

## **Employers Tell All: The Most Unusual Interview Mishaps and Biggest Body Language Mistakes, According to CareerBuilder Survey**

**- 1 in 2 employers know about a candidate within five minutes**

**- Poor eye contact, bad posture and weak handshakes among most common body language mistakes**

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CHICAGO, Jan. 15, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Much like a highly anticipated first date, a job interview can go from pure potential to pure disaster in mere minutes. In a new survey from CareerBuilder, employers shared the most memorable job interview mistakes candidates have made and how body language can hinder their chances of moving forward in the interview process.

According to the nationwide survey, conducted online in November to December 2014 by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among more than 2,100 hiring and human resource managers, 49 percent of employers know within the first five minutes of an interview if a candidate is a good fit for a position. By minute 15, that number reaches 90 percent.

### **Most Unusual Interview Behaviors**

When asked to share the biggest mistakes or most unusual things job candidates have made during the interview process, employers and hiring managers recalled the following true life tales:

- The candidate brought about 50 ink pens to the interview and proceeded to spread them out on the table.
- The candidate kept fidgeting and repositioning his duffel bag, which turned out to have a dog inside.
- After introducing himself by name, the candidate said, "But you can call me Tigger! That is the nickname I gave myself."
- In answer to a question about diversity, the candidate used the term "off the boat."
- The candidate asked if he could offer religious advice to the employees.
- The candidate asked if his wife, who worked at the company for which he was interviewing, was cheating on him.
- The candidate asked how much money everyone else makes.
- The candidate gave the reason for leaving the previous position as "kicking someone's butt that really needed it."
- The candidate sat in a yoga pose during the interview.
- The candidate tried to Google the answer to a question.

### **Top 10 Body Language Mistakes**

Facial expressions, posture and other physical behaviors can reveal more about job seekers than the words they use. When asked to identify the biggest body language mistakes job seekers make, hiring managers named the following:

1. Failing to make eye contact: 65 percent
2. Failing to smile: 36 percent
3. Playing with something on the table: 33 percent
4. Having bad posture: 30 percent
5. Fidgeting too much in their seat: 29 percent
6. Crossing their arms over their chest: 26 percent
7. Playing with their hair or touching their face: 25 percent
8. Having a weak handshake: 22 percent
9. Using too many hand gestures: 11 percent
10. Having a handshake that is too strong: 7 percent

"Acing the job interview isn't just about what you say in response to the interviewer's questions," said Rosemary Haefner, vice president of human resources for CareerBuilder. "It's also about what your body language says about you. Employers are looking for those non-verbal cues to indicate a candidate's level of professionalism and if they will be the right fit for the position."

Haefner recommends the following tips to help ensure a successful interview:

1. **Rehearse:** Preparation is your best defense against disaster. Practice your interview skills ahead of time

with friends or family members, and ask them for their feedback on things like posture, handshake and eye contact.

2. **Press "Record:"** Another helpful exercise is to make a video of yourself answering common interview questions. Watching yourself can help you identify any mistakes you may be making unconsciously.
3. **Have Your "Elevator Pitch" Ready:** An elevator pitch is a 30-second speech summarizing what you do and why you'd be a perfect fit for the role – and it's the perfect answer to that oft-asked question, "Tell me about yourself." Make sure you are also ready to back these claims up later with specific examples that showcase your skills and experience.
4. **Do Your Homework:** Research the company beforehand and come prepared with questions for the interviewer. Employers want to know you're just as interested in them as they are in you.
5. **Just Breathe:** Last but not least, remember to breathe. Taking a few deep breaths prior to the interview can help relieve some of the anxiety that leads to fidgeting or other nervous tics later on.

### **Survey Methodology**

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,192 hiring and human resource managers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between November 4 and December 2, 2014 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With a pure probability sample of 2,192, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 2.09 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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