



Avoid Common Interview Mistakesⁱ

It's important to remember that there are two decisions being made at the close of every interview: Is this the person you want working for you? And, just as important, is this a place where I want to work? Avoid these common errors, and hire the right person for the job.

Mistake 1: *The wrong venue.* An airless, windowless conference room can drain the energy out of any interview. Try a clean office with some natural light or move to a coffee shop or even a park bench for a more relaxed conversation.

Mistake 2: *The wrong people.* Make sure the candidate meets with people who can answer his or her questions about the specific job and with whom he or she will work directly.

Mistake 3: *Relying on memory alone.* Take good notes so you stay focused on the conversation and appear organized when you call the person back.

Mistake 4: *Disorganization.* Know what questions you want to ask and the order in which you wish to discuss topics. Write down an outline so you don't repeat yourself or lose track.

Mistake 5: *Doing all the talking.* Be an active listener as well as speaker. When the candidate talks, it's your opportunity to learn about the person.

Mistake 6: *Asking the wrong questions.* Avoid leading questions that make it too clear what you want the answer to be ("You speak Spanish, right?"). Instead, keep questions open-ended.

Mistake 7: *Gossiping.* Don't use interviews as a forum for talking about others in your workplace or other companies. It makes your workplace seem less professional.

Mistake 8: *Getting too personal.* Asking questions about an interviewee's personal life isn't only uncomfortable, it's illegal. Avoid topics such as family, home, or nationality.

Mistake 9: *Being too high-pressure.* A stressed-out candidate can't answer your questions accurately. Ask tough questions, but do so calmly and give the person time to think and answer.

Mistake 10: *Cutting it too short.* When you have a full plate of interviews, it's tempting to rush through them. But you can't get to know a person's full range of qualities in just a few minutes. Schedule adequate time to talk.

The bottom line: Conducting a good interview helps put your workplace in the best light and ensures that qualified candidates won't turn you down.

ⁱ Source unknown