
Job Interview Blunders

You'll kick yourself if you make these top mistakes

Special Report on job interview success

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Job Interview Blunders – you’ll kick yourself if you make these top mistakes

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Read on to find why and how avoid these – the fun way!

Are you sabotaging yourself with a doomed approach?

- Do you approach an interview with anxiety or adrenalin-fueled preparation?
- Do you get overwhelmed at anticipating all the unknown questions you’ll need good responses to?
- Do you worry that you’ll forget or mess up your answers?
- Does your confidence get undermined when you’re being judged on everything you do and say?
- Do any of these feelings serve you well before or during the interview?

Of course not. Stress sabotages your ability to perform well and think straight.

How can I avoid interviews being stressful? Surely it’s inevitable!

Most people find interviews as pleasant as a visit to the dentist. So how great would it be to make your interviews fun?

You can avoid so many mistakes that sabotage your chances in an interview, and make a huge difference to the whole experience, simply by learning a different way of managing yourself. It’s not complicated. In fact it’s fun. And it gets dramatically better results – I’ve compiled all the most powerful positive techniques I can into my *Interview Success the Fun Way* system, and so far 100% of the many I’ve coached in using it have been offered the dream job they applied for.

Stop acting from fear

If you look for advice on doing well in interviews you will notice one thing: everyone gives you *more* to do, *more* to remember, and *more* to think and worry about.

Experts all try and help by giving checklists of answers you must have prepared, things that you must do, ways you must behave that don’t feel natural, the right things to wear, all in the hope that by being completely prepared for every possibility you may feel more secure and more in control. This they hope will relieve your anxiety.

But there is one basic trap that all this advice falls into. It still leaves you with the anxiety. It all assumes that the way to relieve your anxiety is by accepting it and building an enormous body of preparation and protection that you can hide behind, so that you feel less vulnerable.

But human nature being what it is, as soon as we consider our fears we are talented in thinking up more and more to be aware of. If we prepare for five anxieties, we’ll quickly think of ten more that need answering. If we bolster ourselves against those ten, twenty more will appear. Focusing on squashing anxieties doesn’t cure us of the thinking that causes them.

Stop being a victim

There’s another problem with this: you can never anticipate everything but when you act from anxiety, all your preparation is geared towards responses. It comes from the attitude that you are a sacrificial victim

walking into the lion’s den, and if you do all the right things exactly you might come out alive... if you’re lucky.

But if you prepare all your answers, instead of being afraid that you’ll get the answers *wrong*, you replace that with a fear that you’ll *forget* your *right* answers.

The whole chemistry of fear is still shaping your experience, and keeping you using an approach which does not help you to learn, to prepare, or to perform well, let alone to have an inspiring impact on your interviewers.

The most crucial change you can make

So the task is not to comprehensively prepare for every single possible challenge. It is to be performing at your peak with a sure-footed way of coping well with every challenge that arrives. And having a way to let your true potential shine through, despite any minor mistakes, so that you are at your best and you help your interviewers to see your best.

This positive approach requires a completely different mindset that hardly anyone thinks to use for interviews. There are so many fields today in which scientists are discovering a positive attitude is the crucial key to success. And through job interviews you can possibly achieve a real life-changing success and lasting satisfaction. Yet in this field people are still stuck in the dark ages of being driven by the chemistry of fear and anxiety, and the assumption that there is no other way.

I’m not suggesting that you simply try to be optimistic, or practice relaxation techniques. In theory these things can help you fight off anxiety, but in practice how realistic are they when your adrenalin is pumping as you feel the deadline looming?

Fill yourself with potential, rather than answers

Over the last few years I’ve developed a whole range of practical tools that really work to get my clients feeling capable, creative and effective

for interviews. So much so that they actually enjoy the preparation and even the interview itself. Yes, it really is possible! What I get clients to do is not only unique, it has proven results – every single one of them has been offered the job they were applying for.

The wonderful thing is that by using practical techniques to turn your attitude around and prepare for an interview in a completely new way, you will find it far simpler and easier than the old way which is such hard work. It’s not even going to take you anything like as long, and you will be prepared for so much more that you might be asked, instead of only the questions you’ve predicted.

For this reason the whole process is fun to do. And what is more it will set you up well for future interviews and other situations in which you need to present yourself. So working this way has multiple applications and will stand you in good stead for all kinds of challenges.

Are You Making These Top Blunders in Preparing for Your Job Interview?

