



# Ace an interview

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**D**URING an interview, you might accidentally give your interviewer simple reasons to reject your candidacy, even if you are the most qualified for the role.

Here are five interview mistakes that might damage your chances for hire – and easy tactics to avoid poor interview behaviour.

## 1. Letting your present job get in the way of your future career

If you truly hate your current job, you might inadvertently convey your frustration to your interviewer. For example, when asked “Why do you want to leave your current position?” Your response should exclude negative reasons, as anything you say about your former company will reflect poorly on you.

**Try this:** Demonstrate that this company is the right fit for you moving forward because your interests and abilities clearly align with its needs.

## 2. Not knowing the company's product

Prior to an interview learn as much you can about the company's products or services. Read industry web sites, learn about the department's staff on LinkedIn, and download the company's white papers. Of course, if you have specific questions about emerging technology, new markets, or product variations, feel free to ask your interviewer for some insights. However, if you attend an interview without knowing anything about the company, you will come across as uncommitted and unworthy of a second interview.

**Try this:** Learn not only about the products but also how the company's best customers use them effectively.

## 3. Being a know-it-all

There is nobody who is more knowledgeable about your experience and history than you are, and during an interview you should be prepared to explain how your experience

can benefit the company, based on your exhaustive company research. However, you are not yet an expert on the inner workings and needs of your interviewer's company. Crossing the line from interested interviewee to overbearing know-it-all can be insulting to your interviewer and might ruin your chances for a second interview.

**Try this:** Ask honestly and engagingly about something you want to know – never assume you know better than the interviewer without developing significant knowledge about the company's products or practices.

## 4. Dressing as if a company's casual culture applies to you

So many companies tout their work-er-friendly, casual atmospheres. While this can be a draw for many who prefer a relaxed over a structured environment, these rules don't apply to you as the interviewee. For men and women, a professional dress code applies regardless of what you might know about how the company's employees regularly dress. Even if you are instructed to dress casually, it's always better to dress professionally, knowing you can take your jacket off if necessary.

**Try this:** Use the “grandmother” test: If your grandmother (or your future boss's boss) would not approve of your ensemble, then don't wear it to your interview.

## 5. Believing that you are not being watched

There is no such thing as “not part of the interview.” Every person with whom you speak, from the interviewer – to his boss, to the receptionist – is watching you and evaluating you. If you are kind to each person with whom you interact, your behaviour will speak volumes for you, but one demeaning comment can destroy your candidacy.

**Try this:** Note the name of everyone you meet, so that you may write a short note of thanks for their help throughout your interview day. - [www.careerealism.com](http://www.careerealism.com)