

So You Muffed a Good Opportunity in Your Job Interview? 10 Interview Bloopers and How to Correct Them

by Carole Martin

I'm sure you've sat through movie or TV "bloopers" at the end of shows and laughed at the mistakes the actors make during the filming of the show. If I could put together a film with bloopers that people make in interviews it might seem funny as well – but not when it happens in real life – to you!

How do you avoid bloopers? First you become aware of what some of the pitfalls of interviewing are and then you prepare and practice so that it won't happen to you. Here are 10 of those very pitfalls to watch for.

1. Poor non-verbal communication – slouching – fidgeting – lack of eye contact

It's about demonstrating confidence – standing straight, making eye contact, and connecting with a good, firm handshake. That first impression can be a great beginning, or a quick ending to your interview.

2. Not dressing for the job or company – “over casual”

Today's casual dress codes in the office do not give you permission to dress as “they” do when you interview. It is important to look professional and well groomed, above all.

3. Not listening – only worrying about what you are going to say

From the very beginning of the interview, your interviewer is giving you information, either directly or indirectly. If you are not listening – turning up your intuitive – you are missing a major opportunity. Observe your interviewer and match that style and pace.

4. Being over-familiar – your new best friend is NOT the interviewer

The interview is a professional meeting to talk business. This is not about making a new friend.

5. Talking too much – telling it all – even if it's not relevant

Telling the interviewer more than they need to know could be a fatal mistake. Prepare for the interview by reading through the job posting; matching your skills with the requirements of the position, and relating only that information.

6. Using inappropriate language – you “guys” know what I mean

It's a given that you should use professional language during the interview. Be aware of any inappropriate slang words or references to age, race, religion, politics, or sexual preferences – these topics could get the door slammed very quickly.

7. Acting cocky – being overconfident – “king of the hill”

Attitude plays a key role in your interview success. There is a fine balance between confidence, professionalism, and modesty.

8. Not answering the question asked – “jumping in without thinking”

When an interviewer asks for an “example of a time,” you did something, he is seeking a sample of your past behavior. If you fail to relate a “specific” example, you not only don't answer the question, but you miss an opportunity to prove your ability and tell about your skills.

9. Not asking questions – a missed opportunity you will live to regret

When asked if they have any questions, the majority of candidates answer, “No.” Wrong answer! It is extremely important to ask questions. It demonstrates an interest in what goes on in the company.

10. Appearing desperate – “Please, please hire me!”

It’s a tough job market, and you need a job! But, when you interview with the “Please, please, hire me,” approach you appear desperate and less confident. Maintain the three “C’s” during the interview: Cool, Calm, and Confident! You know you can do the job, – now, make sure the interviewer believes you can, too.

Everybody makes mistakes – that’s what makes us human. We can laugh at ourselves a great deal of the time when we get tongue-tied or forget someone’s name – even our spouse’s. But in the interview you want to be as prepared and polished as possible. If you do make a mistake, consider it a human error and learn from the experience. In the meantime do your homework and get prepared.

The Interview Coach, Carole Martin, is a celebrated author, job coach, and speaker on the subject of interviewing and recruiting. A contributing writer at Monster.com and featured on talk radio, Carole is using her proven methods for coaching job seekers on competitive interviewing skills in technical and non-technical industries.

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