



All the tips, tricks, advice, do's, don'ts, and resources wrapped up in one place. We want you to be successful in your job search. We want it to take the least amount of time possible and cause very little stress. We are here to help you, so take a break from job searching and read this. Then, let us know which part was most helpful. If you have anything to add, let us know that too!

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Join Our LinkedIn Discussion

Career Resumes has a LinkedIn Group: [Resume Help and Advice for Professionals and Executives](#). In this group, job seekers, recruiters, business owners, and like-minded professionals discuss relevant issues having to do with job searching today. Join us!

Preparing for an Interview

The hard part is over: You have secured an interview with a company you are interested in working for.

Congratulations!

Now you need to worry about preparing for an interview. You will want to tailor each interview to focus specifically on the company you are interviewing for, but the following tips holds true for any interview you are getting ready for.

- Interview Mistakes to Avoid
- What is your body language saying about you in an interview?
- Common Interview Questions
- Don't Say THIS in an Interview
- How to Prepare for Behavioral Job Interview Questions
- Candidate Questions to ask the Interviewer
- Interview Follow-Up: Just Do It!
- How to Ask for Feedback after an Interview (when you don't get the job)

Keep reading. We'll cover each of these in detail...



Avoid These Interview Mistakes

Don't do them. Not even once. Don't chance it.

Arriving Late

This should go without saying, but it happens more often than you'd think. Sure, life happens, tires blow, buses are late and tragedy strikes. However, we aren't talking about acts of God here. Simple time management and being prepared (and having a backup plan) is essential to arriving on time. You need to anticipate what might happen to avoid being late.

Start by being honest with yourself:

1. Do I know EXACTLY where I am going and how long it takes to get there?
2. Do I have an alternative route planned in case of traffic, etc?
3. Do I need A LOT of time to get ready?
4. Am I generally late for appointments or social engagements?

Five minutes late might not seem like a big deal to you, especially if you normally operate that way. Trust me, it's a BIG DEAL to arrive at an interview late. It will be noticed and it will count against you.

Two additional things to keep in mind:

1. Arriving way too early is also annoying. If you feel the need to arrive more than 15 minutes early, wait in your car, get a coffee, or do something close by.
2. If your tardiness absolutely can't be avoided, communicate as soon as you can with the interviewer and be polite and apologetic. Ask him or her for a reschedule date and time as soon as possible.

A Poorly Written Resume or CV

Have you updated your resume lately? Are you conveying your skills and highlighting your experience in the best possible way? While you are an expert in your field (or becoming one) chances are you are NOT an expert at writing resumes. It is surprising how many serious job seekers have never received professional help with their resumes. This is important at every stage of your career, but it becomes increasingly challenging as your career advances and you gain invaluable skills sets and knowledge. In advanced positions where the competition is tough and there are less qualified candidates for those corner office jobs, your resume needs to open doors. Do you have the right key?

[Click here for a Free Resume Critique](#)

Being Underdressed

Bring your A Game to the interview table. It is always best to err on the side of caution and risk being overdressed rather than underdressed. Dressing up (business appropriate--not a ballroom party) shows the potential employer that you are serious and professional. It conveys that you take the time to do things right--including getting dressed.

Your Phone Making ANY Noise at All

None. Zero. Turn it off before the interview or leave in the car. I get it, we are all tied to our phones, but an interview is important enough to put the phone away for. If you have regular alerts or little pings that go off when you get an email, or even that sound we all know when your email updates--avoid them. Also worth noting, your phone should be put away so that you are not tempted to look at it even if there is no sound coming out of it. We are all so programmed to look at our phone hundreds of times a day--you might not even realize you do it. DON'T. Avoid the temptation by putting it away. Same goes for your watch.

Being Too Relaxed

It is great to be confident. It is amazing to be prepared. You've got this! You are ready. However, being too relaxed can be perceived as being aloof or disinterested--which is not the message you want to be sending. Check out the next section on Body Language Tips to get a good idea on what messages your posture might be sending.

Trashing your Previous Employers

No matter what the circumstances are (or were) for leaving past jobs, NEVER speak poorly of them or disrespect them in an interview. By doing so you make the interviewer think that you'll do the same after you join their company.

