



## 10 reasons why a job interview can go wrong

Unfortunately a lot of people think that the hard work has now been done and that they can simply turn up to an interview and stroll towards a job offer.

The reality is that getting an interview is a great start, but if you really want to bag that job then this is where the hard work really starts.

Having interviewed a number of people myself over the years, I've seen so many candidates fail to prepare and as the old cliché goes, prepare to fail.

Remember that with most of the examples, you are in control and if you prepare as well as you can, you will give yourself the best chance at securing that move.

### 1. Erm, your company does, erm....

Most job interviews start with the question, "So, tell me what you know about the company". Make sure you take the time to take a look at the company's website and research the key facts about the business.

This isn't a case of spending hours learning everything there is to know about the organisation. Ten minutes on their website or a look at the companies office, will tell you when they started in business, how many employees they have, which areas of business they are focused on and where they are going in the future. It may also be worth a google search to see if the company has posted any news articles and what is going on in their particular sector.

You may even want to consider looking at [LinkedIn](#) and search for individuals who are currently working in that business to see what backgrounds they come from. Try and also find the interviewer on [LinkedIn](#) or Google to see if you can find out what makes them tick.

Job Research is a must and by carrying it out it will show you are serious about the position you have applied for. Not doing your research will start the interview off on the wrong footing and the next 55 minutes will probably be painful!

### 2. Turning up late for an interview

Oh dear. You've pegged it from the car park, arriving for the interview ten minutes late and now you are sweaty and anxious. You are immediately on the back foot and at a disadvantage to all those being interviewed for the position. Would you employ someone who can't make it to work on time?

Again, this is where preparation is key; plan your journey, leaving yourself plenty of time for unforeseen problems such as late trains and traffic.

Print off maps, practice your route and arrive at least 10 minutes before your interview is due to start. This will give you a last chance to look over your notes and gather your thoughts.

### **3. Poor Attire**

First impressions count. Before you even say a word, a recruiter will have made a judgement on your suitability for the role by the way you dress. I've seen candidates wearing bad ties, shiny shirts, creased clothes, mini-skirts and low cut blouses and that's just the men!

Keep it smart and tidy. For the chaps, ensure the suit is dark and clean. Your shirt well pressed and your tie fairly conservative. Oh and make sure the shoes are polished, your hair is neat and tidy and all your breakfast is removed from your teeth.

For the ladies, similar to the above but keep the make-up subtle and don't shy away from that formal suit.

### **4. I hated my old boss**

At some point in the interview you will probably be asked for your opinion on your present or former employers. Don't fall into the trap that many do of bad mouthing past bosses or colleagues, even if they were the worst individuals on the planet. This will only reflect badly on you and let's be honest, no one likes a moaner!

Focus on the positives; what you enjoyed about previous roles and what you achieved for the businesses.

### **5. Do your research**

There are always those standard questions that will come up in every interview situation. And while it's vital that you practice and rehearse how you answer these questions, you should never come across like you are reading from an autocue.

By researching the businesses that you are applying for, you should be able to tailor your answers to ensure that you are answering with examples that are relevant to the position.

### **6. Not answering the question**

Listen carefully to the question, there will be a specific skill or experience that the interviewer will be trying to draw out. Sometimes nerves can take over and you will begin to waffle about everything apart from what the interviewer is actually asking.

The key here is in the preparation. Although you don't want to sound **too** rehearsed, by practicing the answers to typical interview questions, you will be able to try and eliminate the waffle and answer the question with real substance.

## **7. Body Language**

Remember, from the moment you arrive to when you leave, you need to be fully aware that you are there to impress and to sell yourself. Make friends with the receptionist...This is the most basic and simple advice that we can give... be nice and caring....who do you think the hiring manager will ask first for their impressions of you....?

So, don't sit in reception with your legs stretched out, hands clasped behind your head with a chilled out demeanour. Greet the interviewer with a firm (but not iron grip) handshake, and certainly not a limp handshake which might suggest a weak character. Smile and make eye contact. Remember that those first few seconds are a great opportunity to create a great impression.

When you are in the interview, avoid the classic negative body language traits; don't cross your arms as this can be interpreted as defensive and try to sit forward and make direct eye contact to demonstrate your enthusiasm for the position.

If you can subtly imitate your interviewer's positive body language this will certainly build up a rapport, but try not to make it too obvious or they may just find you a tad weird!

## **8. Failing to sell you**

One of the classic mistakes we often see in interviews is when candidates believe it's a sign of arrogance to give examples of where they have excelled in a position. I'm not sure whether it's a Kiwi trait that we feel too reserved to boast about our achievements. It certainly isn't the case in America where candidates are much more confident about self-promotion.

But, there is obviously a fine balance between arrogance and confidence. For example, in an interview, you could say, "I have a reputation for delivering an excellent ROI on marketing projects", rather than, "I am the best marketing person in my company".

Make sure you add some substance when reflecting on your strengths and it is always wise to reflect on some of the projects you delivered and the facts and figures behind those projects.

## **9. Failing to ask any questions**

You've got to the end of the interview and the interviewer will typically ask you, "Do you have any questions for me". By answering no, you will look disinterested and unenthusiastic about the position you have applied for, and you will have blown all the good work from the previous 55 minutes.

You should ensure that you have done your research for the interview and from this research you should be able to put together 2-3 questions ready for this very situation.

So, what do you really want to know? Avoid just chucking in a few token questions about holidays, perks or job progression.

I always find this is a great time to ask if the interviewer has any doubts about my fit within the organisation or if they feel there are gaps on my CV that haven't been addressed.

You could ask, “I’m very interested in this role and I think I’d be successful here. Do you feel that I would be a good fit?” Or you could ask them, “What do you particularly enjoy about working here?” This will demonstrate enthusiasm and gives the interviewer the opportunity to sell the company to you.

Other great questions include, “If I was to be successful, what is likely to happen in my first week?” Or, “is support available for people who want to gain extra skills?”

## **10. Failing to follow up after the interview is over**

We have all probably done it in the past. You finish your interview and then you wait for the phone to ring to see whether you were successful.

But if you actually followed up the interview with a short email thanking the interviewer for their time, you will put yourself ahead of the 90% of people who don’t bother to do so.

Keep the email short, thanking them for their time and reiterate how impressed you were with their business giving a short synopsis on why you believe you would be the perfect fit for their organisation.

Finish the email by informing them that if they have any questions that shouldn’t hesitate to contact you.

Remember, every opportunity you have to set yourself apart from the other applicants in the process is worth taking. With all that time you have spent on your CV and interview preparation, what’s another couple of minutes firing off a thank you email?

And if all else fails and you have waited weeks for an answer, don’t be afraid to pick up the phone to determine what the deadline is for an answer on the role.

I hope you found a few of these tips useful. Remember that you have done extremely well getting an interview in the first place, and if you follow this guide, you should be able to set yourself apart from the other candidates in the process.