

Common Mistakes to Avoid During an Interview

There are a lot of mistakes a person can make during an interview. Mistakes that range from showing up late to simply saying the wrong thing to the wrong person. I have found myself guilty of making several slip-ups myself. Having gone through the interview process many many times, both as the interviewee and the interviewer, I have listed these 5 most common mistake to help ensure that you ace your next interview.

Mistake #1 Show up late

Showing up for an interview late can send the message that you are not respectful of other people's time. It also shows a lack of time management. If your interview starts at 9 a.m. you need to plan to arrive at least 15 minutes early. Walking through the door at 9 a.m. is showing up on time but it does not allow you any time to mentally prepare yourself. If you were rushing or maybe you had to walk in the summer sun and might be a little out of breath upon arrival, that 15 minutes would allow you the time you need to calm down, steady your nerves, use the bathroom, and take a few minutes to think about the interview that is getting ready to happen. Also, arriving early demonstrates that you are conscientious of the time and can be an indicator for what your regular workday might look like. Will you be the employee that arrives daily on time, prepared to start working at the beginning of your shift, or will you be the employee running through the door at the start of the day? If your interview is being held somewhere you have never been before then you should make sure you give yourself plenty of time. Allow extra time in case you get lost or run into traffic. Best practice would be for you to do a test run. That means route the best path to your interview location and visit the site in advance to make you know where you are going and you know about how long the trip will take. If you find yourself in a situation where you know you will be late to an interview you should contact the interview organizer as soon as possible so that

they can adjust your interview schedule. Life happens and when it does good communication is the key to showing that you are prepared and are able to adjust.

Mistake #2 Show Up Underdressed

Your first impression is a lasting one. Showing up to an interview underdressed is not the end of the world but it is the first impression you make on your interviewer. Showing up to interview with a consulting firm in jeans and a polo, where you are being considered for a position to represent the company on million dollar projects and interact with various clients is not the best idea. When you are not sure how to dress it is my opinion that it is better to over dress than under dress.

Mistake #3 Poor Posture

You are being judged from the time you walk into the building until the time you leave. What you wear, what you say, what you do, how you sit, and how you speak provide interviewers with information about you. Poor posture is a negative. For example, sitting slouched down in a chair while interviewing displays a lack of enthusiasm and attentiveness. You want your posture to say 'I am alert, attentive, and excited to be here. You should give me this job'. Key tips to remember are:

- Look the interviewer in the eye
- When sitting sit straight up
- Walk tall
- Keep your head up
- Shake hands with a firm grip
- Speak with confidence

Mistake #4 Respond to a question when you don't know the answer

Do not try to answer a question when you have no idea what is really being asked. You aren't talking to third graders. Trying to sound smart and answer a question you don't understand will only make you look foolish. Once you deliver your

response (full of hot air) the interviewer is left to determine either a) you didn't understand the question or b) they are insulted because it is clear that you don't know what you are talking about and you thought you could fool them. If you don't understand the question being asked it is ok to say 'I don't understand the question'. If you don't know the answer to the question being asked it is ok to say something like 'I am not familiar with that but I will look into it', or 'That's something I'm not familiar with, can you tell me more'.

Mistake #5 Fail to Prepare

Failing to prepare is the most common mistake made by interview candidates and can happen at different points during the interview process.

- For phone interviews be sure to prepare by having a quiet place to receive the phone call. Calls held outside or in public places often have a lot of background noise that is easily picked up by the interviewer.
- For phone and video interviews make sure your devices are fully charged or plugged in. Also, be sure to check and confirm that all devices are working properly, i.e. camera, audio etc.
- Know your resume. You will be asked questions about your resume so make sure you know what is on it and be ready to talk about it.
- Know the position you are applying for. For example, an information architect is not the same as an architect. They do not build houses, they make digital content for instance websites and software.
- Be prepared to ask questions.
- Know the salary range for the position you are applying for. If you don't know the salary for a position you are applying to you can search the internet for salary information for jobs similar to the one you are applying for or ask someone you know that is more familiar with the position or industry.

Now you won't make the same mistakes that others have made, including myself, when going through the interview process. Showing up on time, dressing to impress, keeping good posture, speaking what you know, and being prepared are

great tips for achieving a successful interview. Remember to smile and have confidence, you are ready.

If you like these tips and want more check out my book, '*Beyond The Job Description: How to Succeed in the Workplace*'. Get your copy now at <http://www.ChristinaAlva.com> and follow me on Instagram and Facebook @ChristinaNALva.