Find a way to explain why you are seeking employment elsewhere that doesn't reflect negatively on your past achievements. Your professionalism and integrity will take center stage when you show that you are able to leave past employment on good terms to seek experiences elsewhere.

A good rule of thumb is: If you wouldn't say it to your previous employee's face, don't say it to someone else, especially in an interview.

Strengthen Your Weaknesses

Every candidate is likely to have some weaknesses – even you! Whether it is gaps in your work history or evidence of job-hopping on your resume. This is ok as long as you think about how you can frame them positively. Perhaps you took some time out to travel so you could gain some soft skills, which you can then apply to the role you're applying for.

You should also prepare to discuss your weaknesses and give examples of difficult situations that you've faced in previous roles. Make the interviewer feel as though you have learned from these situations and are able to deal with adversity confidently, using your problem-solving skills. The best way to do this is to give concrete, specific examples.

What is your body language saying about you in an interview?

Your mother was right all along when she poked you to “sit up straight!” Before your next interview take a moment to read the following list of body language tips so you can bring your best A game to the table. You don’t want that slouch and give the wrong idea, right?

Posture

For some of us, it is hard to maintain good posture for a long period of time, like more than 10 minutes. To maintain good posture, sit up straight and imagine your head is a balloon with a string attached to your neck and it is trying to float straight up to the ceiling.

Eye Contact

You can say a lot with your eyes, just watch a romantic comedy. The same goes with an interview, but for an entirely different reason. Eye contact should be direct and engaging without being creepy. Starting with the initial handshake, make direct eye contact and hold it for one beat longer than you normally would. Answer questions while looking directly at the interviewer. Shifty eyes or looking up when asked questions will make you appear to be untruthful, or at the very least, unsure of yourself.

Hand Gestures

Minimal hand gestures are alright but there are some that will subtly (or not) send an aggressive vibe. Avoid pointing at the interviewer for any reason. Also avoid a chopping motion with your hand or slapping it down on the desk or table.

Think of it this way, do not create any motion between you and the interviewer that would disturb the space between the two of you.

Crossing Your Arms

Even if it is more comfortable to stand or sit with your arms crossed, don’t do it. This body language gives you a closed off appearance. Instead, sit with your hands relaxed in your lap or resting on the arms of the chair. If you are standing, let your arms hang casually at your sides.

No Bobbleheads!

Interviews make us eager to make a good impression, but you don’t want to seem too eager. One such way to convey this is excessive nodding of your head. Do some deep breathing before your interview and find your inner stillness. Stillness can be very powerful, but again, creepy if it is corpse-like.

Forget Fidgeting

Another part of your “inner stillness” is to avoid fidgeting. Tapping your fingers or feet, clicking your pen, obsessively tucking your hair behind your ear, etc. We all have things we do when we are nervous to alleviate that extra energy. If you are aware that you fidget, you can also be conscious of avoiding it. Fidgeting will distract the interviewer away from what you are saying and focus them instead on what you are doing. So, stop jingling the change in your pocket!

Express Yourself

Dead eyes--another creepy thing to avoid in an interview. Employers want to see your passion and get to know your personality better. If you are asked a question about something that excites you, let it show. Be alive, not a wax museum statue.

Practice Makes Perfect

To ensure your body language is conveying that you are relaxed, confident, trustworthy and a great choice, practice with a friend or family member. Have them read this article so they know what to watch out for.

Good luck, you've got this!

