

Employers Reveal the Outrageous and Common Mistakes Candidates Made in Job Interviews, According to New CareerBuilder Survey

--Career Expert Offers Tips on How to Stand Out for the Right Reasons--

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With competition hot for open positions, the pressure is on for job seekers to have flawless interview skills. Sometimes that pressure can cause candidates to make unusual, and sometimes unfavorable, interview mistakes. A new CareerBuilder survey of more than 2,700 hiring managers reveals the outrageous and common mistakes that some candidates have made in job interviews.

When asked for the most unusual blunders they'd encountered while interviewing candidates, hiring managers reported the following:

- Candidate wore a business suit with flip flops.
- Candidate asked if the interviewer wanted to meet for a drink after.
- Candidate had applied for an accounting job, yet said he was "bad at managing money."
- Candidate ate food in the employee break room after the interview.
- Candidate recited poetry.
- Candidate applying for a customer service job said "I don't really like working with people."
- Candidate had to go immediately to get his dog that had gotten loose in the parking lot.
- Candidate looked at the ceiling during the entire interview.
- Candidate used Dungeons and Dragons as an example of teamwork.
- Candidate filed fingernails.

In addition to the most unusual gaffes, employers shared the most common mistakes candidates made during an interview:

- Dressing inappropriately - 57 percent
- Appearing disinterested - 55 percent
- Speaking negatively about a current or previous employer - 52 percent
- Appearing arrogant - 51 percent
- Answering a cell phone or texting during the interview - 46 percent
- Not providing specific answers - 34 percent
- Not asking good questions - 34 percent

"With heightened competition for open positions in today's economy, it's important for candidates to put their best foot forward in an interview," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources for CareerBuilder. "You want to stand out for the right reasons. Even though the job search process can be frustrating, candidates should stay positive, focus on their strengths and be prepared on how to best sell their skill set."

Haefner offers the following tips for successful interviews in a competitive job market:

- Stay positive: Many job seekers may be experiencing tougher than usual job searches in this economy. Even if your job search process has been frustrating, do what you can to remain positive. Also, no matter how tempting it is, don't say negative things about a previous employer, regardless of how the job ended - hiring managers may fear that you will say the same things about their organization.
- Research, research, research: When you walk into an interview knowledgeable about the company, the role and recent news in that industry, you show the hiring manager you value their time and that you want to be part of the organization. A simple online search can provide you with the background information about a company that you need to stand out.

- Keep it professional, not personal: Don't let business decorum disappear even in the interview is in a casual setting. Refrain from discussing over-the-top personal issues and focus on the position and selling yourself.
- Practice makes perfect: Nerves are likely to rear their head in an interview, so help calm them ahead of time by practicing. Go through common interview questions with a friend or family member and practice in front of mirror so you can see read your body language.
- Honesty is the best policy: If questions come up that you don't know how to answer, don't lie or pretend you know. Admit that you may not know the answer, but then explain how you would go about finding a solution, proving your resourcefulness.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive© on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 2,720 hiring managers (employed full-time; not self-employed; non-government) ages 18 and over between November 5 and November 23, 2009 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset of U.S. employees, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,720 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.88 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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