



Career Corner

Top 10 List of Interview Dos and Don'ts

By Joyce Brocaglia

Just when I think that I've heard it all, a candidate goes on an interview and absolutely amazes me with some outlandish behavior. Our staff has compiled this top ten list of dos and don'ts as a quick reference guideline for interview etiquette.

10. Read Your Own Press

Make sure you know the contents of your resume and be able to speak about the accomplishments you've described in detail. Remember that the person interviewing you is not a professional interviewer. Prepare a list of the key points that you want to make sure to mention on the interview. Rehearse these points out loud in front of a mirror and make sure to include them in your conversation.

9. So What Does Your Company Do?

Research the company, its competitors, the latest press and the executives. Know the market and how they are positioned. Do a Google on the people that will be interviewing you and ask your HR contact to provide you with bios. Exhibiting knowledge of the company and the interviewer's background shows your level of interest and provides insight into your self-initiative.

8. Digging For Gold

At a time when most companies are trying to do more with less, having money be a focal point of any interview is a mistake. Greed is never good on interviews. Compensation should not be discussed on first interviews. When asked, provide a complete and accurate description of your total compensation package and reply that I'm sure you will make me a competitive offer, but right now I'm focused on learning about the opportunity. Save the salary negotiations discussion for after you've created a strong desire for them to hire you and your leverage will be greater. If you are utilizing an executive recruiter, you are best letting them handle the negotiations. Be truthful with them about your bottom line expectations, and let them handle the

negotiations. If you aren't confident in their abilities to do so, you've chosen the wrong recruiter.

7. White Lies Equal Pink Slips

Candidates often lie about the easiest facts to check—salary, dates of employment, degrees and titles. The information security industry is incestuous, and everybody knows somebody who can check you out. In a field that relies on so heavily on integrity, misrepresenting any part of your career history or accomplishments is a fatal error.

6. Would You Like Some Cheese With Your Whine?

"My last job sucked" was a brilliant comment made by a candidate during a lunch interview. Never let your guard down, even in an informal setting. Don't air your dirty laundry, no matter how bad your last job or boss was. Doing so usually gives the impression that you have difficulty working and playing with others. Emphasize the positives of past experiences and focus on the opportunity at hand.

5. Dressing For Failure

If you own anything polyester, throw it out now. Studies show that a candidate's appearance is the most important part of the first impression created during the first few minutes of an interview. Your mother was right when she told you that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Most interviewers believe people will be more productive if they are well groomed. Wear something that makes you feel confident; it will reflect in the way you carry yourself.

4. You Have Two Ears And One Mouth

You should listen twice as much as you talk on an interview. Listening skills are much more important than most people give them credit for. Don't overpower the conversation. Intimidating behavior will cost you the job. If you are not paying attention during the interview, there is no reason for someone to believe that you will be attentive and able to

execute tasks with minimal supervision once you are on board.

3. I Have No Questions

Employers are just as interested in your questions as they are your answers. The questions you ask give them a tremendous insight into your potential. Remember an interview is a dialogue, not a monologue. Prepare questions of your own in advance.


These can be general questions about the organization and its goals. As the interview is progressing, formulate more detailed questions regarding the roles and responsibilities of the position, reporting structure, and expectations based on information that the interviewer has shared.

2. The Golden Rule

Treat everyone you encounter from the receptionist to the senior most executive with utmost respect and courtesy. Follow up with a professional thank-you letter. It will distinguish you from other candidates and give you an additional chance to highlight your interest and capabilities for the position.

1. Silent Killers

Body language, eye contact, and enthusiasm are all key components of a successful interview. Experts estimate that words express around 35% of what people really communicate. Facial expressions, body movements and actions convey the rest. Make contact, sit confidently erect, and lean toward an interviewer, showing interest and enthusiasm. Slouching in your chair and staring at your shoes are a sure-fire way to have a short interview.

I hope these tidbits provide food for thought when preparing for an interview. They are very simple concepts that will surely make or break your chances of receiving an offer. 

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