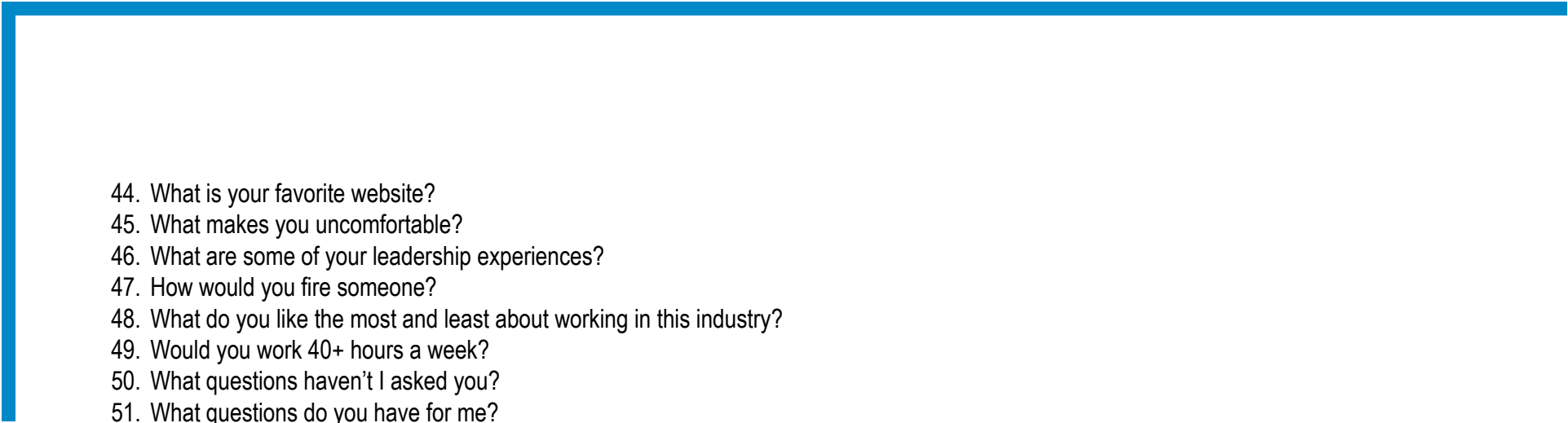
Common Interview Questions

Do You Know the Top Common Interview Questions asked during most interviews?

Some common interview questions will be very obvious and easy to answer, however, I suggest you read the following list to make sure you are 100% prepared for your next job interview. Some of them are not so obvious and you want to be sure you have an answer ready.

I found this list at [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com):

1. Most Common Interview Questions
2. What are your strengths?
3. What are your weaknesses?
4. Why are you interested in working for [insert company name here]?
5. Where do you see yourself in five years? Ten years?
6. Why do you want to leave your current company?
7. Why was there a gap in your employment between [insert date] and [insert date]?
8. What can you offer us that someone else can not?
9. What are three things your former manager would like you to improve on?
10. Are you willing to relocate?
11. Are you willing to travel?
12. Tell me about an accomplishment you are most proud of.
13. Tell me about a time you made a mistake.
14. What is your dream job?
15. How did you hear about this position?
16. What would you look to accomplish in the first 30 days/60 days/90 days on the job?
17. Discuss your resume.
18. Discuss your educational background.
19. Describe yourself.
20. Tell me how you handled a difficult situation.
21. Why should we hire you?
22. Why are you looking for a new job?
23. Would you work holidays/weekends?
24. How would you deal with an angry or irate customer?
25. What are your salary requirements? (Read the section: Salary Requirements: Don't be tricked by this job application question for help in navigating this interview question.)
26. Give a time when you went above and beyond the requirements for a project.
27. Who are our competitors?
28. What was your biggest failure?
29. What motivates you?
30. What's your availability?
31. Who's your mentor?
32. Tell me about a time when you disagreed with your boss.
33. How do you handle pressure?
34. What is the name of our CEO?
35. What are your career goals?
36. What gets you up in the morning?
37. What would your direct reports say about you?
38. What were your boss's' strengths/weaknesses?
39. If I called your boss right now and asked him/her what is an area that you could improve on, what would he/she say?
40. Are you a leader or a follower?
41. What was the last book you've read for fun?
42. What are your co-worker pet peeves?
43. What are your hobbies?

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44. What is your favorite website?
 45. What makes you uncomfortable?
 46. What are some of your leadership experiences?
 47. How would you fire someone?
 48. What do you like the most and least about working in this industry?
 49. Would you work 40+ hours a week?
 50. What questions haven't I asked you?
 51. What questions do you have for me?

Don't Say THIS in an Interview!

Now that you have an idea of the common questions you're likely to be asked, let's go over some things to NOT say when answering these, and other questions.

And remember — no slouching!

Avoid saying these things in an interview. I mean, really, really avoid them – they could kill your chances for getting the job. You might be surprised by how many people still manage to fumble the interview despite my warnings and kind suggestions. But you won't because you've read the following list.

“What does this company do?”

What? This says to the interviewer that you didn't even bother to do a simple search before showing up in their office. Every good interviewee knows to do their homework before an interview. If you don't care enough to find out what they do, you don't care enough about working there. Go home and try again.

