

# Common Mistakes to Avoid in Your Job Interview

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**It's tough to avoid common interview mistakes if you don't know what they are. Here's a few to watch out for.**

### **1. Confusing an Interview with an Interrogation**

One of the most common mistakes is confusing your interview for an interrogation, where one party asks questions, and the other gives answers.

An interview should be a flowing conversation in which both parties mutually exchange questions and answers. During an interview, try to build rapport with your interviewer, matching their communication style and using their questions to develop a relationship.

Candidates who fail to engage in a conversation leave their interviewer in the role of a reluctant interrogator. Thoroughly researching the company beforehand will ensure you are able to offer informed questions and strategic answers.

### **2. Making a So-Called Weakness Seem Positive**

A frequently asked interview question is “What are your weaknesses?”. Conventional interview wisdom dictates that you highlight an ambiguous quality (such as perfectionism), and twist it into a positive.

Interviewers are not typically impressed by this approach – they've probably heard the same answer a hundred times. If you're asked this question, highlight a skill that you wish to improve upon and what you're doing to enhance it.

### **3. Failing to Ask Questions**

Most interviews conclude with the interviewer asking if you have any questions. The worst response is that you have no questions – it shows that you are neither interested nor prepared. Interviewers are more impressed by the questions you ask than the selling points you try to make. Before each interview, make a list of five questions you will ask.

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“I think a good question is, ‘Can you tell me about your career?’” says Kent Kirch, director of global recruiting at Deloitte. “Everybody likes to talk about themselves, so you’re probably pretty safe asking that question.” For more information on appropriate questions to ask during an interview, read Drake Infosheet 4: “Asking the Right Questions”.

#### **4. Researching the Company, But Not Yourself**

Good candidates prepare for the interview by researching the company. Great candidates both research the company and themselves – taking stock of their skills, knowledge and experience.

Formulating a “talent inventory” prepares you for responding to any question about your experience. You must be prepared to discuss any part of your background. Creating a ‘talent inventory’ refreshes your memory and helps you immediately remember experiences you may have otherwise forgotten during the interview.

#### **5. Leaving Your Mobile Phone On**

Although we live in a wired, always-available society, a ringing phone is not appropriate in an interview. Make sure to turn it off (not just to silent) before you enter the office.

#### **6. Waiting for a Call**

Time is your enemy after the interview. After you send a thank you email and note to each interviewer, follow up a couple of days later with a question or further information. Make sure to contact the person who has the power to make the hiring decision directly.

Additional information can be an update on any recent achievements, a current competitor’s press release or industry trends. Here’s an example, “I saw an article that featured your company as a leader in the industry. I thought you would be interested.” Your intention is to keep everyone’s memory of you fresh.

#### **7. Arriving Late**

It is extremely important that you arrive to the interview on time. Even better though, try to be 5 to 10 minutes early. Arriving late shows disorganisation and immediately gives the interviewer a negative first impression.

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