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YOUR INTERVIEW COACH

How to increase your chances of landing that job offer:

7 Mistakes to avoid during the interview

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Introduction - 7 Biggest Mistakes Made at a Job Interview!

Often the biggest mistake candidates make is before the interview itself by not preparing adequately. They may think they can “wing” it on the day. They may think they can win over the interviewer with their charismatic personality! They may not get a huge amount of time or simply don’t know how to prepare.

Whatever the reason, think about it from the interviewer’s point of view – the person who has probably already spent a huge amount of time with the hiring managers drafting out job descriptions, crafting job adverts for the job boards and sifted through hundreds of CVs and application forms!

Everyone is busy today and it’s likely the person interviewing you probably has a very long list of “things to do” and a full day of back to back interviews. It’s unlikely a good recruiter will say to you – “Sorry I didn’t have time to read your CV.” I did say a good recruiter!

Looking for a new job can feel like a full-time job, especially if you are crafting a cover letter and tailoring your CV to every vacancy – this takes time, effort and energy. So, let me help you with a few insider tips and suggestions!

1. Not preparing specific examples

You may have already included some information about key achievements on your CV (If not downloaded my free eBook 7 Biggest Mistakes to avoid on your CV today!) and this may have been one of the main reasons you were invited to interview.

Employers today put a lot of emphasis on inviting candidates that have evidence of meeting and better still exceeding expectations and targets on their CV.

It’s essential to spend some quality time preparing 5 or 6 specific examples that demonstrate common behavioural competencies. My eBook “How to prepare for an interview” goes into more detail – subscribe to my [newsletter](#) to receive a free copy!

If you’ve just left school or college and have no work experience – that’s okay, just think about hobbies, charity work or volunteering where you may have demonstrated team work, the ability to understand instructions, learnt a new skill and how you went from complete beginner to intermediate or advanced.

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To help you think of specific examples consider these common behavioural competencies and think about a time when you demonstrated these skills.

- Communication & Presentation skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Customer & Client orientation skills
- Relationship Building skills
- Commercial Awareness and Business Acumen
- Planning and Organising skills
- Prioritising skills & Time Management
- People Management & Development skills
- Leadership skills
- Team Player and Member
- Adaptable and flexible
- Ability to learn quickly
- Decision Making skills

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2. Struggling to answer the tough questions

These questions can catch out even the most confident candidates if they don't prepare or give these some serious thought before the day of the interview. The questions below (despite being around for decades and a bit dated) still get asked today:

- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Why are you leaving your current employment?
- What attracts you to the job and our organisation?
- Why should we hire you?
- What will you bring to the job and company?
- Tell me about yourself?
- Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

Visit my blog for further information to help you answer these questions: [How to Answer Tough Interview Questions](#)

3. Not researching the company

Another very common question recruiters and hiring managers ask is “What attracts you to working for our organisation?” or “What do you know about our company?”

Today you need to go beyond the usual stock answers or churning out the answers everyone else provides. You need to think carefully about how this opportunity fits with your career aspirations and how it will also benefit the employer. It's got to be a win-win.

Avoid the usual responses:

- “I'd like to work for a Global company.”

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- **“I’d like to work for an International company.”**
- **“I’m looking for a new challenge.”**
- **“I want to work for a company with a good reputation.”**

There’s nothing wrong with the answers above but they’re not particularly original, they are not unique (most candidates will say the same) and they’re not particularly personal to your own values, ambition, aspirations or career goals. So think carefully about your genuine reasons.

This takes a little time researching the company and finding out their plans for the future too.

- What is it about being part of their goals, strategy and mission?
- What will you do that makes a difference or adds value?
- What will you contribute in order to help the organisation achieve their goals?

The clues are possibly in the job advert and description – so don’t overlook this content when researching and preparing your answers.

You absolutely need to know what’s currently going on at this company and you can do this relatively easily by looking at their news feed or twitter activity.

The larger corporate organisations will have a person or even a team of people responsible for their social media. Their social media will be by design not by accident. So, you’ll get real time intelligence on what topics this company consider important enough to tweet about or re-tweet.

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4. Exaggerating

The interview is a “buying” and “selling” process. We all know that we have to “sell” ourselves to the interviewer or persuade them to “buy”. We need to be our best supporters – no one else will be singing our praises during this very important meeting.

Of course, there’s a clear difference between slightly exaggerating the level of competence and lying about a particular skill to get through the interview process.

Here’s the problem. If the core part of the job requires someone very competent or advanced in a particular skill then the job will be extremely stressful for someone without these skills.

No doubt the person telling fibs will get caught out (if not at the interview stage) on day one of the job. Even going on a quick on-line course will not produce someone with the level of competence required overnight and that person will struggle to meet expectations.

Worst case scenario is you’ll end up getting fired. It’s actually relatively simple to terminate a contract in the early days of a new job if you are not performing to expectations and even easier if you’ve been caught out telling lies during your application. It’s gross misconduct.

5. Lack of enthusiasm

This is a particularly hot topic at the moment. Employers want to hire individuals with plenty of enthusiasm. They want to hire people that are enthusiast for the job and for the organisation.

This demonstrates that you are already motivated about your career and motivated individuals are likely to be more productive. Also if you are motivated about your career this indicates you are self-driven, determined and are far less likely to need managing.

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It's hard to fake enthusiasm consistently throughout an interview and then on into the job. For a lot of people an interview is stressful enough without trying to be someone you think the organisation are looking to hire.

For these reasons you need to be yourself and true to your own values. If not there could be some misalignment with the words you use and your body language and a trained interviewer will pick up or sense there's something you are holding back.

6. Being negative about your previous employer

Most of us recruiters will know that you're not likely to be leaving a job you absolutely love! Let's put aside the "passive candidates" for now. Recruiters will know there are probably a number of reasons for you looking for the next career move.

The usual reasons are progression or promotion, increase in salary, job satisfaction, work/life balance or it could be a break down in your relationship with your manager or colleagues.

Recruiters normally aren't probing for any sinister reasons – they simply want to understand how you've made decisions about your career, what motivates or de-motivates you, what factors are important and what drives you to succeed.

This information can then be matched to the job and the corporate culture in order to assess if you "fit".

7. Sharing too much information

A good recruiter will always aim to build rapport, make you feel relaxed and comfortable. They want to get the best out of you and gather quality information in order to make the best decision for all parties (The business, the manager and you).

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However, there's a tendency when you feel comfortable to share a little too much information. The interviewer isn't your friend – they have an agenda. They need to match you to the job, the team and the organisation by gathering lots of data.

Everything the interviewer observes during the interview will be analysed against key criteria and indicators in order to make the best decision.

Always be mindful you are in an interview – regardless of the label “informal or formal” interview. Even with an informal interview there's an agenda, normally with less objective and obvious criteria – personality fit or team fit.

To a certain extent you can prepare for the motivational fit, job fit and cultural fit but unless you have a lot of “inside” information it's fairly impossible to prepare for the “personality fit” or “team fit” aspects. This is why you need to stay true to your direction, values and career goals – don't feel tempted to stray from your path just to land any job.

Thank you for downloading our facts sheet – we hope you've enjoyed reading and learning.

Please do come and say hello on social media – [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#)!

For more information on preparing for an interview then subscribe to my [newsletter](#) and receive announcements and discounts.

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