“When are you due?”

“Umm, I'm not pregnant.” Insert foot into mouth now. Don't ask personal questions in an interview. You are not there to find out about the person, you are there to find about a job. You don't need to know if they are married, have kids, what their favorite color is, or what they ate for lunch. If you want to personalize the interview somehow, ask them about their job at the company, what they do, what they like about the company, etc. But again, this should not be the focus of your interview.

You'll have plenty of time to get to know them as a person at happy hour once you are hired.

“If I don't get this job, I won't be able to pay rent.”

Even if this is true, don't admit it. You do not want to get a job based on pity, nor do you want to guilt someone into giving you a job. That is starting off on the wrong foot and may prevent you from ever settling on solid ground there. Get the job on your merits and your qualifications--not your personal circumstances.

“I'm hoping to someday have your job.”

Would you hire someone who was after your job? No. Neither would anyone else. It doesn't indicate that you have ambitions. It indicates that you were dumb enough to say it out loud. Go home and try again.

“My last job was horrible.”

No and No. Yes to talking about the challenges of your current or past positions. No to bad mouthing and complaining. Once a complainer, always a complainer. No one wants that on their team.

“What the H*&!”

No swearing EVER in a job interview. Even if the person interviewing you drops a causal bomb-don't follow suit. It's not worth compromising your integrity for bonding over a few expletives.

Same goes for slang and terms like:

- Dude/Bro
- Honey/Sweetie
- Girls/Guys/Ladies

Avoid casual language in an interview unless you are absolutely sure it matches the company's culture.

“I interviewed for another job I really want.”

Ok, good-bye then. There are better ways to show that you are in demand, but a first interview isn't the place to do it. If you are offered the job, then start negotiating. But when you first meet a hiring manager, find out as much as can about the job. Who knows, it might turn into your first choice after all.

“I may not be the most qualified but...”

Even if you feel this way, think about this: The person thought you were qualified enough to interview you and they know what they want. So, in a way, you could be insulting their intelligence right along with your own self deprecation. Be in it to win it! Let them decide if you are qualified--it's their job.

How to Prepare for Behavioral Job Interview Questions

What are Behavioral Job Interview Questions?

Well, if you are going to prepare for them, you need to know what behavioral job interview questions are, right? They ask questions about how you have (or will) behave in certain situations and require more than yes or no answers.

Typically, most job interviews will include several behavioral interview questions and the following list will help you recognize them and prepare your answers.

Behavioral Question Format

The Question

1. Present a situation
2. Ask you to describe what action you have taken to respond to something similar in the past
3. Inquire what the result was

Your Answers

Craft your answers to provide one of the following:

1. Concrete examples of skills and experiences that relate directly to the position you are interviewing for.
2. Examples of your success in the past that are positive indicators of your potential success in the future at their company.

The following list of questions and examples of answers is from The Balance.

As you read each one, jot down the experiences you want to share and a few keywords that describe them.

Q: Tell me about how you worked effectively under pressure.

A: I had been working on a key project that was scheduled for delivery to the client in 60 days. My supervisor came to me and said that we needed to speed it up and be ready in 45 days, while keeping our other projects on time. I made it into a challenge for my staff, and we effectively added just a few hours to each of our schedules and got the job done in 42 days by sharing the workload.

Of course, I had a great group of people to work with, but I think that my effective allocation of tasks was a major component of the success of the project.

Q: How do you handle a challenge? Give an example.

A: One time, my supervisor needed to leave town unexpectedly, and we were in the middle of a touchy negotiation with a new sponsor. I was tasked with putting together a PowerPoint presentation just from the notes he had left, and some briefing from his manager. My presentation turned out successfully- we got the sponsorship, and the management team recommended me for an award.

Q: Have you ever made a mistake? How did you handle it?

A: Once I misquoted the fees for a particular type of membership to the club where I worked. I explained my mistake to my supervisor, who appreciated my coming to him, and my honesty. He told me to offer to waive the application fee for the new member. The member joined the club despite my mistake, my supervisor was understanding, and although I felt bad that I had made a mistake, I learned to pay close attention to the details so as to give accurate information in the future.

Q: Give an example of how you set goals.