1. It’s an Interview not a Recital – Overpreparing and Memorising

When you hear that you have an interview, is your instinct to anticipate all the questions, script out all your answers, and memorise as much as you can so that you’re ready for anything? It might sound sensible but there are two major problems with this approach.

Firstly it’s impossible:

- Interviewers will often ask deliberately unexpected questions
- Planning your answers is a vast job and you don’t know how the interviewers will respond to them anyway until you meet them
- Memorising everything is impossible so it makes you panic and takes up valuable time you could be using more productively for effective preparation

- Drilling yourself is a sure way to remove the inspiration and freshness that can impress interviewers with your sincerity and authenticity

Secondly it’s driven by fear:

- Trying to prepare everything you can is an attempt to control the uncontrollable, to feel more comfortable about the unknown content of the interview
- As you try and anticipate everything you become ever more aware of how unprepared you still are, as you realise how impossible it is to prepare answers for everything
- Your fear and panic grow instead of being removed
- You now have an extra fear – that you’ll forget the carefully prepared answers when you need them, or will get them wrong
- Where’s the fun in that?! And where’s the inspiration, enthusiasm, and confidence that will get you feeling great about the interview, and that will impress your interviewers? There is another approach that will give you all that and leave you even better prepared.

Surely I have to prepare for the interview?

Yes, of course. But over-preparing is a disaster. You want to feel ready to cope with anything, but trying to script every possible response you’ll need is the wrong approach. Instead, focus on *feeling* ready. That does include thinking through the main things your interviewers will want to know, but also it includes feeling confident, being able to fluently answer unexpected questions, and helping the interviewers to see your value. Getting yourself feeling creative, not labouring nervously, right from the start will make your preparation fun, not a chore, and will prime you with the attitude of success.

Tip 1

What do you want the benefits of your new job to be? Not the money but the rewards or learning from the job itself, even if they are small. No, you don’t know whether those benefits will actually come out the way you want, but forget that for now – focus on the best you might get. Now imagine that vividly and let yourself get excited. Look forward to telling people your strengths that make you so ready to work in this job for those benefits. Your excitement will start you thinking creatively.

Finding the Fun

Putting down anxious activities and engaging in exciting, creative ones – doesn’t that sound fun? Worrying doesn’t solve anything, but a positive attitude does – so give yourself permission to try it!

Go Further

Replacing your anxiety with positive progress works best with a step-by-step method and an enthusiastic coach to keep you on track. You can get both at <http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com/get-started/>

2. Thinking *What If?* – Building Anxiety

Do you worry what the interview is going to be like? Do you wonder things like “What if they ask me about my weak areas?”, “What if I look nervous or inept when I struggle for an answer?”, “What if everyone else has a better resume than me?”

Spending time imagining all the “What if?”s is a natural reaction to having a job interview coming up, but it’s a fruitless and destructive one. Your imagination is a powerful tool, and it can help you immensely throughout preparing for and having a successful interview. But it can also be a millstone around your neck, dragging you down if you don’t use it wisely.

How can you avoid thinking vivid negative thoughts? Simply trying to silence them won’t work. You need positive thoughts to crowd them out

of your mind. Therefore you need a way to have plenty of positive things to think about as you prepare.

The first step to this is recognizing that focusing on the positive things you *do* have, what *is* rather than what *if*, will ground you in practical reality and give you a foundation on which you can build great material and skills for the interview. That’s only the beginning – next comes the positive and creative building of these, keeping you growing in optimism and a feeling of capability and readiness.

Tip 2

List all the behaviours you naturally have that could benefit your new employer. What do you find easy to do that many don’t? Ask your friends and colleagues to add to your list - what strengths do they see in you? Keep focusing on these and imagine these natural abilities being welcomed for your job.

Finding the Fun

It can be surprising and very cheering to realise what overlooked natural talents are giving you a head-start over many others.

Go Further

Zero in on your strengths, get expert insight to see yourself in a new light, and match yourself to job requirements at <http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com/get-started/interview-impact/> by taking the Interview Impact programme.

Are You Making These Top Blunders in Being Interviewed?

3. Hiding Behind the Mask – Not Being Bold, Open, and Engaged

Do you inwardly feel cautious in interviews, being careful to only say the right thing and understand what they want from you before committing yourself to an answer?

