

Common interview mistakes that contractors make

Introduction

Being a contractor you will tend to go to quite a lot of interviews, so you need to be good at them. In previous articles we have discussed how to [Prepare For An Interview](#), [How To Pass An Interview](#) and also described the [Killer Technique For Contractors](#). This article lists the common mistakes candidates make in interviews.

The Most Common Mistake - Lack Of Sales Pitch?

This one warrants a whole heading of its own. An interview is a sales meeting between you and the client where you are the product.

Too many candidates make the mistake of treating it like a general chat whereby they get asked lots of questions whilst the interviewer assesses whether or not you can fulfil their requirements. I call this ineffective approach 'Here is my sweetie jar - is there anything you like?'

Good interview technique is about assessing the requirements, selling your solution, and closing the deal. It is a sales pitch.

This whole topic is discussed in detail in the article [Killer Interview Technique - Successful Ways For Contractors to Pass Interviews](#).

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Other Common Interview Mistakes

Other than failing to treat the interview like a sales meeting, which is the number one common mistake, there are lots of other common mistakes which can also guarantee your spot at the end of the job queue! Here we go:

Wrongly focused on what the contract does for you rather than how you can help the client: Never discuss why the role would be good for you and what you would get out of it. The client does not care. They are solely interested in whether they can trust you to do the job on time and to budget. Clients pay you top money to help them solve their problems, not yours.

Failure to address their problems: You fail to understand their problem and summarise how your relevant experience will be of benefit to them and solve their problems. It is down to you to convince them you can meet their needs, not for them to establish this from general stuff you say.

Blagging / Telling lies : Sometimes candidates pretend they know stuff rather than admit they don't know something. You will be caught out and no one hires a blagger. They are far too risky. The boss wants to know that at the end of the day they can trust you to either get something done, or put your hand up and ask for help.

Inability to listen / failure to answer the question: Sometimes candidates, particularly techies can 'go off on one' and get carried away by drilling down into some detailed technical area when it is not required without answering the question.

Interrupting too much . This is just plain rude and bad manners. Wait for the other person to finish speaking. Make notes whilst they are speaking if you are worried you'll forget your points by the time they have finished. Watch out for your eagerness being mistaken for simply being rude.

Talking too much : Some people rabbit on for hours. Remember the 50/50 rule and ensure the conversation is evenly balanced. If they speak for 90% of the time you won't get your points across and be able to impress them. If you speak 90% of the time they will think you talk too much and are a poor listener.

Lack of preparation . Lack of preparation means you know nothing about the company or a list of relevant questions to ask that get everything across to sell yourself. Create a set of open questions that provoke conversations about topics which you know a lot about. No one else in that interview room is going to blow your trumpet. You've got to blow it yourself. Filter your prepared questions that are relevant to the position they have explained to you during the interview.

Poor timing : Too much focus on one issue means you fail to shine in other areas and get through the whole sales pitch.

Poorly targeted answers: Align your responses based on the interviewer. If they are non technical then don't bore them with deep technical information they know nothing about. They won't be impressed. Use the buzzwords and describe the benefits in terms of how it can help improve the business and hit deadlines.

Lack of commercial awareness : If you fail to show you understand business and the concept of cost versus benefit then they will be worried that you will spend too much time building something they don't want. Give the impression you have commercial acumen.

Discussion of money : It is just the wrong place to do this and makes you look like a novice. Do this with the agent.

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Know it all : Don't give the impression you know everything. No one likes an ego - they wreck teams and cause mayhem.

Lack of interest : Lack of knowledge about the company will show you are not that bothered. Do some homework about the company.

Boring: No one likes working with someone who is dull. Use your sense of humour.

Conclusion

The key to passing an interview is [interview preparation](#) and [interview technique](#).

Good luck.

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