A: Within a few weeks of beginning my first job as a sales associate in a department store, I knew that I wanted to be in the fashion industry. I decided that I would work my way up to department manager, and at that point I would have enough money saved to be able to attend design school full-time.

I did just that, and I even landed my first job through an internship I completed the summer before graduation.

Q: Give an example of a goal you reached and tell me how you achieved it.

A: When I started working for XYZ Company, I wanted to achieve the Employee of the Month title. It was a motivational challenge, and not all the employees took it that seriously, but I really wanted that parking spot, and my picture on the wall. I went out of my way to be helpful to my colleagues, supervisors, and customers - which I would have done anyway, I liked the job and the people I worked with. The third month I was there, I got the honor. It was good to achieve my goal, and I actually ended up moving into a managerial position there pretty quickly, I think because of my positive attitude and perseverance.

Q: Describe a decision you made that wasn't popular and how you handled implementing it.

A: Once, I inherited a group of employees when their supervisor relocated to another city. They had been allowed to cover each other's shifts without management approval. I didn't like the inconsistencies, where certain people were being given more opportunities than others. I introduced a policy where I had my assistant approve all staffing changes, to make sure that everyone who wanted extra hours and was available at certain times could be utilized.

Q: Give an example of how you worked on a team.

A: During my last semester in college, I worked as part of a research team in the History department. The professor leading the project was

writing a book on the development of language in Europe in the Middle Ages. We were each assigned different sectors to focus on, and I suggested that we meet independently before our weekly meeting with the professor to discuss our progress, and help each other out if we were having any difficulties. The professor really appreciated the way we worked together, and it helped to streamline his research as well. He was ready to start on his final copy months ahead of schedule because of the work we helped him with.

Q: What do you do if you disagree with someone at work?

A: A few years ago, I had a supervisor who wanted me to find ways to outsource most of the work we were doing in my department. I felt that my department was one where having the staff on premises had a huge impact on our effectiveness and ability to relate to our clients. I presented a strong case to her, and she came up with a compromise plan.

Q: Share an example of how you were able to motivate employees or co-workers.

A: I was in a situation once where the management of our department was taken over by employees with experience in a totally different industry, in an effort to maximize profits over service. Many of my co-workers were resistant to the sweeping changes that were being made, but I recognized some of the benefits right off the bat, and was able to motivate my colleagues to give the new process a chance to succeed.

Q: Have you handled a difficult situation? How?

A: When I worked at ABC Global, it came to my attention that one of my employees had become addicted to painkillers prescribed after she had surgery. Her performance was being negatively impacted, and she needed to get some help. I spoke with her privately, and I helped her to arrange a weekend treatment program that was covered by her insurance. Fortunately, she was able to get her life back on track, and she received a promotion about six months later.

Candidate Questions to ask the Interviewer

Do you have any questions for me?

You've made it through most of the interview. You answered all the common questions and aced the hard behavioral interview questions.

The last interview question can be the hardest to answer:
“Do you have any questions for me?”

Undoubtedly, you do have questions, but if you don't prepare for this part of the interview it can get awkward real quick. Remember, the interviewer is hoping you will ask questions. So have at it.

Candidate Questions to Ask That Will Really Impress

The following candidate questions were compiled from 100,000 interviews conducted by a team at The Muse. These were the ones that stood out from thousands of mundane questions like, “what's it like to work here?”

Ask these instead:

1. “Who does _____?” or “How do you get _____ done?”
 2. This shows that you have insight into the position and places you in the role you've applied for.
 3. “Why Does This Role Matter to the Growth of the Company?”
 4. This question shows that you are interested in more than just what the interviewer thinks of you. It also proves that you want to make an impact beyond your own role or team and get a feel for how you'd fit into the future plans of the business.
 5. “Could I Meet Some of the People I'd Be Working With?”
 6. This question shows that you understand the importance of cultural fit and team dynamics and that it matters to you.
 7. “Why Has the Person in This Role Decided to Leave?” / “Who Had This Role Before?”
 8. This can reveal many things. Was the person a bad fit? Did they get promoted or move to different company? If the recruiter hesitates or becomes evasive, that could tell you everything you need to know!
 9. “What Do You Like Most About Working Here?”
 10. As a candidate, it's the perfect question to catch the recruiter a little off-guard and get an honest answer. Regardless of what they say, you can probably gauge how they truly feel about their company, which gives you another indication of whether it's the right fit for you.
 11. “Do You Have Any Reservations About Me or My Qualifications?”
 12. First of all, it takes bravery to ask this question. It's gutsy. And it gives you the opportunity to address any concerns up front and in person.
 13. “How Do You Deal With Professional Disagreements Within the Team? Can You Give Me an Example?”
 14. This is another question that shows that you care about team dynamics and understand that how a team works together can make or break the success of projects.

