

Interviewers' Pet Peeves

As seen on MSN.com by Carole Martin

You sit facing the interviewer, feeling like things are moving along nicely when all of a sudden the interview takes a drastic turn for the worse. What just happened? You may have hit one of the interviewer's pet peeves, one of those things that automatically triggers a negative response. Here are seven of the most common peeves provided by experienced interviewers, along with some tips on how to avoid them:

1. Smells: Too Much of a Good Smell Can Be Bad

Pat Riley, author of *Secrets of Breaking into Pharmaceutical Sales*, has a pet peeve story to relate: "Preparing for an interview is not like preparing for a date. I had one interview with a woman who doused herself with perfume (the same perfume my ex-girlfriend used to wear) right before stepping into the small interview booth. The perfume was overpowering and brought back bad memories."

2. Communication: Too Little Leaves Interviewers Exasperated

"My number one interviewing pet peeve is an applicant who won't talk," says Steve Jones, a manager of client services at a software company in Dallas. "I try to ask open-ended questions and prod them for longer answers, but no luck. I've even mentioned to a few that I need more information so I can get an idea of where they're coming from -- still no luck. I always end the interview saying, 'Now it's your turn to ask questions,' and still no luck; they don't have any. Oh well -- next!" "Help me out here," says Jones. "Come prepared to answer questions and talk about yourself."

3. Communication: Too Much Can Be Too Much

"Candidates who ramble are the ones who get to me," says Dotti Bousquet of Resource Group Staffing in West Hartford, Connecticut. "Last week, I was interviewing a candidate and asked her one question. The candidate talked and talked and talked for 45 minutes straight. I was unable to stop her. I had to say, 'Let's wrap this up,' and I stood up while she continued to talk. I walked to the door of the office and opened it. She left, but continued to talk while walking out the door." The lesson? "Candidates should stay focused, and answer the question asked -- in less than two to three minutes," advises Bousquet.

4. Lack of Focus: Results in Losing the Interviewer

"Typically, candidates are simply too intimidated by the process," says Mark Fulop, project director for a large nonprofit agency. "Relating the answer given to one question back with another -- and asking clarifying or follow-up questions -- shows me that the candidate is confident and thinking about the whole picture instead of enduring an interrogation."

5. Averting Your Eyes: One Way to Avert an Offer

"People who do not make any eye contact during the entire interview" irritate Gwen Sobiech, an agency recruiter in West Hartford, Connecticut. "I realize some people are shy, but to never look at me once -- they look down, around, everywhere, but not at me for the entire interview. I find that extremely annoying. I also tend to distrust someone who will not look at me when I've asked a question."

If you are uncomfortable looking into someone's eyes, look at his "third eye," just above and between the person's two eyes.

6. Slang and Street Speak: Leave Them on the Street

"Poor communications skills really get to me," says Robert Fodge of Power Brokers in Dover, Delaware. "What I mean by this is not merely their language fluency, but more about the use of language. Slang words and street speak just don't have a place in most business environments. Also, candidates who say 'um,' 'like' and 'uh' between every other word lose my attention very quickly."

7. Deception: Little Lies Leave a Big Impression

One major complaint among recruiters is when a candidate is not completely truthful; small lies are all too common in the world of recruitment. This includes not being completely forthcoming with relevant information, embellishing accomplishments, hiding jobs or leading the process on with no intention of ever following through. Building trust during the interview is key to getting an offer.