

The Most Common Mistake People Make in Interviews, According to Recruiters

by Jennifer Bewley via Fairygodboss | November 27, 2017



In any job search, there's a lot to overcome—from machine-based resume screening to narrow-minded hiring managers. That said, the No. 1 mistake most people make in interviews is within their control.

You just have to learn how to speak up for yourself effectively, according to Gail Tiburzi Buck and Rebecca Oppenheim, Managing Partners at Wolf + Ryan, an executive search firm that believes employment is empowerment and donates services to victims of domestic violence for every placement they make. I spoke to both women about ways we can more smartly advocate for ourselves. Here's what they had to say.

What is the No. 1 mistake candidates make when interviewing?

We find that the No. 1 mistake our candidates make while interviewing is not advocating enough for themselves. Interviewing is tough, especially if you haven't had to use these skills in a couple years. But it's important to be ready for your job search before you land yourself in front of the hiring manager of your ideal company.

How can candidates more effectively advocate for themselves?

Promoting your relevant skill set in a concise manner is imperative in an interview setting. Don't leave it up to your resume. Hiring managers and the HR department are most likely considering multiple candidates for the position, and this is your opportunity to set yourself apart.

We recommend to all of our candidates jotting down some talking points and quickly reviewing right before the interview. Obviously, you want your interview come across naturally and not contrived, but I can't tell you how many times a candidate has walked out of an interview and forgot to bring something up from their background that is a huge asset to the position. We're all human and nerves get to us, especially when there is so much on the line. Also, it's important to keep your stories short and concise. You won't get to cover a lot in the interview if each example you give from your background turns into a chapter book.

In order to advocate for yourself, you must first know your value. What is market compensation for someone with your experience and job title? Be sure to take into account your geography as well. Also, if you have an open relationship with your colleagues, it might be beneficial to check in and see if you are on the same page. This may not come into play immediately in the interview process, but it is necessary to know before looking for your next opportunity. We recommend developing a relationship with a recruiter who's knowledgeable in your industry and checking in with them periodically.

What steps can candidates take to “retrain” themselves to avoid the mistake?

When we first interview a candidate, these mistakes are very common. Making these mistakes with us is okay because we can work together to refine answers, whereas, with the hiring company, you may not get a second chance.

Understanding what to highlight from your background changes with each interview and sometimes so does your resume. We are here to help guide you through that process, so you are marketing yourself specifically to the target company and opportunity. It is so important to develop a relationship with a recruiter that you trust to be a resource throughout your career. Not only do we prep all of our candidates for their interviews and often role play ahead of time, but sometimes it's for an opportunity we didn't even present to the candidate.

Are there any differences in how the mistake manifests itself between female and male candidates?

Yes, we find that we tend to work differently with males and females when it comes to knowing your value and advocating for yourself. First of all, there is a very fine line between advocating for yourself and coming off as cocky, and no one wants to hire the latter. With women, we tend to have to empower them a little more during the process and help boost their confidence. Yet, with men, it's often the opposite.

Let's say the candidate still made the number one mistake in the interview. Are there any post-interview actions they can take to overcome the mistake and still be considered for the position?

Definitely! No matter what, you should always follow up each interview with a thank you note. In case you forgot to mention something this is your chance to bring it up. As I said earlier, you are most likely being compared to a number of applicants for the position. A thank you note is your final impression. It's your last

chance to separate yourself from everyone else as the best choice. Show them you are a good listener. Bring up specifics from your conversation. Reiterate things you know would be an asset for both the role and company, and point out anything you may have forgotten. We also offer to review thank you notes for our candidates prior to sending them off. It's sometimes difficult to gather all of your thoughts after a day of interviews and we can help organize them.

Source: <http://www.vault.com/blog/interviewing/the-biggest-mistake-people-make-in-interviews-according-to-recruiters>