Did you know that confidence is the number-one quality that influences interviewers? If you feel and express confidence, you give interviewers confidence in you, but I'm not talking about a cocky arrogance. When we are put on the spot in unfamiliar surroundings we cautiously wait to see what others expect of us before we commit declaring any definite answers and opinions. But that caution is very visible as a holding back, which will undermine your ability to shine. Confidence is not about show and appearance, or even ability. It's a state of mind.

You may imagine that you can only truly have confidence when you are relaxed, and when you know you are the best. How otherwise can you really feel it? Well that's not true, and a confident state of mind can be yours with only a little preparation and practice.

When you take responsibility for your own state of mind, you grab the biggest advantage that you can have in an interview. Confidence allows you to be definite and strong. It allows you to show your true nature, and without fear that you might be giving away weaknesses.

The trouble is that we have a fear of revealing weaknesses, and that fear is one of the worst and most visible weaknesses itself. It signals clearly to others that you have things to hide, which worries interviewers. But whereas many interview experts advise you to simply appear confident, having that surface appearance is fruitless because your interviewers, like everyone else, are finely tuned to spotting inconsistencies and inner conflict in people. They will know you are putting something on, whether it's a mask of caution or confidence.

Instead you truly need to feel confidence, and from that state of mind will naturally flow various helpful behaviours and sub-conscious signals. It will allow you especially to be authentic and open. And that is what interviewers really value because they need to know they can trust you.

You must prepare for your interview by genuinely making yourself confident. You don't need a reason to allow yourself to be confident.

Just remember what it feels like, bring it vividly into your imagination, and choose to feel that at the moment when you need it.

What works for you? – what do you do in life that gets you in a great state of mind?

Tip 3

One simple tip is to pick a role model, who reminds you of feeling confident. Then remember that person before the interview and walk in as if you have just the same confidence. Once you kick-start an attitude it's much easier to continue it, and your confidence is then real. This can work wonders, but practice it first.

Finding the Fun

Focusing on confidence, and on whatever reminds you of it, is fun in itself because, as long as you allow it to, it will make you feel more energised, optimistic, and capable straight away.

Get More Help

Mastering your psychology is a key to successful interviews and it can be both fun and liberating to have ways to choose your state of mind. I have an in-depth unique step-by-step system of inner exercises <http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com/get-started/peak-performance/> that I use to take interview candidates through four methods to get the best state of mind, and ways to overcome five obstacles that can hinder your efforts.

4. Waiting For Orders – Not Taking The Initiative

Do you allow your interviewers to lead the interview, while you remain a passive responder answering questions and waiting to find out what's coming next? That might sound inevitable, and it's hard to avoid because this is how interviews are set up. But to show yourself at your best you need to reclaim some of the initiative without being pushy or trying to dominate the conversation.

If you can engage with your interviewers, and not simply be reactive, you can grab opportunities to shine. You can help your interviewers to understand you. You can offer illustrations and answers without them needing to drag those out of you, and most importantly, you can show how your mind and communication skills work. You will also feel continuing confidence because you are contributing to how the interview flows.

This is essentially showing your independent thought and leadership skills, in a subtle way, and it shows that you have some life in you. But, it's really important not to seem pushy or obvious about it and so this skill requires a particular balance and attitude of mind, which most people have no idea how to achieve. One key is to see your interviewers as *colleagues*, who need your active contribution to make the interview really productive.

Tip 4

Think of your interviewers as human and vulnerable, just like you, and with a *need* for what you can offer. Be understanding and pro-actively helpful. You’ll feel good for trying to help them out and they’ll see your initiative.

Finding the Fun

It’s a relief not to feel merely a passive subject of an interrogation – you’ll feel more in charge of yourself, more valuable, and more creatively stimulated as you figure out ways to be of use.

Get More Help

Getting the right initiative, attitude and balance often involves overcoming unhelpful subconscious habits. You can now learn a unique method of getting the right balance in interviews that is fun and also hugely productive in all walks of life, to manage human relationships in all their troublesome complexity. Get personal coaching, the powerful Success Story system, and ingenious playful

methods of mastering inner skills.

<http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com/get-started/peak-performance/>

5. Losing The Plot – No Compelling Story of Your Value

Do you have a way to structure your answers, that is persuasive, adaptable, psychologically effective and easy for you to apply to all of your past experiences even without preparing your answers? This is the big secret to not having to slog through scripting your answer – structure! There is a structure which is natural and conversational, yet has a focused relevance and effectiveness in expressing what your interviewers will want to hear.

