

## **Avoid These 10 Interview Bloopers**

**Poor handshake:** The three-second handshake that starts the interview is your first opportunity to create a great impression. Once you've delivered a poor handshake, it's nearly impossible to recover your efforts to build rapport. Here are some examples:

- The Limp Hand (or "dead fish"): Gives the impression of disinterest or weakness
- The Tips of the Fingers: Shows lack of ability to engage.
- The Arm Pump: Sincerity is questionable, much like an overly aggressive salesman.

**Talking too much:** Practice answering questions in a direct manner. Avoid nervous talking by preparing for your interview with role-plays. Over-talking takes a couple of forms:

- Taking too long to answer direct questions. The impression: This candidate just can't get to the point.
- Nervous talkers. The impression: This candidate is covering up something or is outright lying.

**Talking negatively about current or past employers/managers:** Even if your last boss was Attila the Hun, never, never state your ill feelings about him/her. No matter how reasonable your complaints, *you* will come out the loser if you show that you disrespect your boss because the interviewer will assume that you would similarly trash him or her. When faced with the challenge of talking about former employers, make sure you are prepared with a positive spin on your experiences.

**Showing up late or too early:** One of the first lessons in job-search etiquette is to show up on time for interviews. Many job-seekers don't realize, however, that showing up too early often creates a poor first impression as well. Don't diminish your candidate desirability by appearing desperate. Act as if your time were as valuable as the interviewer's. Always arrive on time, but never more than 10 minutes early.

**Treating the receptionist rudely:** Since the first person you meet on an interview is usually a receptionist, this encounter represents the first impression you'll make. The receptionist has the power to pave your way positively or negatively before you even set eyes on the interviewer. The interviewer may also solicit the receptionist's opinion of you after you leave.

**Asking about benefits, vacation time or salary:** Wait until you've won the employer over before beginning that discussion.

**Not preparing for the interview:** Nothing communicates disinterest like a candidate who hasn't bothered to do pre-interview research. On the flip side, the quickest way to a good impression is to demonstrate your interest with a few well thought out questions that reflect your knowledge of their organization.

**Verbal ticks:** An ill-at-ease candidate seldom makes a good impression. The first signs of nervousness are verbal ticks. We all have them from time to time -- "umm," "like," "you know." Ignore the butterflies in your stomach and put up a front of calm confidence by avoiding verbal ticks. You can also sometimes avoid verbal ticks by pausing for a few seconds to gather your thoughts before each response.

**Not enough/too much eye contact:** Either situation can create a negative effect. Avoid eye contact and you'll seem shifty, untruthful or disinterested; offer too much eye contact and you'll wear the interviewer out

**Failure to match communication styles:** Allowing the interviewer to set the tone of conversation can vastly improve your chances of making a favorable impression. You can put the interviewer at ease -- and make yourself seem more like him or her -- by mirroring his or her communication style.