

Thanks to the ease of internet research, you can learn a lot about a company and its people – including the people you are going to meet during your interview. Today, it's assumed that you have done research – significant research. If you seem to have no clue about what's currently going on at the organization or know nothing about any of the people you are meeting, you are putting yourself on the "don't call back" list. Instead, follow the company on LinkedIn and Twitter, and Google everyone you are going to meet or think you might meet. Scour the internet and the company's LinkedIn page for information on what's happening right now and find an internal source who can give you firsthand insights.

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2. Not practicing your weak spots

Your interview doesn't have to be a flawless performance, but it must do enough to instill confidence in your hiring managers. So you want to avoid flubs as much as you can. Know the things that trip you up and practice them in advance. Is it that "So tell me about yourself" interview question that you just don't know how to answer? Or do you have trouble shaking hands or remembering names? Practice is the key to gaining confidence so you can reduce your stress and perform your best.

3. Not focusing on appearance

Hiring managers should focus on your accomplishments and ability, right? Well, they will if you don't distract them with careless external cues. I'm talking about unpolished shoes, wrinkled clothing, bedhead, ill-fitting suits: these are just a few things that interviewers notice. Your overall appearance indicates how serious you are about the job and how prepared you are. Don't let one of these easy to fix distractions nix your candidacy. Decide on your look, and make a checklist – shirt ironed, shoes polished, suit back from dry cleaner, etc. Follow the checklist for every interview. Just as airline pilots follow a strict checklist before making a perfect take-off, you must follow a plan so your career can take off.

4. Not remembering names

Let's face it, you are going to meet a lot of people during a job interview. And people's favorite sound is the sound of their name. Saying to the third person you meet during the interview process, "I really enjoyed speaking to the person before you..." will have a negative impact. There are plenty of cutting-edge, proven methods for

remembering names. My [interview with Brent Sverdlhoff](#), author of [How Could I Forget You: A Creative Way to Remember Names and Faces](#), shares a few of the best techniques. Choose the one that will be easiest for you to add to your skillset.

5. Not honing your storytelling skills

Statistics don't cinch interviews. Stories do. Stories are memorable. They connect both halves of the brain. If you want to be remembered long after the interview ends, integrate your facts into compelling, human stories. Instead of saying, "I saved my company \$50,000 by building real-time data app for clients," tell the story behind it: "I was having lunch with one of our clients who said, 'My business would be so much more successful if I had immediate access to your inventory levels. Sometimes the delay in talking to your customer service reps loses me a sale.' So I realized that an app would be the ideal way to deliver this to clients. I reached out to our internal app development team, and in 2 months we had a prototype. Now that it's in full production, we are saving \$50K annually on customer support and our clients' net promoter score increased from 6.5 to 8."

6. Not delivering a confident handshake

A wimpy handshake gets things off on the wrong foot – or hand. The handshake is one of the first connection points with a hiring manager. It seems so basic, yet time and again I hear from recruiters and hiring managers about their disdain for the limp handshake. Although you have probably shaken a lot of hands, it won't hurt for you to practice so that you always exude confidence and make a great first impression. With a firm, confident handshake, you set the stage for an outstanding interview performance.

7. Not listening

Sure, the interview is the place where you can share your accomplishments and convince decision-makers you are the ideal candidate. But speaking at the expense of listening will only make you sound like a blow-hard. When you spend time listening during interviews, you learn how to position what you say and make it relevant. You also acknowledge the person who is asking the questions. The best way to show you

are listening is to nod appropriately, repeat what's being said, and respond in a way that is both compelling and completely in line with what was being asked.

8. Not asking the right questions

Questions serve two functions. They help you understand something that's important – and they show others you are curious, thoughtful, and engaged. Most interviewees ask questions to satisfy the first function. “What opportunities do you offer to travel or pursue an overseas assignment?” or “What are the pathways for growth beyond this role?” But it is the second function that's more important and powerful for connecting you to hiring managers and decision-makers. Questions like “How will the recent drop in oil prices impact your ability to compete in this market?” or “Has the rapid adoption of social media changed how you are delivering and measuring your training programs?” Use the research you did about the company and your awareness of what's happening in the world – and be prepared with some questions that show that you are a big thinker, emphasizing your ability to serve the employer, not the other way around.

When a company schedules you for a series of interviews, apply what you learn in each of those conversations, quoting and referring to the prospective colleagues you have already met. This is a great way to show you are engaged and paying attention, and that you fit right in.

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