Most people have only a vague idea of where they’ve come from and where they are going, or struggle to put this into words that clearly prove what value they can bring to a company.

Do you have a clear overview of your whole career, and your underlying motivation? What has taken you from childhood ambitions through to where you are now and the goals you have for the future? Many people feel they bumble accidentally through their career without real purpose. But this is only the confusion of remembering a complicated life. It doesn't mean there was no guiding principle that helped you make your choices.

Your Success Story is a structured overview that puts you and all of your achievements into perspective, gives them meaning to your interviewers, and gives you a flexible, compelling and persuasive way to express your value to your interviewers.

Your Success Story is the single most powerful tool you have to make a real impact in the short time you have.

This isn't about launching into a tale when your interviewers just want brief facts. It's a narrative thread which you can dip in and out of, in answer to any and every question. So your success story becomes

clear to people even if they don't ask you for it. And if they do ask you to tell them about yourself, this concise targeted tale is what you say.

This alone, having your story ready to use, will double your confidence instantly and is responsible for most of my clients' success.

Tip 5

Find what has been consistent in your work experience, the thread to which you have held throughout your career, and the personal changes it has led you into. It's there, even if you've had a haphazard career of falling into jobs you don't think you chose. Consider what are the major phases of your personal development through your career and life, and notice how each phase prepared you for the next. Then summarise that clearly within a couple of sentences. If you understand something about your journey, you can summarise its essence briefly enough to make your key qualities understandable to your interviewer.

Finding the Fun

This is a creative, interesting way to understanding what makes you tick, and it keeps you focused on your strengths that have seen you through obstacles. Knowing you have something powerful and unique that you can express concisely, is a really great feeling. We all like to hear and to share little stories, and this one is your personal gem!

Get More Help

The problem is that we all find it hard to gain a clear perspective on our own story since we live *inside* it. So I find that people get a far faster and clearer overview by following the Success Story system. Check out <http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com/get-started/success-story/> for a powerful step-by-step system that draws out your story from you, focuses it, condenses it, and rehearses you in expressing it in a fluid way that you feel able to use. It's so potent that this system is included in every interview coaching programme I offer.

6. Being a Fish Out of Water – Not Creating Rapport

You may feel that interviews make you feel nervous and stressed but they do the same to your interviewers. They are desperately hoping that that you are the perfect person with whom they will feel trusting, confident, and comfortable – enough that you clearly would fit into the job. But meeting you, questioning you, trying to get past the polite etiquette and your protective caution, puts a lot of pressure on them. And of course they are responsible if they turn out to have chosen the wrong person, so all of this creates a strained atmosphere of emotional undercurrents.

If you let yourself get drawn in to those anxious undercurrents you are unlikely to inspire trust, confidence and comfort. So you need to be proactive, establishing a rapport with your interviewers. Many people rely on the interviewers to set the atmosphere even when they are not good at it or when their interviewing style is more combative. After all they are at home in their office and you may feel like the fish out of water. But you can quickly clear the air so that the interview seems easy, productive, and personal. So be open and engaged with your interviewers.

Try and make them feel comfortable, not by being artificially friendly, but by actively pursuing a comfortable atmosphere between you.

Tip 6 & 7

Pause periodically to check that they have understood you or that you are answering their point. You don’t have to be very informal, if they are being formal. It applies to whatever the atmosphere is but you are aiming to reduce the coldness or distance between you to whatever degree the interviewer is comfortable with.

Another tip is to make sure you maintain eye-contact more than you feel inclined to, because in answering questions you are likely to look away from the interviewers as you search your memory, which can

have the effect of making you seem disengaged or distant. Always reconnect with their eyes as you answer.

Finding the Fun

Who wants to feel uncomfortable? Helping others - even in subtle ways - to feel more relaxed helps you to be more comfortable too. You can actually enjoy your interview! And the more you do, the more your own social skills will be balanced and helping express your positive attributes.

Get More Help

People often tell me they are very unsure about their ability to find a rapport at the best of times, let alone when under pressure. You don’t have to put up with such doubt! If you’d like a whole practical system to mastering rapport, and making yourself comfortable with the attitude of naturally engaging with people, it’s included in two of the Interview Success the Fun Way coaching programmes: Interview Impact <http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com/get-started/interview-impact/> and Peak Performance <http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com/get-started/peak-performance/>

Goodbye to Job Interview Blunders

I hope you can see from this report that a positive attitude and a sense of fun can be a very practical way to dramatically improve your interview prospects, and avoid many common job interview blunders that seriously undermine your chances. I find that a lot of people are really immersed in assumptions that there is no alternative to the fear-based approach. Do you tell yourself that you should be ‘trying really hard’ and ‘taking it seriously’? Are you so anxious about the consequences of making a wrong move, that you can hardly allow yourself to believe that a shift away from struggle and strain can really achieve anything?