How to Ace a Phone Interview

What is the purpose of a phone interview?

A phone interview is like a pre-date. It is used to ask a few key questions to determine if the candidate is qualified to bring in for a face-to-face interview. Something in the candidate's resume, application, or cover letter caught the hiring manager's eye and her or she just wants to be sure.

All the same rules apply to a phone interview as they do to an in-person interview--it's just more concise with shorter answers. If you smile, they will hear it in your voice.

Preparing for a phone Interview

Before the interview have the following things ready:

- A copy of your resume
- A glass of water
- Pen and paper
- A quiet place to conduct the call
- Turn off phone alerts

Make sure you have researched the company and have made a list of your strengths and weaknesses. More on that later.

Don't do the follow things:

- Eat
- Chew gum
- Smoke
- Don't interrupt the interviewer

What to Concentrate on in a Phone Interview

Keep in mind that the goal is to schedule a face-to-face, not complete the entire interview on the phone. The idea is to not waste time--yours or the interviewer's.

Keep your answers short and only answer what is being asked. If the interviewer wants to know more, he or she will ask.

When you are asked to "tell me about your yourself", here are some tips:

- Give information that is related to your relevant work history. Include things that would matter to the job you are applying for.
- Give examples of projects and jobs that helped prepare you for this job.
- Give a brief list of your professional skills as they relate to doing this job well.
- Make any experience you have relevant to the job you are interviewing for.

"What are your strengths and weaknesses?"

These are always tricky questions, but they give you another chance to relate to the job you are applying for. When talking about your strengths, focus on the specific skill requirements of the job. Include examples of problem solving.

When talking about your weaknesses, don't give a canned answer like, "I just work too hard." Nope, not going to work. Instead, be honest with something like, "Finding time to stay current with all the new technolo-

gies and skills required in your field.” Everyone has this problem these days with the fast paced world of technology. Follow it up with an example of how you try to combat this. Classes, webinars, groups, professional organizations, etc.

Avoid Answering Questions about Salary in a Phone Interview

It’s always a good idea to avoid answering this question early in the interview process. It’s hard to say what you want to make without knowing more about the position. When it comes to negotiating a salary, it is also best to get the company to make the first offer.

Related: [*Negotiating a Job Offer*](#) (or anything else you want)

You can reply with something like, *“I would like to find out more about the company, the position, and your benefits package before I can answer that question.”*

The End Goal of a Phone Interview

When it comes to the end of the phone interview, if you haven’t already been asked to schedule a second interview now is your chance. Usually the interviewer will ask you if you have any questions. You can say, *“Yes, when can meet in person?”*

Interview Follow-Up: Just Do It!

How Effective is Your Interview Follow-up?

So, you've had your interview, you sent your thank you, you keep searching--now what?

If you are in a lull with your job search it is good to ask yourself, "Who haven't I followed-up with lately?"

Before you do, check out Allison Green's article in U.S. News & World Report on [5 Things You Should Never Do While Waiting to Hear Back About a Job](#).

DON'T do the following:

- Check in aggressively.
- Bluff by saying you have another job offer when you really don't.
- Stop applying and interviewing for other jobs.
- Go on vacation and become inaccessible without giving the employer a heads up.
- Agonize and obsess.

Why You Should Follow Up

Ok, now that you know what NOT to do, let's talk about why you should follow up:

- It Can Give You Peace of Mind
- It Gives You a Chance to Strut Your Stuff (a Little More)
- It Can Move Things Along or Give You Closure

How to Follow-Up

Keeping the above don'ts and whys in mind, here is some solid advice on following up:

- Don't follow-up prior to the time frame the employer gave you to expect to hear from them. But remember, you should have already send your thank you.
- A quick email or phone call is sufficient

If you want to read more on this subject, check out [How Following Up Can Help You Land the Job](#).

