

Deadly interview mistakes

It seems incredible that someone would turn up to an interview with a recruitment consultant in thongs but Adecco's Marie Stockley swears it's true. But wait there's more.

Ms Stockley, Adecco's general manager local branches, also knows of a time when a candidate told off colour jokes during an interview.

Another turned up clutching a resume covered in stains.

Okay, these examples are all pretty obvious things to avoid but what else? Here, Ms Stockley lists her top 10 deadly mistakes to avoid when showing up for an interview with a recruitment firm.

1. Underestimating the recruiter's role

"Many job seekers make the mistake of thinking that meeting with a recruitment consultant is not a 'real' interview," Ms Stockley says. "Recruitment consultants assess job seekers to determine their suitability and work ethic. Only the shortlist is passed onto the employer. If you can't impress the recruitment consultant, then you won't make the cut."

2. Presentation

Look the part and dress as you would if you already had the job. Hard to believe but Ms Stockley and her team have seen job seekers arrive for interviews without shoes or in dirty clothes. Being neat and tidy is a must and keeping things simple is a good idea. "Glitter on your cheeks and chest is not appropriate. Neither are bare midriffs, or T shirts with slogans," Ms Stockley says.

3. Target your skills

Recruitment consultants don't want to hear a candidate say "I'll do anything". "We admire the 'can do' attitude but without an indication of your skills, its difficult is to find you a job." "Adecco advises applicants to review their skills and preferred working environment to help recruitment consultants find you a suitable job."

4. Resumes

A well presented, up to date, typed resume is your most powerful weapon in job hunting - yet Adecco often sees handwritten resumes prepared on torn scraps of paper. "One candidate submitted a resume hand written on the back of the yellow pages cover," says Ms Stockley. "Another resume was so old that bugs actually ran out of it when it was opened," she says. "A resume needs to reflect your skills. It should explain your past duties as well as where you worked. It must have your correct contact details."

See CareerOne's resume advice stories in this section for more help.

5. Always be honest with your answers

Never lie or over exaggerate your experience or qualifications as you will only get caught, Ms Stockley warns. She also recommends being honest about your circumstances. "It's dreadful when employers find their new recruit has an overseas trip booked for six months time." "Instead let the recruitment consultant know and we can find appropriate work for your circumstances."

6. Be prepared

Candidates are often let down by failing to research the company and the role before going to the interview. In some cases, job seekers may not even know the name of the person to see. "You

need to be able to demonstrate your suitability for the position so be prepared to show how your past experience will benefit your new employer," Ms Stockley says.

7. Be on time

Being on time for a job interview is common sense but many applicants fail to leave enough time to reach the interview or to mentally prepare themselves. "Being late or failing to meet an interview time suggests you are unreliable," Ms Stockley says. Adecco also advises candidates to allow enough time to complete the interview. "We advise candidates to allow two hours for an interview and skills test but often see applicants squirming in their seat because they parked in a one hour zone," she says.

8. Telephone manners

When job seekers call a recruitment agency regarding a job, consultants often initially 'interview' over the telephone. "Your ability to express yourself over the phone is critical so you should prepare yourself before placing the call," Ms Stockley advises. "Have handy your employment history so you can tell recruiters what they need to know to get you a job."

9. Interview demeanour

"Companies prefer to work with competent and likeable people. You should treat every interview like it's your first. Appear interested and keen to show that you are a willing worker," Ms Stockley says. Turn off your mobile phones the minute you arrive in the recruitment firm's office. "Don't sit making calls in reception and certainly don't take calls during an interview." Likewise, she warns candidates to use humour carefully. She says, "Sexual innuendo or swearing is a faux pas."

10. Be good to your referees

Being able to provide referees and their phone numbers is essential.

CareerOne's Editor Kate Southam would add that it is also a good idea to call your referees to let them know you are pursuing work and the sort of skills he or she might be asked to verify. "Double check that it's okay that a recruitment consultant contacts them," she says.

"Also check what phone number they wish to be contacted on. Note that mobile phones are not a good option since a case in Queensland where a supposed referee was actually inside a prison.

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