Take heart! Make sure you take positive steps to immerse yourself in enthusiastic encouragement and genuinely confidence-boosting activities, so that your natural anxieties don’t win out and drain your energy. Recruiters want to see your confidence and enthusiasm, so get strategic about guaranteeing you have those. A skilled coach is one of the best strategies for fast and effective success, so invest in your rapid career progress and have fun at the same time!

About Tim Sheppard

Profile

I help people have fun making the personal impact they want, to communicate creatively, authentically, persuasively, and to relate and present themselves to their best advantage. I am a business and life coach drawing on storytelling, improvisational and rapport skills. I help solo professionals and small businesses succeed in presentations, meetings and interviews. <http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com>

My Story

I know what it’s like to feel you’re holding yourself back. I grew up extremely self-conscious and unable to engage or converse with people properly. I felt I had so much to offer people, yet I couldn’t express it. I was intensely frustrated, and constantly missing out on opportunities to connect with others. I had hardly any friends.

After a long search I found the most intensive, dynamic and powerful way of deeply changing my attitude and skills, and I enrolled at Europe’s premier school of Circus Theatre – yes I ran away to join the circus! Here I was trained by world-class teachers in techniques of engaging with audiences and expressing myself. These were so potent that I transformed my whole personality and became confident, expressive and happy. And I learned exactly what methods of teaching can create such change so completely.

I learned that the right practical actions can be totally transformative, fast, and fun too because the most effective experimentation is playful. But without being led through the right psychological steps, I would never have had the courage to make deep or lasting changes. And I learned that techniques from stories and storytelling are the big game-changer: knowing the structure of how to communicate is powerful and persuasive in every situation.

I changed so much that I mastered even the most terrifying aspects of performance, that many professional performers balk at: dangerous aerial acrobatic skills, improvisation, authentic emotional expression, and even chaotic street performances, as well as disciplined Shakespearian acting.

Once I had proven that my new confidence was rock-solid and making me effective and happy, everyone wanted me to reveal my secrets and work the same magic on them. So in between circus shows I devised a popular training for non-performers to help people benefit from the cutting-edge little-known techniques that I was trained in, and combined them into a program suitable for professional business people to use in everyday life. I brought a deep understanding of the subtle art of storytelling, and the communicative agility of improvisational games, and started running popular and intensely fun Wild Times courses.

Soon I had people claiming I’d changed their life, and some even turned from shyness to become nationally known performers.

From running these courses I learned all of the challenges and psychological stages that people go through when moving from self-consciousness and reserve to positive, expansive freedom in expressing their creative gifts and message to the world, with an engaging impact.

I wanted to work more deeply and personally to help professionals achieve really ambitious goals, so I trained and became accredited as

a coach. I then applied my radical, playful and intensely experiential methods to more focused individual challenges that my clients brought to me. I developed practical systems to pull people out of the traps of anxiety, caution and negative assumptions, and unleash their exuberance and natural abilities. And I found my clients were really enjoying the adventure. I really love revealing to people that they already have far more ability than they think, once they step easily and quickly beyond their unhelpful habits. And it all happens through the same fun methods by which I was taught, making it not a labour but an exciting pleasure.

I soon discovered that many of my clients' biggest challenge was to be fluent and expressive enough in making an impact when being interviewed for a new job – a very challenging environment and difficult situation. Not only that but the pressure to succeed in an interview and the reward of getting a better career or salary makes people even more prone to anxiety and negative approaches. My first clients were all desperate because they had one-shot chances at their dream job. No pressure then! When I heard from every one of them that they’d been offered the job, I knew I had to help more people get such a great result. So I developed a complete system to take people through a fast transformation so that in record time they can turn up confident, primed and persuasive in this awkward environment.

I’m now offering programmes in **Interview Success – the fun way!** in a format that professionals anywhere in the world can easily join.

Visit <http://interviewsuccessthefunway.com/> to start your adventure of real job interview success, including a free assessment.

Best wishes for your interview success!

Tim Sheppard