Here are some examples:

*Dear [hiring manager's name],
I hope all is well. I just wanted to check in and see if there's an update on the timeline or status for the [job title] position I interviewed for on [date of interview]. I'm still very interested and look forward to hearing back from you.*

OR

Since we last spoke, I couldn't stop thinking about our conversation about [business challenge you discussed]. I wondered if the team has considered [your idea for a solution]? I faced something similar at [previous company name] and this [explain positive result, with numbers if possible].

Use the following ONLY if it is true:

*Dear [hiring manager's name],
I hope all is well. I wanted to check in on the status of the [job title] position, as I've received an offer from another company. I'm still very much interested in joining the team at [company name], and wanted to get an update on my candidacy and the timeline before making a decision. Please let me know when you have a moment.
Thanks!*

It's polite to let potential employers and your recruiter know if you've received offers elsewhere, and especially if you've take a new job.

How to Ask for Feedback After an Interview (when you don't get the job)

Post-Interview Feedback Can Be Really Helpful

Feedback, presented in the right way, can really help job candidates improve their interview skills and career success. However, so many job applications don't ask for it and hiring managers don't give it. Why?

In today's busy work culture, many employers won't take the time to give constructive feedback to candidates who didn't make the cut--with-out being asked. So, ASK!

Respect Everyone's Time

The hiring process can be lengthy and time consuming for employers and frustrating and drawn out for candidates. Everyone has time issues, so it is important to be sensitive to everyone's time--on both sides of the table.

Once you are notified that you did not get the job, send an email so they can respond when they have time. I know this is a tough time, and our human pride can get in the way. But you have a lot to gain by getting some good feedback.

Your email can be very simple and short. For example:

*Dear _____,
Thank you so much for the opportunity to apply for [position] at [company].
If you have time, I'd really appreciate some feedback about my interview skills and overall qualifications. I'm always looking for ways I can improve, and I value your insight as I continue my job*

search.

Thank you again for your time.

Best wishes,

[Your name]

Asking For Feedback Indicates Maturity

It can be hard, but it's worth it. Even if you weren't the perfect fit for this particular position, the way you handle the entire interview process (including the rejection) could set you up to be considered in the future.

Asking for feedback shows that you are willing to learn and improve. It is also a great opportunity to let your positive attitude shine through.

You Might Discover Something You Didn't Know About Yourself

Feedback and constructive criticism can be particularly hard to hear if you think you aced the interview. That is why it is really important to ask for it. You might discover you have an annoying habit you are unaware of. Maybe you tap your foot constantly and fidget. Maybe you looked at the clock too much. Maybe you interrupt people when they are talking. It might just be that you lacked certain skills or the hiring manager felt you weren't the perfect cultural fit. The point is, you don't know until you ask. Instead of torturing yourself by wondering--ask!

Additional Job Search Tools

Searching for a new job and interviewing are hard. It's hard to keep your eye on the prize every day, especially if you aren't hearing back and have a day job you have to concentrate on.

Career Resumes is here to help. Our website has all kind of useful information for you, including:

- [Free Resume/CV Critique](#)
- [LinkedIn Makeover](#)
- [Job Search Checklist](#)
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Bonus Material – 10 Clues to Solving Criminally Bad Interviewing!

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How are your interviewing skills?

Other than gaining exposure to job marketing channels, perhaps no other part of a career search is as neglected as preparing for an interview. Job hunts are thus often unduly prolonged, costing the job seeker time, money, and peace of mind. So here are 10 easy clues that will, if you follow them, lead you to more success and a shorter career search!

Related: [Interview Techniques that will Land You the Job](#)

1. Tell employers what they want to hear.

Far too many of us forget to stick to the reason we are being interviewed: our ability to meet the employer's needs. Instead, we squander valuable interviewing time talking about our needs, interests, or the irrelevant. It would be more productive, however, to focus on how we can be of help to them. To that end, we must study the company beforehand and listen attentively during the interview to make sure we have a clear idea of what they need. Once we do, we are in a much better position to point out how our qualifications meet their needs.

