

5 Biggest Job-Applicant Mistakes

Job interviewing can be a stressful experience. But if an applicant conducts the proper research into the company, his or her own experience and desires, and a professional demeanor, the chances of being hired are greatly increased.

Here are the five biggest mistakes job applicants make:

Mistake 1: Not researching the company before the interview

"Not knowing reveals itself in the interview process," says Tony Jenkins, of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida. "Sometimes [the interviewer] asks questions around how [the applicant] would approach a problem and their answers do not relate to the company's business. You want to hear answers that relate to the company's business."

Mistake 2: Inability to articulate needs and desires

Companies are hiring because they either need to solve problems or have opportunities that require more employees, which is why the best applicants are those who can articulate how their experience is best for the particular position.

Mistake 3: Being unprofessional in the interview

Be early to all interviews and remember not to be too personal with the interviewer. "It's hard not to screen a person out when you hear about their personal medical history and/or their family's medical history or their date from last night," says a recruiter. "Don't share personal information that's not applicable to the job."

Another unprofessional faux pas is to speak ill of a current boss. Applicants do not persuade an employer to hire them when they complain that a boss micromanaged. It makes the recruiter think the micromanaging was needed.



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Mistake 4: Demonstrating poor communication skills

Having good communication skills means you are able to talk with confidence and expertise about who you are and why you're the best fit. Practice the basics of communication before going to the interview, listening and responding and not talking over the other person. Too many applicants over-talk and don't listen to the questions being asked of them.

Remember that part of having a good interview is listening. But don't be dull or fear showing enthusiasm. Companies seek enthusiastic, focused, passionate employees.

Mistake 5: Not keeping the personal to yourself

With the proliferation of MySpace and other social-network web sites, people often think it harmless to include their social-network identification in their résumés or in an interview. But it is not harmless—too often what is posted on those sites does not demonstrate corporate professionalism.

You should also make sure your voicemail reflects a professional attitude as well. When searching for a job, keep the outgoing message simple, such as who they've reached and that you'll return the call soon.

An applicant's e-mail address should also reflect a professional attitude. E-mail addresses often describe people's personal attributes. The e-mail addresses given to recruiters should simply state the professional name of the applicant.