

Top 10 things not to say in a job interview

If you want to make a good impression during a job interview, it is important to say the right things. Here are ten things you should avoid saying.

Job interviews can be an intimidating process. There are a number of good resources that will help you to learn what the right things to say are during a job interview. It is also important, however, to know what things you should not say during an interview. Here are ten things that you should absolutely avoid saying during an interview if you want to walk away with the job.

1. *"I'm sorry I'm late."*

If you want to start an interview off on the wrong foot, being late is a good way to do so. Make a good first impression by being on time. Being late tells the interviewer that you do not respect his time, that you are unorganized and that you do not manage your own time well. Most importantly, when you have to start off an interview by apologizing for being late, you have already established a dynamic where you are subordinate to the interviewer rather than being an equal. This will hurt you immensely during the negotiating process.

2. *"I left my old job because my boss was a jerk."*

A prospective employer does not want to hear you bad-mouthing your old boss. When she hears you complaining about what a jerk your old boss was, all that is going through her head is that, someday, this is what you will be saying about her. Even if your ex-boss was a jerk, your prospective boss does not want to hire someone who, it seems, cannot get along with others, cannot accept responsibility and who is not a team player. Stay away from the negative, and focus on the positive. For example, does this new position offer more opportunities for responsibility and advancement? These kinds of things are what your prospective boss wants to hear.

3. *"I'm just looking to work here until something better comes along."*

Sometimes in life, we do have to accept employment that is less than ideal in order to keep food on the table while we are looking for something more appropriate. Your prospective employer does not want to hear this, however. He believes in what his company does, whether it is flipping hamburgers or washing cars or constructing luxury high-rise apartments. Every company makes its own contribution to the whole of society, and when a prospective employer asks you why you want to work for his particular company, he wants to know that you understand, respect and value the significance of his company.

4. *"I don't have any experience."*

If you are applying for a job in a field in which you have no experience, you are going to have to work extra hard to sell yourself. This is not an impossible task, however. Attitude and enthusiasm will go a long way. If you are inexperienced, do not lie about or

exaggerate your experience. Rather, make the most of what you have. If possible, think of some things you have done in your life that are somehow related to the position. For example, you may not have supervised employees in the past, but you may have raised four children and smoothly run a household for many years. Perhaps you were the leader of your daughter's Brownie troop or coached your son's football team. These are all positions of leadership requiring supervisory skills. Demonstrate your enthusiasm for the job and show off the skills and experience you do have that will contribute to the position.

5. *"I'll work for free just to get my foot in the door."*

In most cases, offering to work for little or no pay in order to get your foot in the door is a mistake. When you offer to work for little or nothing, you are not valuing yourself or giving yourself worth. If you do not value yourself or your talents, how can you expect someone else to do so? Before going into a job interview, make sure you know what the industry standards are as far as pay rates for the position for which you are applying and the amount of experience you have. Know what you are worth, and expect others to know and appreciate that as well.

6. *"I'm not willing to work overtime."*

Employers do not want to hire employees who are just there to put in time and pick up a paycheck. They want to hire employees who are dedicated to what they are doing and who are willing to go the extra mile when necessary. If the job for which you are applying may require overtime, and you are unwilling or unable to work extra hours due to other commitments, then this may not be the job for you. Otherwise, it is best not to make a blanket statement that you completely rule out the concept of working overtime. Of course, there may be times when you will be unable to accept an offer of overtime hours due to family obligations, but if the job requires it, you had better be open to the possibility of putting in extra hours now and then.

7. *"I'm looking for a position that is less stressful and will allow me to work less hours for more pay."*

When your prospective employer asks you why you want to come to work for her company, believe me, she does not want to hear that it is because you want a cushy position that will not require much of you. Even if the position will offer substantially better working conditions, what your future boss really wants to know is whether you have a good attitude, enjoy challenge and are excited about opportunities for growth, increased responsibility and career advancement.

8. *"I don't like to stay in one place very long."*

If your job history shows that you have hopped from one job to another in quick succession, a prospective employer is going to see this as a potential problem. Be prepared to explain why you have three jobs in as many years. Did one company close its doors? Did you outgrow a company because you had advanced as far as you possibly could? Were you recruited away from a company by another company which offered a better salary and more opportunity for career advancement? Your employer is going to

want to hear that you had good reasons for changing jobs so many times and to be assured that you are not going to jump ship from his company the minute something better comes along.

9. *"I'd like a large salary and a corner office and a private secretary."*

You are a salesperson, and what you are selling is you. This is not about what this company can do for you at the interview stage; it is about selling them on what you can do for them. It is important that you value your own worth. If you are at that stage in your career where you can command a high salary, a corner office and a private secretary, then by all means negotiate these items as part of your requirements. But even then, no matter how high up you are on the career ladder, no employee has value to a company if he or she brings nothing to the table. Let your prospective employer know what you have to offer to the company, why he should hire you rather than someone else, and why you would be honored to accept a position within his company.

10. *"9 to 5? Boy, that sure takes the best part out of the day, doesn't it?"*

I had to throw this one in because it's something that was actually said during a job interview by an interviewee who was less than enthusiastic about work schedule that would be required of her. Needless to say, she was not offered the position. Even if you learn during the interview process that the position may not be exactly right for you, now is not the time to say so. Keep in mind that you may be compelled to accept this position, depending on your circumstances. Remember, too, that even if you do not accept or are not offered this position, it is important to make a good impression. Other positions may open up with this same company in the future, or the person interviewing you may remember you down the road when a friend at another company is looking for someone.