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5 Common Interview Mistakes

Adeline Barncastle is a leading Professional Resume Writer from Lloyds HR Consultancy

The most important 1st thing is to make sure your handshake is firm and not limp!..and then keep your eye contact; these are the perfect mix of professionalism and personality. But hold on: here are the less obvious uh-ohs that could derail your chances.

Dress Appropriately for the job You are Applying for

The people that don't get hired are often wrongly dressed for the interview! Usually they're overdressed: too much makeup and jewellery or impractical shoes. Sometimes, underdressed like a casual pair of jeans, T-Shirts or oversized tops or worse still stretchy pants and tight T-Shirts! Men too should make every effort to dress appropriately and NEVER use sneakers to an interview!! You should look one step above what is expected to be worn on the job, not a whole ladder!

Don't Air Your Grievances

For me, the most critical part of the interview is when you explain the decisions you've made—especially why you went from one job to the next. The explanation tells me about your motivations and attitude. One golden rule: Do not complain about a former job. Find a positive way to frame it. You don't have to say that everything was perfect. But if you can't find a way to explain how you handled a difficult situation or describe what you learned on the job, it can seem as if you'll be disappointed by the ordinary ups and downs of a business. To me, then, it feels like a risk to hire you.

Qualify Nothing

A lot of people have negative speech habits, such as using hedges like just, actually, kinda, and almost. For example: "I'm just really grateful to be talking to you today" or "I'm kinda thinking I want to transition into this job." These hedges make you come across as less confident, less authoritative—and less employable. Same for using disclaimers like "Well, I'm really not an expert on this." People think these types of statements make them seem more likable or down-to-earth, but they undermine credibility. Before an interview, ask a friend to listen to your speech for any bad habits, since they are often unconscious. Then give yourself a few days to focus on each one, and excise all of them.



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Stay on Topic

At the interview, talk only about the things that directly correlate with your ability to do the job: your knowledge, skills, and abilities. For legal reasons, interviewers are trained to stay away from trouble spots. But interviewees often open the can of worms themselves—for example, by mentioning problematic family situations. Most people know not to talk about religion or politics, but even sports can be dangerous. If you're a diehard Broncos fan and your interviewer likes the Roosters, you could be in trouble. It's best to stay focused on what you came there to talk about: the job.

Pare Down

Too many people walk into an interview with tons of extraneous items. You only really need your Diary to record relevant points of the interview for your own reference. Do not bring in your cell phone! Or if you do, make sure it's turned off, not just on vibrate. Interviewers will not excuse phones going off or, worse, people looking at their phones. Don't bring reading material, either. It gives the interviewer an impression that may be good or bad, when what you want is to stay neutral. A water bottle might be acceptable, but I've heard about folks bringing in a Big Gulp. Not a good idea. Companies hire people, not just a set of skills. They take everything you do into account to gauge your fit for their business.



Please check out my Facebook and website (below) for more interview tips; especially on handling phone (or remote) interviews which are most likely the 1st approach potential employers make!

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