Related: [Preparing for an Interview: A checklist for success](#)

2. Plausible, not perfect.

Perhaps the only perfect answers you can give during an interview are "Yes" and "No," so any attempt to deliver a "solid gold" reply to a

question beyond that is usually doomed to failure. If it doesn't sound stilted or canned, it lacks credibility. So in your own words, tell them what seems the most plausible answer. Speak from the heart, as simply and directly as possible, keeping their needs in mind. Your sincerity will win points!

3. Keep your answers short.

There is nothing worse than boring the interviewer. Yet many an interviewee, unsure of having answered a question correctly, drones on, often repeating himself as he tries to "get it right." Solution: Make a conscious effort to keep your answer short, but if unsure about whether or not you've answered correctly, ask, "Does that answer your question?" If the interviewer needs more info, he can ask for it.

4. Follow the Rule of 3.

A good way to keep your answers manageable and on target is to frame them in three parts. For example, if asked, "Why should we hire you?" a marketing executive might say, "First, I meet all of your stated needs. Second, my experience in solving problems such as those you mentioned is especially strong. And finally, my knowledge of how to gain exposure to hidden markets should be of immediate value to you." Such tripartite answers are easily composed on the fly (with a little practice) while conveying a sense of certainty and logic.

5. Avoid negativity.

There are many ways interviewers can draw you into being negative. They can ask you about your past mistakes, weaknesses, poor reviews,

gaps in employment or education, bad bosses, your dislikes, etc. You should always answer honestly, of course, but as noted above, keep your answers short, the better to avoid “raising a red flag.” And remember too that truth is often subjective and relative, so be as positive as possible. Always put yourself and others in the best light consistent with the truth rather than being overly and unnecessarily hard on yourself or others.

6. Ask them questions.

You miss opportunities to make a good impression if you fail to ask questions of your own during the interview, especially those that relate to the job. Asking questions, often as a comeback to a question you were asked, shows you have been listening and that you are sincerely interested in their needs. Not asking questions, on the other hand, can be construed as indifference or uncertainty.

Remember too that since not every interviewer is adept at telling you what he needs, you must be ready to draw those needs out of him. The better you know what they want, the better you can convince them of your suitability.

Related: [Candidate Questions to ask the Interviewer](#) (and impress the heck out of them)

7. Anticipate problem questions.

Most of us can guess where our weak areas are; e.g., our lack of education or experience, our age, gaps in our work history, etc. So, remembering the rules about “plausibility, not perfection,” and “keep your answers short,” explained earlier, have credible rebuttals ready—you don’t want to be struggling to think of something at the last moment.

Related: [How to Prepare for Behavioral Job Interview Questions](#)

8. Avoid “canned” answers.

Inexperienced interviewees study lists of commonly asked or problem questions, and then struggle to compose and deliver their answers virtually verbatim. Aside from sounding rehearsed—a turn-off—their answers often aren’t appropriate to the question being asked. A much better way to approach practicing for interviews is to remember three words [**See the “Rule of 3” in this document**] associated with how you might answer this or that question. Then, just build your answer on each word or thought in turn, not worrying about being perfect.

9. “Mirror” the Interviewer.

Any good salesman [and you are selling yourself in an interview, right?] tries to “mirror” his prospects; i.e., he tries to imitate their attitude, facial expressions, or body language. Why? Because it sends a subtle psychological message that he is like them, that he understands the importance of their needs. So, if it seems appropriate, when they smile, he smiles; when they lean back, he leans back; when they knit their brows, he knits his, etc.

Remember that half of any interview is “chemistry,” how you and your interviewer interact. Yes, you want to be appreciated for what you can do, but you also want to be seen as someone who will fit in.

10. Practice.

Too many people fail interviews simply because they don’t take the time to practice, not because they can’t do the job. No, you can’t anticipate every question, but the very act of practicing, remembering to use the rules above, will allow presenting yourself with much more self-assurance and credibility. If you can’t get a friend or spouse to critique you, then play back and analyze questions and answers you have tape-recorded.

In most respects, interviewing is like public speaking, often regarded as one of the things we fear doing most. But since confidence is built upon knowledge, if you take the time to investigate and internalize the rules set forth above, you won't get "stage fright." So get your mind straight before and during an interview. Take deep breaths, visualize yourself as calm and in control, see yourself making a good impression, and ... relax!

You're going to do fine!

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