



TOP-12 MISTAKES TO AVOID IN A JOB INTERVIEW

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Mistake #1: Not Mirroring the Community

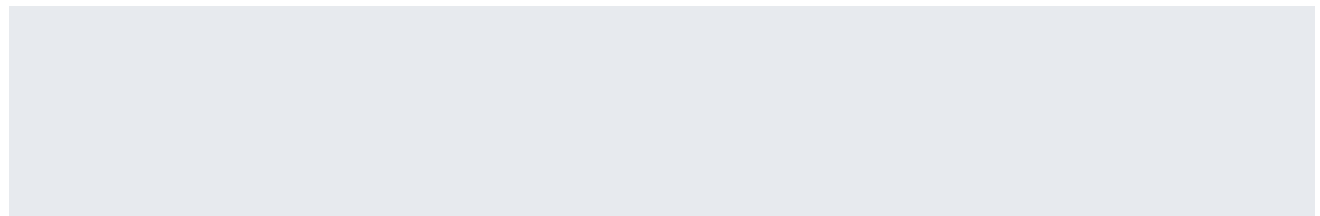
(0:00:44)

- Try to “mirror” the people you will meet in your interview via:

Dress

- ***Try to mirror what a bank president in the town would wear.***
 - For women, in a mid-sized to metro area, a blazer or suit is likely what is needed to mirror the community. In a rural town, depending on the town, a blazer might not be necessary, a more business casual dress or blouse might be sufficient.
 - For men, always wear a tie no matter who you are mirroring but think twice before wearing thousand-dollar cufflinks in a small town. On the other end of the spectrum, do not wear slacks and a sportscoat in a metro area.

How can I mirror what a bank president in this town would wear to an important local business meeting?



Ideal Candidate

- Understand beforehand what the committee is searching for, then try to mirror that in your answers. If the search committee wants a salesperson, talk about your sales strengths, if they want someone with leadership experience, talk about your leadership experience.

How can I mirror this search committee's ideal candidate via my answers to questions?

Culture

- The search committee often hires who they are most comfortable with, so strategize beforehand how to “fit in”.
 - If you are interviewing in a town like New Orleans, and the entire committee orders a drink at lunch, you might want to order a drink.
 - If you are interviewing in a rural town, do not talk about how you travel abroad 3 times a year to vacation in Paris.

Write out the top 3 things you think the community wants or top 3 ways to mirror the community.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Mistake #2: Not Having a Strategy to Offset Your Weakness (0:03:29)

All candidates have weaknesses whether it pertains to a previous job or the applicant's personality when interviewing. How will you turn your weakness into a strength?

Write up to 3 weaknesses you have as a candidate as it pertains to this position.

(Hint, maybe the town is wanting to develop an industrial park and you never have, maybe they want a deal closer and you have never closed a deal, etc.)

1. Weakness:

2. Weakness:

3. Weakness:

What is my gameplan to offset these weaknesses if they come up and either neutralize them or turn them into perceived strengths?

When it comes to interviews, public speaking, or anything that makes you nervous while talking, what is your weakness? (Hint, some people babble too much, some people are too quiet, some people come across as a know it all, etc.).

Write your biggest personality weakness here:

What is my gameplan to neutralize this personality weakness in the interview?

Mistake #3: Not Having a Theme to Your Answers (0:05:07)

- Seek to understand the “ideal candidate” in the minds of the search committee by reading their job profile thoroughly and build a theme so they see that person in you. Bring all your answers back to this theme.

What common theme do you want to leave the search committee with when they discuss you? Does this theme match what the “ideal candidate” the search committee is seeking? If not, should you adjust your theme?

List 3–4 stories that reinforce your theme as questions are asked

Story to reinforce my theme 1:

Story to reinforce my theme 2:

Story to reinforce my theme 3:

Story to reinforce my theme 4:

Story to reinforce my theme 5:

Mistake #4: Making a Bad Entrance (0:06:57)

- Make sure upon entrance you do the following
 - Walk in with an energy level around a scale of 7 out of 10 to show you want the position, are excited, yet you are not bouncing all over the room from too much coffee
 - Shake everyone's hand in the room
 - Make eye contact with everyone as you shake hands
 - Do not pass anything out

Example of how this can go wrong: We once had a female candidate shake all the male search committee members' hands but not the female search committee members' hand. This cost her the job.

Mistake #5: Mishandling "Tell Us About Yourself" (0:08:36)

Helpful exercise:

Going off the theme you have already established in point #3, write out a "Tell Us About Yourself" statement with information that best pertains to this position.

- Start with your best accomplishments as it relates to this position
- You do not have to go in chronological order
- Do not bring up past jobs or items that do not pertain to this type position
- Record yourself on your smart phone or ipad making your statement, ensure you do not go past 2 minutes.
- Practice this enough that it flows naturally and does not sound rehearsed.

Write your two-minute "Tell Us About Yourself" Elevator Pitch here using the above bullet points to guide you:

Mistake #6: Talking More About Job Duties & Education than Tangible Results (0:11:12)

- Answer questions by providing numbers with tangible results you have had rather than previous job duties

Examples of good answers:

- "I responded to 14 RFI's last year"
- "We created \$24 million of new sales tax in our community"
- "We landed 4 new industries"
- "We assisted 12 existing industries expand"
- "We received \$6 million in CBDG grants"
- "I answer to 4 cities and 2 counties"

Example of not so good answers:

- I respond to RFIs
- I recruit retailers
- I recruit industries
- I do BRE
- I apply for grant
- I answer to the Industrial Development Board

Write up to 6 numeric, tangible items you have accomplished in your career:

1. Tangible example:

2. Tangible example:

3. Tangible example:

4. Tangible example:

5. Tangible example:

6. Tangible example:

Mistake #7: Having a Guilty Conscience

(0:12:37)

- Do not discuss health/martial problems you have, or why you were previously fired from/quit your last job unless the interviewer asks

How will you answer why you left or was fired from your last job, so that it is not viewed as a weakness?

What other negative items are you conscious of which you might accidentally spit out? (Such as health problems, martial problems, etc)? Be aware of these and try to avoid saying them.

Mistake #8: You Do Not Convey a Good Reason for Why You Want the Job (0:14:17)

- Convey a reason why you want the job by working in assets the community has into your personal long-term goals.

Write a specific 1-minute answer about why you want this position, and work in assets the community has as part of the reason you want the job. As an example, you could say, “Well I have won four industries in a town with no railroad and your community as two railroads, so I want to see how many I can win now that I have this added infrastructure you have.”

Mistake #9: Passing Out Items (0:16:14)

- Do not pass out items before nor during your interview. If you have items to pass out, wait until the very end.
 - Passing out items before or during the interview could distract the committee from listening to your answers and take away from the flow of your interview

Mistake #10: Never Pausing (0:17:53)

- Try not to rush into your answers so fast they sound rehearsed.
 - If you take a second or two to think about an answer even if you already know the answer to it, it shows deliberation. It shows sincerity and deep thought, not just a canned response that you give to everyone.
 - You do not have to answer every question. It is okay to say, “I have not thought about that, but let me think about it and get back to you.” This will build credibility and show humility.

Mistake #11: Not Asking the Search Committee Good Questions (0:19:57)

- Ask specific questions that relate to the success the committee wants to achieve. For example, if a town wants to develop an industrial park, ask, “What has been the hindrances in the past to you not getting this done?”
- Do not ask organizational structure questions such as, “Who appoints your 10th board member?” Instead, ask questions regarding what the community views as success.
- A great question to ask: “Is there anything I haven’t answered you would like to know about me which might give you any concern about me being successful in this position?”

List up to four questions you would ask the search committee if given the opportunity. Be mindful not to have more than four questions.

Question 1:

Question 2:

Question 3:

Question 4:

Mistake #12: Following Up Too Intensely

- You should send a single thank you note to the search committee via the executive search firm, or via email if the organization isn't using a search firm, but do not contact the search committee members or the staff of the organization other than that single time for at least a week.
- We understand you want to know how you did or the status, but there are many reasons why the search can drag out, and you never know what is going on behind the scenes.
- If you have not heard from the search in seven days, ask the search firm or chair for an update.
 - *After this request, do not follow up for 14 days thereafter.*

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